

# HRSA Monthly Report

February 2018

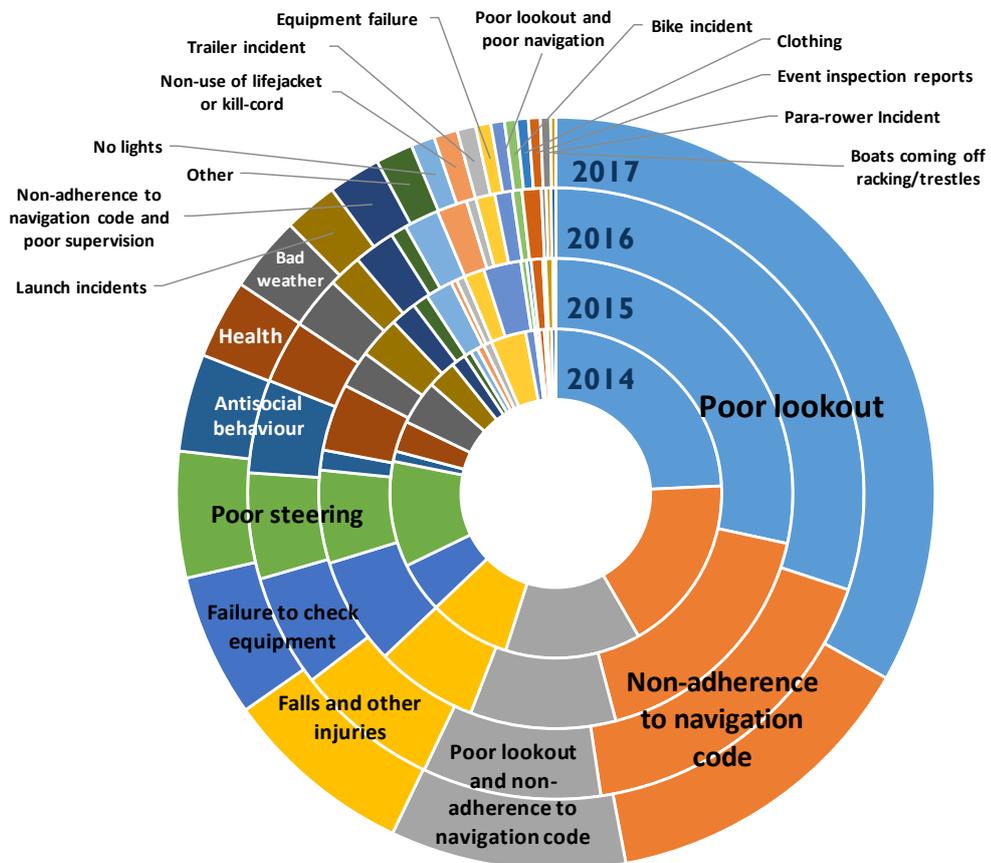
Stephen Worley

## Incident Analysis

The analysis of incidents reported in 2017 has been completed and reports are included with this report. The number of reported incidents continues to increase year on year. It is not clear whether this is due to an increased willingness to report or to an increased number of incidents. However, the Regional Rowing Safety Advisers (RRSAs) and others have been encouraging clubs and their members to report incidents.

It is also difficult to understand whether there has been a change in the level of activity that has impacted on the number of incidents.

The proportion of incidents due to each cause shows only small changes compared with previous years. Poor lookout, non-adherence to the navigation code and doing both at the same time are still the causes of the majority of incidents, as shown below.



The information that accompanies this report explains the analysis in great detail and provides comparisons with previous years. It may be possible to produce regional breakdowns if requested.

## **The Weather**

We are now approaching the time of year when air the temperature starts to rise (normally) but the water temperature remains low. The temperature of the surface layer of water may increase slightly but the temperature of the water below that is still low. Rowers tend to wear less and still be comfortable when rowing. They tend to become complacent about the consequences of capsize because they feel warm. This is a dangerous delusion. If they do fall in then the rate of cooling of the skin can cause the gasp reflex. The consequences of falling into water at this time of year are as great as they were in the depth of winter. Care should continue to be taken.

## **RowSafe**

The 2018 update should be issued in early April. The updates have been defined and provided to the communications team. These updates are summarised in a document included with this report.

These updates address the opportunities for improvement identified by users and others, incorporate the Safety Alerts issued in the last year and extend the scope of RowSafe to include Ocean Rowing.

