

LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS No 27 of 2015

Safety of Navigation within Cowes Harbour

(This notice supersedes LNTMs 01 and 03 of 2015 which are hereby cancelled)

The Cowes Outer and Inner Fairways (see Figure 1).

The Cowes Harbour fairway is divided into two distinct areas; the ‘Outer Fairway’ and the ‘Inner Fairway’.

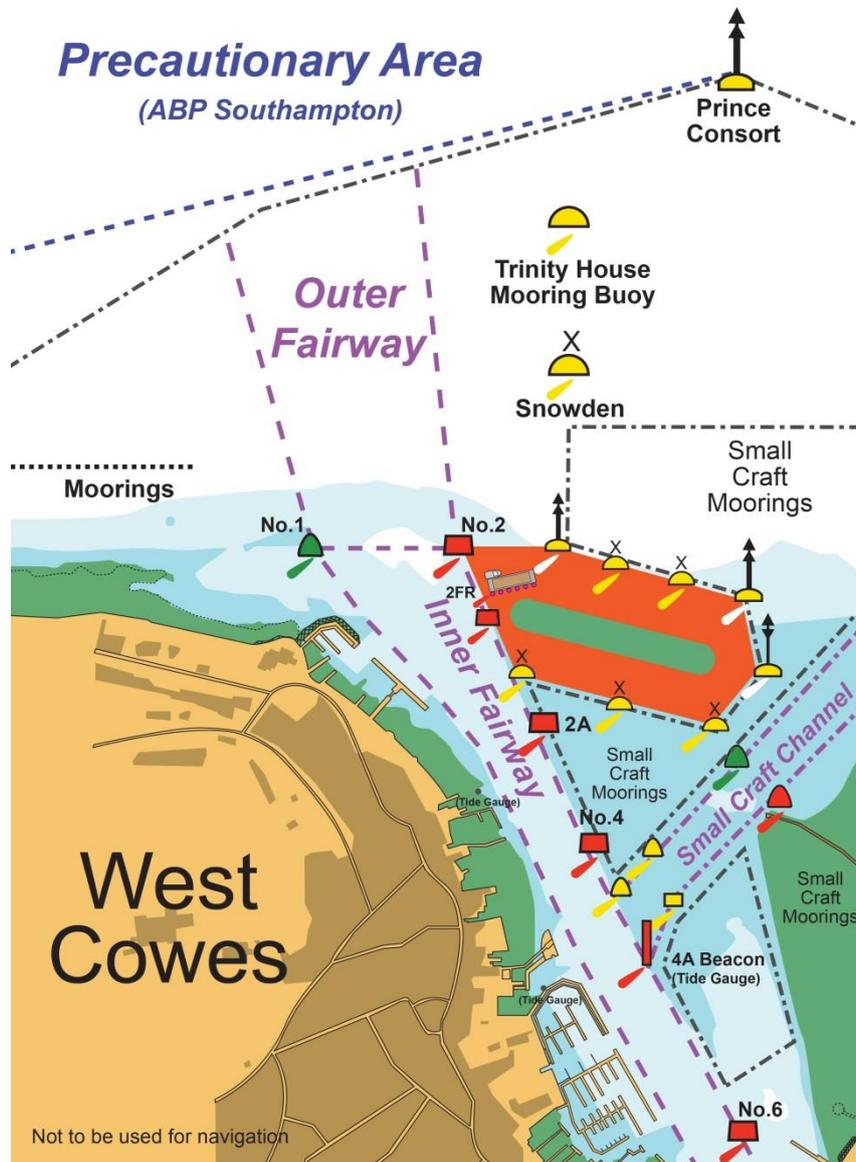


Fig 1: Outer and Inner Fairways

All mariners are reminded of the requirements under Rule 9 of the Merchant Shipping Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions Regulations 1996 (COLREGS) as amended, in particular parts a) and b), which state that:

'a) A vessel proceeding along the course of a narrow channel or fairway shall keep as near to the outer limit of the channel or fairway which lies on her starboard side as is safe and practicable.

b) A vessel of less than 20 meters in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway.'

The Cowes Fairway extends north of No 1 and 2 buoys, and is referred to as the 'Outer Fairway'. Small craft should be vigilant for large and regular commercial traffic which cannot safely navigate outside of the Outer or Inner Fairways, and are reminded again of their duty under Rule 9 of the Collision Regulations; compliance with the Collision Regulation is also a requirement of the Cowes Harbour Commission General Directions.

During strong tides and/or winds it may not be possible for some commercial vessels to proceed safely at a speed that is less than 6 knots whilst trying to maintain their required course. This is particularly true in the area between the harbour entrance and the Small Craft Channel. All small craft must comply with Rule 9 and not impede the passage of these vessels.

