

Priority lock, risk based staffing 2024

April 2024

Dear Stakeholders,

As we approach the implementation of our updated operational strategy for the boating season, we wish to share with you the thoughtful considerations that have informed the prioritisation of our lock sites. Our commitment to maintaining a safe navigation, enjoyable, and sustainable waterway system has guided a comprehensive review process, ensuring that each lock's priority status reflects a balanced assessment of key factors critical to our shared objectives.

Prioritisation Strategy

In determining the priority for each lock, we have meticulously considered a variety of factors, including but not limited to: the inherent risk factors associated with each lock's operation (such as depth and sluice turbulence and uniqueness), boat traffic, the health, safety, and wellbeing of both our staff and waterway users, the availability of site services (water, pump-out, waste management), and the imperative of income protection through vigilant compliance and registration enforcement. Furthermore, footfall in operational areas and onsite, location including the proximity to marinas, commercial activities, hire boat operations, and the strategic significance of gateway or destination locks, has been evaluated to gauge the impact on local communities and economies. Water level management, essential for ensuring navigational safety and environmental stewardship, has also been a critical consideration.

This detailed approach has allowed us to classify our locks with a clear priority system, ranging from A (Priority staffed) to D (Can be unstaffed), ensuring that our resources are optimally allocated to serve the highest needs and responsibilities. This classification not only reflects our dedication to operational excellence but also our commitment to the safety, enjoyment, and well-being of all who rely on and cherish our waterways.

We are grateful for your understanding and support as we implement these measures, designed to ensure the long-term sustainability and accessibility of our waterways. Together, we can ensure the Thames continues to thrive as a vital waterway for all its users.

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding.

Kind regards,

Mark Hill & Maria Herlihy

Harbour Masters – the non-tidal River Thames



Creating a better place for people and wildlife