Drafts of the Ocean Rowing sections of RowSafe have been provided to the Ocean Rowing industry and feedback has been very positive. These are in the process of being finalised. The latest versions are included with this report.

## **Work with the Cornish Pilot Gig Association (CPGA)**

Safety advice will be presented to three gig clubs in the Portishead area on 21<sup>st</sup> March. This will be based on the presentation made just prior to the CPGA AGM. The safety arrangements of one of the clubs will also be reviewed and feedback provided.

There has been a request for gig cox training at a club in Dorset. Training material is being prepared and a visit has been arranged on 14<sup>th</sup> March to discuss and plan the next steps. It is expected that the training will be delivered starting in the following weeks.

There have been some internal discussions about making it easier for CPGA clubs to use the Incident Reporting system. This is not particularly difficult and some clubs have already used it. Further improvements can be made once the software used for club database system has been updated.

## **Resuscitation and the provision of Automated External Defibrillators**

British Rowing's Medical Panel is endorsing a more active approach to cardiac arrest within rowing clubs. To do this will require, among other things, undertaking resuscitation training.

There is more information at <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/British-Rowing-Medical-Panel-Resuscitation-and-provision-of-AEDs-DAZ-25.01.2018.pdf> and a detailed explanation is included with this report.

## Incident Reports

Incident reports were reviewed (other than those of simple capsizes). Comments were made on a few and some were forwarded to others for information. Incident Reports that describe medical treatment beyond first aid and those that describe medical issues are routinely shared with the Honorary Medical Adviser and, where appropriate, his advice is conveyed to the people involved. The CPGA Safety Adviser is informed of reports mentioning gigs and these are often discussed with him.

In the previous report, the clubs that have been recorded as the “primary club involved” in the greatest number of incidents were identified. It is understood that the Chairman of British Rowing has sent certificates of recognition to the Chairmen of the top five reporting clubs. These are Lea RC, Christchurch RC, Avon County RC, Marlow RC, and Taunton RC

There was an incident in February in which a university 8 was damaged beyond repair but its crew escaped without serious harm. The incident occurred because the 8 became positioned upstream of a motor boat that was so badly moored that it was blocking a considerable proportion of the river.

The stream was strong. The boat became lodged against the upstream end of moored boats and a pontoon or landing stage. It was not helped by a well-meaning person on the pontoon lifting and pulling one of the oars, thereby causing the boat to tilt and fill with water. It is possible that the cause of its breaking up was partly due to it being so low in the water, having been swamped, and having a large proportion of the hull under water.

The causation is far from simple and there are many underlying causes.

It is planned to deliver extensive Safety Management and Safety Leadership training at this university on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

There have been other incidents where stronger than normal flows have led to boats being damaged. The nature of river flow round bends has been investigated and it was found that this flow can become helical.

There is a vector component of flow that involves the surface water moving to the outside of the bend with the water at the bottom of the river moving in the opposite direction. This circulation will tend to push rowing boats to the outside of bends. This may have been a factor in the Dove Pier incident and the incident at Arnhem.

This phenomenon will be investigated further and a Safety Alert may be produced.

### **Inappropriate positioning of a trailer**

There was a recent report of an incident that occurred in September 2017. It is reported that a cyclist collided with a boat on a parked trailer. He reports being hit on the chest by the boat. The trailer was parked in such a way that the boat extended outside of the car park and over the adjacent tow path.



The cyclist reported that he was taken to the local Accident and Emergency department and was released after four hours. He was scanned and X rayed, diagnosed with soft tissue trauma and this was followed up by his G.P. He was subsequently referred to a physiotherapist where he has been treated for past the last five months. He reports that he is in continuous pain and discomfort and was unable to complete normal domestic tasks without assistance for three months. He has not cycled since the incident.

This incident could have been avoided if more care had been taken in positioning the trailer.

### **Complaint Received**

A “formal” complaint was received from the mother of a junior sculler in a head race. It appeared that the single sculler had become very cold due to her having spent a protracted time stationary on the water in cold conditions. This was explained in the January report.

The mother involved has since agreed to be contacted by the event organisers and help them to understand how they can improve their procedures. Contact details have been shared. As a result of this discussion the event has decided to make the following improvements.

