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ADVICE FOR BOATOWNERS

CONWY HARBOUR BYELAWS AND THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR PREVENTION OF COLLISION AT SEA

These notes are provided for the advice and guidance of Boat owners navigating within Conwy Harbour and its Approach Channel.

1. BYELAWS RELATING TO SEASIDE PLEASURE BOATS

These require that :-

- a) Maximum speed of navigation through the water is 10 knots. This is self explanatory.
- b) Boats must navigate with care and consideration for other users. This means that your speed must be below the 10 knot maximum - if at that speed you create either danger or nuisance to any other person, e.g. if at 10 knots your wake is such that it causes danger or nuisance, then you must slow down to a speed where your wake will not create problems for others.
- c) Engines of vessels must be effectively silenced. This is self explanatory.
- d) Boats engaged in waterskiing must carry an observer in the boat in addition to its driver. This is self explanatory.

2. THE INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF COLLISION AT SEA (THE RULE OF THE ROAD)

These rules are valid on all tidal waters all boat owners/navigators should be familiar with their requirements.

In particular your attention is drawn to.

a) The Safe Speed Rule (Rule 6)

This rule requires that amongst other factors traffic density and the manoeuvrability of your own boat must be considered when determining at what speed you intend to navigate.

This is of vital importance because if you are navigating close to any other vessel/s you must be able to stop if anything whatsoever goes wrong before a collision occurs i.e., steering failure or the driver being distracted for any reason. Under this rule it is obviously therefore UNSAFE to pass a couple of boats lengths away from other boat/s if you are doing 30 knots because you could not stop before the collision if anything went wrong. Under this rule speed and distance away are both relevant.

It is difficult for me to give exact guidance in this respect as all boats differ and it does of course apply to both your own boat and any other that you may be close to. Both are obligated under the rule.

Because of all this the best guidance is that each boat should not navigate any faster than a speed which will allow her to be stopped in half the distance to any other vessel in her vicinity.

b) Proper Lookout (Rule 5)

All vessels are required to keep a proper lookout at all times.

This rule means exactly what it says.

c) Navigating in Narrow Channels (Rule 9)

The rules amongst other things require vessels navigating in a narrow channel to keep to the starboard side of the channel. This rule is self explanatory but often not adhered to in the Conwy Approach Channel. It is worth noting that this rule is equally binding on vessels under sail therefore either short tacking across the channel impeding other vessels within it or for example turning across the channel into wind to hoist or lower sails should not be undertaken unless well clear of other vessels navigating in the channel on the correct side.

My comments and guidance above are not intended to be a full interpretation of the rules merely to concentrate on those issues which relate to safety in the Harbour and its Approach Channel.

Should any boat owner require further advice then please do ask, my staff will be happy to help in anyway that we can.

Finally a note of caution. Failure to comply with the Byelaws and Rule of the Road is a very real safety issue and is causing me great concern.

Both Byelaws and the Rule of the Road are LAW and there are very considerable penalties available to the courts for persons convicted of infringing them. I wish you all to be safe on the water not to have to prosecute you but I shall do so if I must to reduce the likelihood of a serious accident occurring.

Please in your own safety interests OBEY THE RULES and do let the Harbour Office know if you experience any problems with vessels who do not comply with the requirements.

A.J. MEAD
PRINCIPAL HARBOUR AND MARITIME OFFICER