

## **FORTH PORTS LEISURE SAILORS AND SMALL HARBOURS MEETING 24 MARCH 2017**

Here is my summary report of this meeting. The RNLI contribution is especially important for Forth sailors.

1. There is a huge variety of vessel movements on the Forth and Tay, 2,535 on the Forth in 2016, 5,000 associated with the new Forth Replacement Crossing and 231 on the Tay. There is a lot of waterfront development going on at Dundee.
2. While Forth Crossing V/L movements have tailed off with completion of the structure, both Forth and Tay are getting into oil platform and sub sea structure decommissioning.
3. Summer 2017 will see the launch of the new carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth. No date yet. The berth at Rosyth will be taken by the second one under construction HMS Prince of Wales.
4. There is increasing emphasis on marine incident reporting. Forth Ports website is the channel for this. Leisure users are urged to participate in near miss reporting.
5. Don't hesitate to contact Forth and Tay Navigation Service (FTNS) on VHF for inbound and outbound traffic movements in poor visibility or if one cannot see round the corner under the bridges.
6. The buoys round the new Forth Crossing piers and exclusion zones will go this year. No date yet. There will be no navigation lights on the new bridge as it is well lit and the navigation channel is wide at that point.
7. The exclusion zone round the Hound Point oil terminal is 30metres, round Braefoot Bay terminal (handling gas tankers) is 100metres.
8. We hear from the RNLI that they are widening their area of responsibility, getting more into prevention, just as the Police deal with crime prevention and the Firebrigade fire prevention. We are being urged to wear life jackets at all times afloat and in dinghies, kayaks etc. to have a hand held VHF. The RNLI is suggesting that clubs need to address this to avoid inviting regulation.  
  
There have been fatalities on the Forth that could have been avoided by both these measures. Three anglers without lifejackets died 100metres off East Wemyss and a VHF would have saved a kayaker's life off Portobello. Dalgetty Bay Sailing Club makes wearing lifejackets mandatory as a condition of membership and this has already saved one life. We are urged to make this a club requirement and to raise the profile of LJ servicing. The RNLI stresses the VHF direction finding capability of their lifeboats.
9. The Forth and Tay are well covered by lifeboats but factors such as necessity to avoid regulation, reduced manning of HMCG and consequent loss of local knowledge suggest that leisure boaters need to be more risk aware and better equipped. Arguing for LJs and hand helds the RNLI says "What price a life".
10. The RNLI tells us that a man overboard should be a mayday and that it can always be cancelled.

**Paul Shave**