

Salcombe Harbour Board – 2 November 2009**WHITESTRAND PONTOON****Report by Salcombe Harbour Master****Statutory Powers: Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954**

Financial Implications: The cost of replacement pontoons at Whitestrand and Normandy is currently unknown and will remain as such until a requirement and specification is agreed. The cost of providing additional remote tender berthing will be £10,000.

Purpose

To consider the problem of overcrowding and under capacity of Whitestrand pontoon during the summer months.

This report supports South Hams objectives of good jobs (CP2), retention of the district's character (CP3) and value for money (CP6).

Recommendations**That the Harbour Board RESOLVES to:**

- a. **engage in consultation, initially with the Harbour Community Fora, then subsequently with the general public, to develop a proposal for the replacement of Whitestrand and Normandy Pontoons, which strives to improve the functionality of both pontoons for implementation during the winter of financial year 2011/12, and to**
- b. **Increase the capacity for remote tender berthing at Whitestrand by providing a second remote pontoon between the tide gauge and the garbage pontoon for the 2010/11 season.**

Background

1. Whitestrand Pontoon is the Town landing for Salcombe. Whitestrand sits alongside Normandy Pontoon, which was specifically provided for the use of visiting yachts. Whitestrand and Normandy Pontoons together represent Salcombe's "Front Door" for visitors arriving from the sea.
2. Over the years Whitestrand Pontoon has been developed and improved, most recent improvements were completed in 2003/04 when the bridge and bridge landing pontoon were replaced. The time has now come when the Whitestrand end pontoons require replacement and the Normandy pontoons are not that very far behind them.

3. Tender berthing has for many years been a role of Whitestrand and following a public consultation in 2007, tenders mooring to the back of Whitestrand and the adjacent foreshore during July and August have been charged. The revenue raised by the Whitestrand berthing charge has been used to provide additional tender berthing, in the form of a remote pontoon, and for additional staff to actively manage the tender berthing problem during the high season. This strategy has proved extremely successful in alleviating some of the congestion, but it has not been, and was never expected to be, the complete answer to the problem.
4. In order to decide what to do next to tackle the problem of replacing the aging pontoons and also to address the ever increasing number of tenders and other assorted boats that use Whitestrand, it is necessary to understand the multiple roles that Whitestrand tries to fulfil, these include but are not necessarily limited to:
 - Access to and from the Town from the water
 - Commercial landing for:
 - South Sands Ferry
 - Harbour sightseeing trips
 - Hire Boats
 - Fishing Trips
 - Yacht Taxi
 - East Portlemouth Ferry during the winter and periods of inclement weather
 - Kingsbridge Ferry, when disabled access is required
 - Pick up and set down point for all vessels other than visiting yachts arriving from the sea.
 - Tender berthing for residents
 - Berthing for vessels under 4.25m, that have no alternative mooring so it represents a free mooring other than in July and August.
5. It is clear that Whitestrand Pontoon is multi functional and equally clear why it struggles to cope with the demands placed on it throughout the summer season. The situation is compounded by the fact that the pontoon is made up of three separate sections which have to articulate over the foreshore at low water. This dictates that the end pontoon has to take the ground at low water, otherwise the entire structure would tear itself apart, consequently the silt around the end of Whitestrand cannot be dredged to improve water depth along the face of the pontoon or to improve access for tenders behind the pontoon. This is the reason that tenders congregate around the ends of the pontoon in the deeper water. Tenders are often up to ten deep at the ends of the pontoon which results in them causing an obstruction on the front of Whitestrand and into the fairway when the tide turns.
6. To complete the picture, Whitestrand Pontoon is sandwiched ~~in~~ between the RNLI slipway on one side and Normandy Pontoon on the other, with public slipways at both Whitestrand and Chapel End to add to the cocktail.
7. Because of the close proximity of Normandy Pontoon to Whitestrand Pontoon, any development of one cannot be considered in isolation of the other.

