

Lymington Harbour Commissioners

New Ferries River Trials Information Update to Stakeholders – No. 4

Wightlink have defied the will of all the regulators in deciding to introduce their new ferries before the necessary safety trials are complete and the environmental concerns have been resolved.

They have taken this action despite repeated requests from the LHC and their previous undertaking not to do so. They claim that they are justified because of the needs of the Isle of Wight, but the real problem that has led to this situation is Wightlink's determination to design and build ferries in advance of meaningful consultations with all the regulators. As a result, all subsequent consultations have taken place against the commercial necessity on the part of Wightlink to introduce ferries that had already been paid for.

We have once again requested Wightlink to desist from this action, and are contacting all the relevant Government Departments for support in preventing it. However, if Wightlink go ahead without completion and acceptance of the risk assessment we will be providing whatever harbour patrols are appropriate to help safe guard other river users. These actions will be taken by the Commissioners in order to minimise any threat to the safety of other river users but without condoning the introduction of the new ferries. It has been confirmed to us by Government that as presently constituted, the Commissioner's do not have the power to prevent the new ferries sailing.

We expect the full BMT report to be available by 5 March and it will be circulated to stake holders for consultation as soon as possible.

In this fast developing situation, we will keep you all informed as they occur.

Peter Griffiths – Chairman LHC

24/2/2009.