Breakwater Exclusion Zone (see Fig 1)

Works on the new detached breakwater will take place during August, September and October 2015, these works are protected by an Exclusion Zone; all vessels must avoid entering the Exclusion Zone unless directed to do so by the Harbour Master. [See LNTM: Breakwater Exclusion Zone for full details.](#)

Inner Harbour Cross Current (see Fig 2)

Between HW -2.5 hours and HW-1 hours, vessels transiting the Inner Fairway between the Island Sailing Club and the Small Craft Channel may experience a westerly setting tidal flow of up to 1.5knots particularly on spring tides; this cross current will have a tendency to set vessels down towards the western shore. Small craft when outbound should be prepared to alter their heading so as not to be set across the fairway when transiting this area and avoid impeding the safe passage of commercial shipping and ferries. [See LNTM: Changes to Tidal Flows in Cowes Harbour for full details.](#)

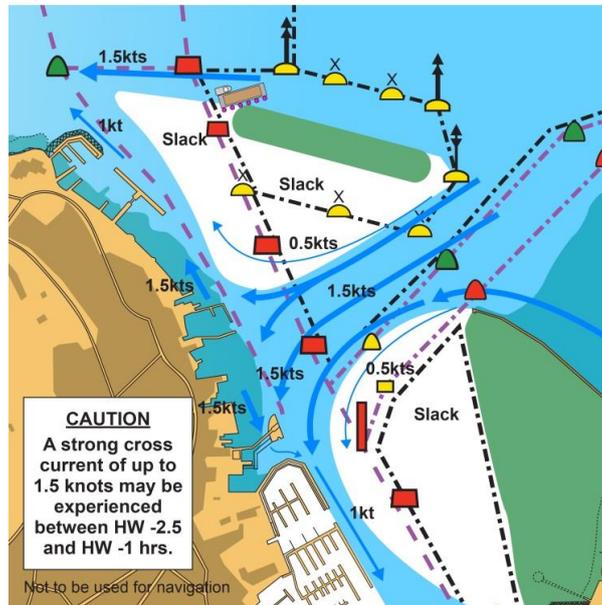


Figure 2: Cross current at HW -2 hrs

Small Craft Channel and Shrape Watersports Area (see Fig 3)

Small vessels generally less than 20m in length approaching or departing Cowes from or to the north or east may use the Small Craft Channel (SCC) provided that there is sufficient water in relation to their draught. A tide gauge is situated on the red beacons at either end of the channel. When there is sufficient water small craft are advised to use the SCC in preference to the fairways, therefore avoiding the main harbour entrance which is used by commercial vessels entering or leaving Cowes and is bisected by the yacht club race start lines. Small craft bound to Cowes from Southampton Water are also advised that it is possible to avoid the Precautionary Area by crossing the Solent to the east of the Bramble Bank, setting a course towards the Shrape Beacon before altering course to the west for the SCC. The difference in distance between using this route and using the main fairway is negligible.

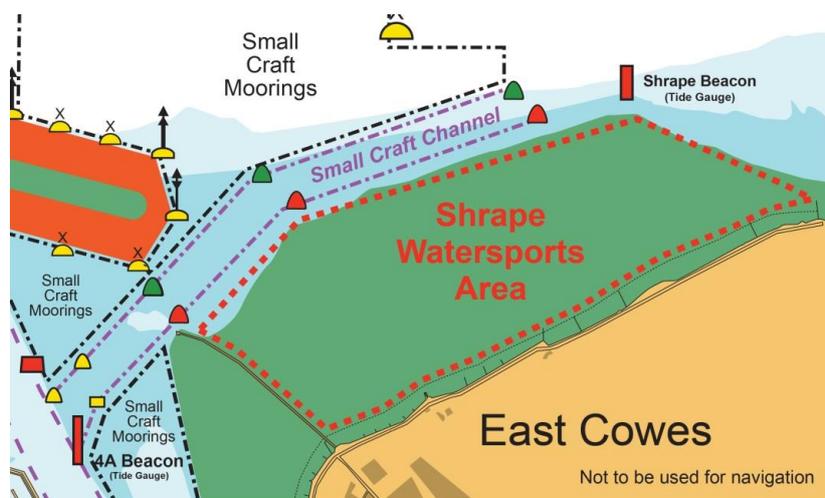


Figure 3: Small Craft Channel and Shrape Watersports Area

Additionally, vessels shall not bypass the Small Craft Channel or fairway approaches by ‘cutting-through’ the small craft mooring areas; such action is associated with much risk because of the concentration of unlit

moorings and moored vessels in this area. The Shrape Watersports Area is used by sailing schools for pupils under instruction and should, wherever possible, be avoided by vessels not engaged in supervised activity.

General Direction 4.6 - Sailing in the Inner Harbour

“The Master of any vessel fitted with sails and an auxiliary engine when navigating the Inner Harbour south of the Shrape breakwater shall proceed with the engine running and ready for immediate use, except in an emergency or with the permission of the Harbour Master.”

In addition sailing vessels, if safe and practical, particularly in very light or very strong winds, are recommended to have their engines, if fitted, ready for immediate use when navigating in the vicinity of the Cowes Fairways.

General Direction 6 – Cowes Chain Ferry (see [LNTM: Cowes Chain Ferry](#))

All vessels shall when safe and practical give way to the Chain Ferry. Vessels requiring an unimpeded passage must contact the Cowes Chain Ferry on VHF Channel 69 and given early indication of their approach; the Chain Ferry will hold on an agreed river bank for your transit.

General Direction 3.7 - Departing Marina or Moorings

The Master of a vessel leaving a marina area or moorings within the Harbour shall give way to vessels navigating within a fairway.

No Anchoring Areas

Vessels must not anchor in the fairway, Small Craft Channel, and in any of the areas containing small craft moorings due to the presence of ground chains. These areas are clearly identifiable on the navigational charts for the area.

Rod Hodgson, Deputy Harbour Master, Harbour Office, Town Quay, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 7AS

3rd August 2015

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