

LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS No 02 of 2015

Small Craft Channel

(This notice replaces LNTM 27 of 2013 which is hereby cancelled)

The Small Craft Channel (SCC) connects the main fairway with the eastern approaches. This allows small vessels, generally less than 20m in length, approaching from or departing to the north or east to use the Small Craft Channel provided that there is sufficient water in relation to their draught. A tide gauge is located on the Shrape Beacon (see Figure 1) and on the Cowes Yacht Haven wall. The minimum depth in the SCC is chart datum; therefore the minimum depth of water in the channel is equal to the height of tide shown on the tide gauge.

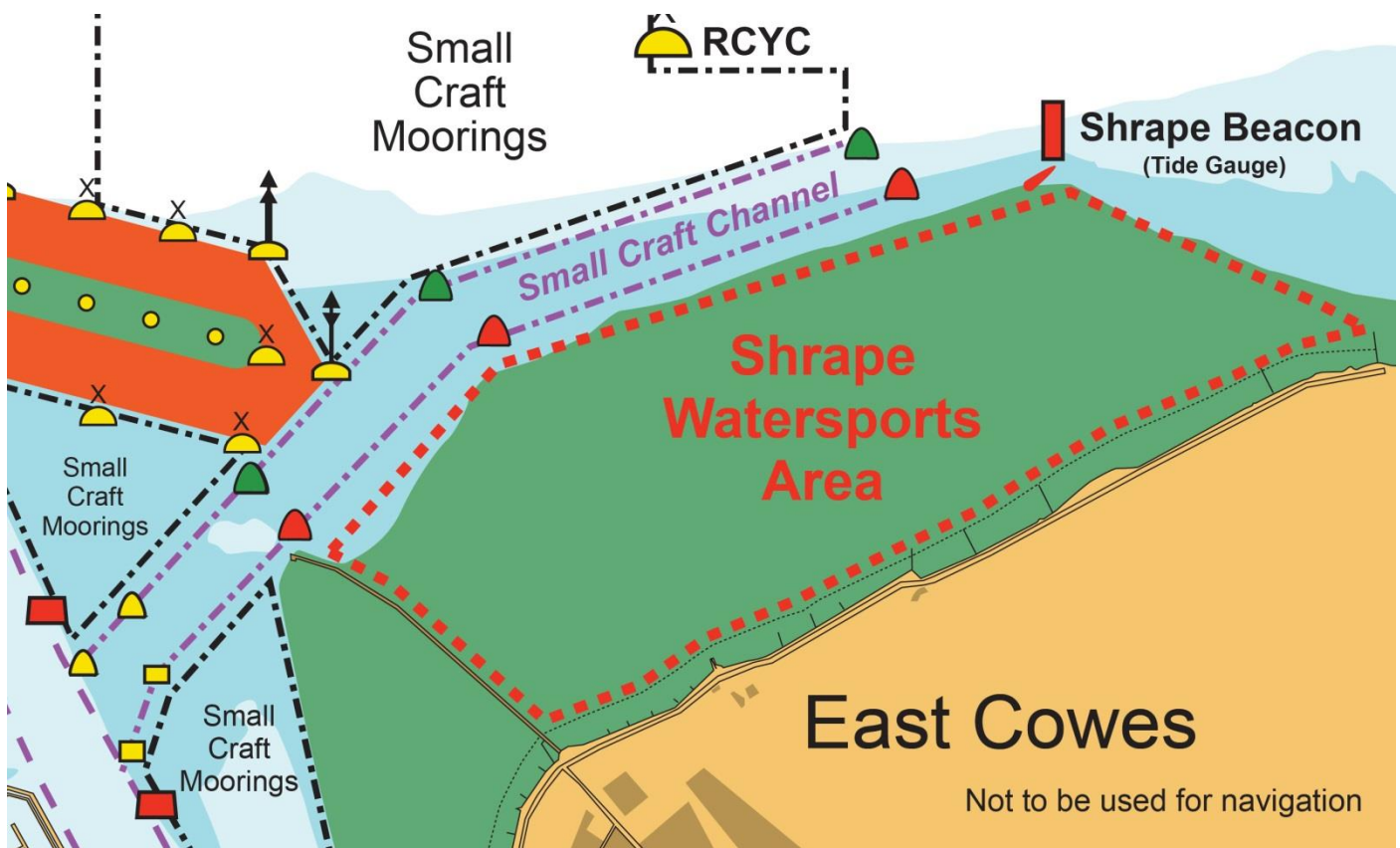


Fig 1: Small Craft Channel

Navigation

The channel is at its narrowest 35m wide and is marked by three pairs of lit lateral buoys at the eastern end and two pairs of lit yellow special marks at the western end. Vessels navigating in the vicinity of the Small Craft Channel and the Inner and Outer Fairway must ensure that Rule 9 of the Collision Regulations is complied with.

Vessels joining or leaving the Small Craft Channel at the western end should navigate with particular caution. Vessels joining or leaving the Small Craft Channel are advised to give way to all vessels navigating in the Inner Fairway. Particular care should be taken to avoid impeding commercial vessels in the Inner Fairway, this includes passenger ferries (Red Jets) turning off Cowes Town Quay and large car ferries approaching and departing from East Cowes Red Funnel Terminal.

During the last 3hrs of spring flood tides a southwesterly current of up to 2 knots may be experienced within the Small Craft Channel; skippers of inbound vessels must take care to ensure that they are not set across the Inner Fairway on joining it in the vicinity of the yellow channel markers. A northerly cross current of up to 2.5 knots may be encountered during spring ebb tides; care should be taken to adhere to the buoyed channel and not to enter the 'small craft moorings' (see Figure 1), these are prohibited areas. The area to the south of the Small Craft Channel and east of the Shrape breakwater has been designated a watersports area and craft not using the area should ensure they remain within the limits of the Small Craft Channel.

The Small Craft Channel and its buoyage characteristics are marked on the latest edition of SNC 2793 produced by the UKHO, issued in September 2013.

Rod Hodgson

7th January 2015

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