- Provide an improved warm-up circulation 1 km upstream from the start line and offer all crews the opportunity to stay warm by paddling around a 1 km buoy marked course to ensure safety whilst doing so.
- Provide all Marshalls, Umpires, Launch Drivers and Medical personnel with an enhanced briefing to help them to identify any competitors who exhibit the signs of cold. Signs and symptoms will be re-iterated to all non-medical personnel to enable them to assess any competitor.
- Provide additional areas on land for competitors to re-warm. This will involve removing boats from one side of our Boathouse, and installing a hot-air blower to create an environment where anyone can take refuge from the elements.
- Consider advising crews who prefer to sit and wait for their call to the start-line to have a foil blanket.
- Ensure that safety briefings instruct Race Marshalls to monitor and review, very closely, any competitors who have chosen to remove their outer clothing in preparation for the race.

This event already makes extensive provision for safety and, in many respects, achieves best practice. Other events would do well to aim to emulate this level of performance.

## **Duty to maintain a proper lookout**

There have recently, and previously, been reports explaining that a head on collision was due to the other crew being directly ahead, in the cox's "blind spot" or that the cox's view was obstructed by the crew.

This is clearly not acceptable as it is contrary to Rule 5 of the COLREGs which states "*Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.*" The COLREGs are directly applicable on some waterways and used as the basis for bylaws and navigation rules in others.

An amendment has been made in RowSafe to add "*Keep a good lookout at all times when afloat. Coxes who cannot see directly ahead should enlist the help of members of their crew.*"

## **Conspicuity**

Regional Rowing Safety Advisers (RRSAs) and others were asked for their views on the use of hi-vis kit by rowers. The question they were asked was:-

*Based on what you have seen, has the use hi-vis kit increased in recent months and years?*

Some RRSAs invited responses from the Club Rowing Safety Advisers in their region and one discussed this with them at a regional meeting.

The general consensus seems to be that:-

- hi vis is becoming more common with club rowers
- some schools use it, many do not
- it is effective in making rowers easier to see
- it tends to reduce the number of collisions
- it is more readily available, not expensive, and "fashionable"
- it is a "good thing"

The individual responses have been anonymised and are all presented in Appendix I.

It has been reported that some members of some clubs feel that encouragement to use hi vis kit is an unnecessary intrusion on their personal freedom. A very direct briefing note has been prepared explaining the potential consequences of collisions, this available on request from [safety@britishrowing.org](mailto:safety@britishrowing.org).

## Lifejackets

A Regional Rowing Safety Adviser has recommended an alternative lifejacket for rowers and scullers. This is the Spinlock Deckvest LITE for adults and the Spinlock Deckvest CENTO for juniors. There is more information at <https://www.spinlock.co.uk/en/categories/lifejackets>

When asked about their suitability for use when rowing and sculling the response was:

*A few of our adult oarsman and juniors have used both versions of the Spinlock Lie Jackets - the Deckvest LITE and the CENTO and found they were able to row and scull wearing them and so we do think they are an option as a "Rowing" Life Jacket - and UK made and a bit cheaper than the Secumar. The photo shows a couple of our Juniors using. The girl in the bow is wearing the Deckvest LITE - the lad in the stroke seat the CENTO.*



We have permission from the parents and the photographer to use these photos.

Another supplier claims to be able to supply “Rowing Lifejackets”. Apart from them being light in weight, it is difficult to identify any characteristics of these products that would make them more suitable for rowers than many other similar products.

## Other Advice

The following requests for information were received.

- Advice has been provided on Food Safety by sharing the relevant guidance documents from the Club Safety section of ClubHub (as yet still unpublished).
- Advice was sought on the need for rowers in small fixed seat boats to wear buoyancy aids with activated glow sticks, when rowing at night in winter. The rowers did not want to wear them but the club executive insisted that they did. They were advised to consider a different type of lifejacket and to accept the advice of the club executive.
- A request was made for a printed version of RowSafe because it was said to be difficult to read on a mobile. It was explained that we do not have printed versions because it contains hyperlinks that do not work from the printed page, it is long and would be expensive to print and it is updated every year and the cost of reprints would be prohibitive.
- A request was made for a flow chart describing the incident reporting process. We have an obsolete one and it would not be too difficult, it required, to produce a new one. It is difficult to gauge the demand. Please feel free to comment.
- Advice was sought from a university Sport Compliance Officer on the management of rowing boat maintenance. It was explained that some university clubs employ a boathouse manager who can complete a reasonable range of maintenance tasks. Extensive or structural damage would require the support of a boat builder and local clubs should be able to recommend one. Boats should be checked prior to each use but there is no need for annual thorough examination of boats as they are relatively fragile and tend to break rather than wear out. It was also explained that the RNLI will check lifejackets at no cost.
- Advice has been sought from another head race on the conditions under which the event can take place. The response is summarised in Appendix 2.
- There was a question on the need to report capsizes that cause no harm. The response was that reporting these is a quick and efficient process that helps us put our incidents into perspective. Encouraging juniors to enter their own report, as was suggested by the enquirer, will help them to develop a habit of openness and lead them to learn that there are no downside to being open and honest.
- Advice was given on the location of documents that support the Risk Assessment Training. They can be found by clicking on “Resources” in the top right hand corner of the on-line learning presentation.
- There was a question on safe temperatures for rowing. The response was that There are no recommended temperatures in RowSafe. Temperature is only one part of considerations when deciding whether it is safe to row. Consideration should also be given to wind (and wind chill), humidity, precipitation, etc. and to the characteristics of the crew and the type of outing planned. A heavyweight adult crew will often cope better with adverse conditions than a crew of young juniors. In cold weather a short, physically intense outing would be preferable to a longer outing with many technical exercises.