Way Ahead

8. The original proposal, embodied within the Strategic Business Plan covering the five year period from 2007 to 2011, was to replace the Whitestrand end pontoons in 2008/09 and the Normandy Pontoons in 2009/10. The plan was amended and these projects delayed to accommodate the more urgent requirements to replace of the deep water Visitors' Pontoon and the Batson Pontoons. These delays have enabled greater thought to go into the Whitestrand and Normandy Pontoon replacements and it is suggested that a direct one for one replacement will extend the life of what currently exists, but it will not assist in alleviating any of the overcrowding or congestion currently experienced each summer.
9. In order to understand all of the factors at play with Whitestrand and Normandy pontoons, it is proposed to engage in consultation, initially with the Harbour Community Fora, then with the general public, in an attempt to develop a solution for implementation during the winter of financial year 2011/12. Initial thoughts suggest, but are not limited to the following four options:

Option One

Replace Like for like, with the same footprint as the current Whitestrand and Normandy Pontoons. This would extend the life of the current arrangements but would not improve the situation.

Option Two

Replace the Whitestrand end pontoon within the same footprint but extend Normandy Pontoon. Part of Normandy Pontoon would then be made available of roles other than for the sole use of visiting yachtsmen, which is the situation currently.

Option Three

Replace Normandy and Whitestrand Pontoons with one long pontoon, joining the footprint of the two pontoons together. This would cut off access to the slipway at Whitestrand and present a management problem for the operation of the larger pontoon with multiple uses.

Option Four

Extend Normandy Pontoon by approximately 30 metres; replace Whitestrand Pontoon with a similar footprint as present then switch the roles of Normandy and Whitestrand, designating the smaller Whitestrand Pontoon for visiting yachts and visiting yacht tenders and the larger Normandy Pontoon for the Town Landing and all the associated functions. This option, although potentially the most radical, does offer the most scope for improvement to the Town landing facilities.

10. Consultation would have to incorporate any alternative arrangements to ensure business continuity during any works.

11. All of the above options would require additional capacity for remote tender berthing during July and August; it is therefore proposed to take action to address this issue immediately. The proposal is to double the current capacity for remotely berthed tenders by installing a temporary plastic cubi pontoon, similar to that employed successfully off the end of Normandy Pontoon for the last three seasons, between the tide gauge and the garbage pontoon. This improvement could be actioned for the 2010/11 season.
12. The only viable place to put any further remote tender parking is between the tide gauge and the garbage pontoon; this will necessitate the removal of some foreshore moorings, an unfortunate consequence but one considered necessary to meet the ever growing demand for small boat berthing. Mooring holders whose moorings are affected will be reallocated similar facilities as close to their original mooring as practicable.

Financial Implications

13. At this stage the cost of the Whitestrand Normandy improvements are unknown. Once options are discarded and workable options become possibilities, detailed budget costings can be worked up.
14. The cost of doubling the remote tender berthing capacity would be £10,000. This cost can be paid for directly from the revenue raised by the Whitestrand Berthing Charge in year, thus providing a tangible improvement without having to raise additional revenue.

Risk Assessment

Risk / Opportunity	Issues / Obstacles	Benefits
With Normandy and Whitestrand Pontoons both requiring major investment and replacement, there is an opportunity to address the current overcrowding problems suffered during the summer months	All the options should be considered before any further investment is made	There are potentially huge benefits to the safe and efficient operation of the Harbour if the ultimate solution for the replacement of Whitestrand and Normandy Pontoons is well thought through and value is added to the project to address the long standing overcrowding issues.
The purchase of plastic pontoons in the short term to address the requirement for additional remote tender berthing will survive any future development	Remote tender berthing will be required no matter which option is perused for the re-development of Whitestrand and Normandy Pontoons	The Harbour always has requirements for temporary pontoons to support community activities, such as regattas, rowing and sailing events.

Conclusion

15. The problem of insufficient tender berthing capacity during the high season needs addressing immediately. This can be done in year from the revenue budget and should be progressed for the 2010/11 season.

16. The complicated issue of the replacement of Whitestrand and Normandy Pontoons should not be rushed. A consultation exercise with Harbour Community Fora, to work up some realistic options, followed by public consultation on the proposals could allow this project to complete in financial year 2011/12. .

Ian Gibson
Harbour Master

Salcombe Harbour Board
2 November 2009