## **Appendix I – Feedback on the use of Hi-vis kit**

**The individual responses**, in no particular order.

Since we issued a request to wear high vis, our members have been very good particularly on these dusky early mornings. I think it must help when you are trying to catch an oncoming boat out of the corner of your eye. It is hard to believe that some rowers elsewhere can be so arrogant and dismissive of their responsibilities not to wear high vis. Many fashion tops are available in bright yellow. I can see that if they continue, you will have no choice but to make it mandatory.

Use of hi-vis in this city where there are very many rowing clubs is limited, but definitely more prevalent than say 10 years ago. The various college rowers aren't allowed out in darkness and almost none of them wear hi-vis, but I'd guess that some 30-50% of town boats (especially coxless boats) wear hi-vis in dusky or dark conditions. I'm not aware of any local policy or regulation mandating use of hi-vis, though individual clubs may have requirements of which I'm not aware.

As you know, when I was RRSA, I was trying to introduce this in this region. I have noticed that brightly coloured crews are on one river. A club has adopted a policy of Bow wearing a Tabard, or reflective jacket. It has been 8 months since any reported incidents, an improvement.

As you indicate this response is purely anecdotal – no measurement has been involved. My impression is that use of hi-vis or brightly coloured kit has increased in non-competition-related inland rowing activity. It is by no means universal and it would be VERY hard to tie it to any other change in accidents, incidents or near-misses.

It feels to me that there's way more out on the Tideway, I run around the bridges once a week at different times of the day. ...or perhaps it's because I see so much in my wash basket! At school it's compulsory part of the Kit (everyone has to have at least one top) for bow of coxless crews and for singles. I'm not sure about coxed boats only because my son's too large to ever be stuck in the bows of an eight!

I certainly think that there has been an increase in the use of high vis. I would further highlight that in the event someone ends up in the water there is a significantly increased ability to see them if they are wearing high vis... worst case scenario I know but a reality.

Simple answer I think is yes, use of hi vis has increased of recent years. However it seems to me more that rowers are using a lot of crossover kit e.g. cycling tops which are often reflective colours or general lycra running kit which more and more seems to have reflective bars/stripes in it. We don't specify rowers wearing reflective kit although coxns will often wear brighter tops. From a local perspective our club red colours are pretty visible.

I've not seen any evidence of this at all, with the vast majority of rowers continuing to wear dark clothing. The only high vis clothing I see widely used is life jackets, primarily for launch drivers (coxes life jackets continue to be dark too).

One of our old men wears a fluorescent yellow beanie hat, that works perfectly well. It also keeps his head warm as he does not have much hair.

At our club, members are gradually wearing hi vis with several prompts over the last 18 months. Now the majority of scullers and bows are wearing hi vis. Recently at our open forum your recent info regarding collision avoidance was put to the members. It was decided that it should not be a rule, but members understanding their duty of care overruling personal choices. Those flouting these expectations would be subject to peer pressure rather than conflict with the club. Personally I feel it is better for individuals to understand and think about reducing risk, taking on board advice and developing a safety mindset rather than slavishly following rules. Naturally clubs need to have basic rules in place to support their duty of care to their membership and others affected by their activities.

I have asked around but no-one has reported any significant difference.

I think we are making more efforts to use Hi Vis. Certainly our ladies' sculling school on Thursday mornings is very careful in this respect. Sweaty Betty do a hi vis stretchy top which goes over almost any combination of T shirts and sweat shirts and is not baggy. We also go in for Hi Vis hats which are quite good.

It is a good question to ask. The simple answer is, yes, more folks are using high vis clothing. However, I believe it is more of a sports fashion thing rather than a true rowing safety thing (a conscious effort to improve one's own water safety).

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With us – only in terms of winter coaches kit when driving launches.

We tend to only row if the visibility is OK and never at night or in the dark. Hence hi visibility clothing not required. I do however think if crews are rowing and the visibility is poor then bicycle type lights on the riggers and hi vis clothing is essential and best practice.

I can happily confirm that it is now *de rigueur* at our club either by way of light/hi-vis tops or yellow hats. We have done a good brainwash job.

We row on a lake. The lake has a circulation pattern and when we use it, it is for exclusive use (save the odd canoeist). The need to be seen in order to navigate is quite low. That said, the trend in sportswear is for more high visibility clothing - some folks at the Club also run and have high vis tops which they also use when they row, also some brands of technical tops come with high vis reflective patches. I have a feeling, that when folks buy their new sportswear, the high vis comes with it so to speak. It could be that the sportswear industry happens to be looking out for us (forgive the pun). We just happen to be the beneficiary.

Hi Vis clothing is used by some scullers and bow rowers from these two clubs. I would not describe it as widely used. I have not seen or heard of any incidents or near incidents caused by lack of visibility. On the other hand we have not reached the peak foggy season yet.

At the moment the school does not use hi-vis kit so I really can't help from that point of view. However I have observed the town club leisure group who row during the week and it is much easier to spot them at distance.

It does appear that more people are wearing hi Vis but not for any safety reason, I think it may be down to cost/fashion I was near the Tideway on Wednesday night and of the boats I saw only I had a rower with HI Vis on and they were in the 4 seat of an 8. I seem to remember that in the Tideway Code it is strongly recommended to wear Hi Vis, but I would say most clubs do not and they choose to rely on the lights attached.

My observations from my two local clubs, both of whom have a rule for “night-time” rowing where cox/stroke/bow/scullers must wear visible outer layers, during the day we are also seeing much greater use of Hi-Vis, partly as you suggest below this is due to awareness and fashion. The slightly more problematic area is one of the three local schools has a uniform strip that is predominately black with red stripes, they also row with black blades and sometimes in black singles. I should point out that their director of rowing is trying to change this with the school and encourages his charges to wear non-uniform white tops. To conclude I think my local experience is that awareness of visibility is generally good and the vast majority of those on the water are making good efforts to be seen.

Further to my region’s Safety Meeting on Saturday - I mentioned the use of Hi-vis garments while rowing/sculling and to those at the meeting and must say that all at the meeting agreed that they had seen an increased use of Hi vis garments in the region and all agreed that it was a good thing and should be encouraged.

More common as it is more readily available / cheaper / greater number of stockists / fashion wear / seen & used in more sports & activities - running, cycling / used as work wear more often!!

The Club implemented a policy of the bow man and all single scullers wearing hi-vis last May following a number of collisions. No one complained and everyone complies. The school, that shares our boathouse, has also now implemented this policy. Since last May the number of collisions, or near misses, has reduced dramatically. We share the river with three other clubs who do not wear hi-vis and their visibility, compared to a hi-vis wearer is noticeably reduced.

Hi Vis vest are becoming increasingly more noticeable on the River by four local clubs, not so much by the schools. Helmsman the most noticeable in small boats. Hi Vis vests are used at night by almost all rowers.

I am noticing more hi vis and I think more “fashionable” versions are becoming available from the likes of Crew Room, etc.

Hi-vis is definitely becoming more common on the Tideway. It tends to be scullers, although more coxes and bowmen are wearing them. Also a significant number of coaches and launch drivers now wear hi-vis jackets. I have spoken to some people in clubs and the view seems to be that hi-vis is beneficial. Unfortunately, few schools seem to be using hi-vis.

Here, Hi Vis on Bow in all boats is being phased in and will be compulsory from end Feb. Interpretations of 'Hi Vis' are pretty poor with people wearing washed out yellow and orange and not reflective in any way. Some guidance would be welcome - I push kids parents the way of hi quality Running/Cycling tops. If you add to that the facts that the club has high membership numbers but has 70% annual membership churn and 95% of Club members registered on BR have no points...we are now predominantly a Novice Club..... (except for nippy Juniors). No amount of Hi Vis will protect people from lack of watermanship and steerspeople looking around. The vast majority of collisions here happen at the same couple of places....A coach on the bank IS the only answer as we do with all Juniors.... and .....coaches who are up with Boats as one of latest collisions in Vllls had coaches on the bank.. somewhere....and I believe inexperienced coxes. So Hi Vis is not super protective armour!

(This is at the same club as the previous comment) After several weeks of gathering views on Hi-vis from our membership and discussions in club committee meetings. We are now in the situation where we are making Hi-Vis for all scullers and bow persons of every class of boat mandatory by the end of this month (Feb.). Although when we originally advised the idea, many had already up-taken Hi-vis. Possibly as individuals were buying new training kit and as our club colour is already Orange, Hi-Vis Orange was a natural option, though some are using yellow. While searching for my own Hi-vis I found anything suitable for my needs in Orange seemed to be out of stock, probably already taken up by the cycling and running fraternities. I did though have a couple of negative responses from a couple of members who happen to be "cyclists". Their view was that a cycling group survey said that wearing Hi-Vis made some cyclists less wary of the road as they expected others to avoid "them". They thought the same would apply to the river and bow steers would be less likely to look ahead. We have also purchased a number of Hi-vis tops for use of members who do not yet have their own or forgotten to bring to the club, therefor there should be no excuse for non-compliance. We have also purchased and are awaiting stock of smaller sizes for our junior members, also Hi-vis tape for use on life jackets. Hi-Vis long sleeve tops should also be worn under these for maximum visual impact. The waterway is very narrow in places due to congestion of narrow boats and barges, in many cases double moored (triple mooring sometimes witnessed). We have been working very hard over the years with the Canal & Rivers Trust to alleviate this problem. Hi-Vis is also essential for these boaters to see Rowing crews as many newcomers do not observe or are aware of navigational rules. As an organisation we have welcomed the usage to try and lessen the possibility of collisions on our river.

## **Appendix 2 – The conditions in which a head race can take place**

It is almost impossible to define these conditions as it depends on so many things that I know nothing about.

When it comes to river velocity then it is worth noting that boats travel at about 12 metres per second (about 6 knots). Some more, some less. Any flows more than 1 or 2 knots will make it difficult for boats to get to the start and for them to hold station. Fast flows can cause turbulence around bridges and other obstructions, this can be very hazardous. Fast flows are also a problem at bends where the surface flow can set diagonally across the river and push boats towards the outside of the bend. Please remember that the velocity at the surface in the centre of the river, and at the outside of bends, is much greater than the average flow velocity.

The process specified in the instructions that a decision will be made by local experienced river users seems pragmatic and sensible.

Both water temperature and air temperature are important. Water temperature does not change much from one day to the next but if the temperature at about 0.5 metres below the surface is less than 5C then consider abandoning the race or restricting the race classes. If it is below 3C then cancel any event where there is a possibility of capsize. Low air temperatures are tolerable but only providing there is very little sitting still and waiting. Again, if it is cold (it is not just temperature, wind chill, humidity and precipitation (rain) are also important) then consider reducing the number of small boat and junior events to make the divisions smaller and the waiting less. It is usually the slower boats at the ends of the divisions, and the smaller people, that have most problems.

In my view, on a river, if the visibility is less than 500 metres then racing should be postponed or cancelled. If postponed then you may not have time to complete the program before dusk and may have to cancel some events. Again you should use local knowledge. Please remember that visibility can be patchy.

As far as wind is concerned this is more difficult to quantify as it will affect different parts of the course in different ways. The water is sheltered, to some extent, by winds blowing across the river but less sheltered from winds blowing along the river. As there are so many bends on your course I expect that some parts of the river will not be sheltered whatever the wind direction. Again local knowledge is important.

Wind has two effects; it tends to produce rough water and make steering difficult. If white horses can be seen on any part of the course then cancel the event. If it is rough but not that rough then cancel the small boat and maybe junior events. If the wind direction is such that the approaches to the bridges are exposed to crosswinds then consider cancelling or restricting the event. This is just a matter of common sense, I do not think that specifying wind speeds would help.

I feel that I have just told you what you already know. Local knowledge is important and you should be able to rely on it. Do not be afraid to restrict or cancel the event even though you will be under great pressure to allow it to continue. It is better to be thought of as over cautious than cavalier about safety and it is difficult to explain why it went ahead if someone is hurt. Epithets like "if in doubt, don't go out" and "it is better to be on land wishing you were at sea than at sea wishing you were on land" are valid.

I hope that you will have a great, and safe, event and that the conditions will be perfect.