

Salcombe Harbour Board – 8 November 2005**TOPICAL HARBOUR ISSUES****Report of The Salcombe Harbour Master**

Statutory Powers: The Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954

Financial Implications: None

Purpose

This report informs members of current and future issues that may affect Salcombe Harbour Board and Salcombe Harbour Kingsbridge Estuary. This report links to the Council's Aim – 'which is to improve the well being of the people of the South Hams'.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board notes the Report.

The Issues**Municipal Ports Review**

1. At the British Ports Association conference held in Brighton on 5th October 2005, the Municipal Ports Review Working Party met with representatives of the Department for Transport Ports Division to discuss the progress of the Review.
2. The Group were informed by the Department that the Review document is still with the ODPM's office, but were hopeful that it could be distributed to local authorities by the end of this year.

Pontoon Projects

3. On 18 October 2005, the Board's Pontoon replacement projects were tabled at the Council's Asset Management Group for consideration. The Group considered the detailed Project Appraisal Form that the Board instructed the Harbour Master to complete. The Group supported the three projects and recommended that further consideration is given by the Senior Management Team.
4. At today's Board Meeting, the Harbour Master will be able to brief the Board on any further progress to date.

Wireless Internet Connection

5. The Harbour Master has entered into discussion with specialist suppliers to investigate the feasibility of establishing a wireless internet connection throughout the Estuary. The benefit of this arrangement to the Council would be that customers afloat can access the internet for any local services and facilities.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Environmental Management Plan Review

6. The second document, Maps and Actions, of the Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary Environmental Management Plan review has been printed following its final proofing and endorsement by members of the Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum.
7. Copies of the plan will be issued to members of the Salcombe Harbour Board but members are asked to keep these to themselves until the formal presentation of the plan to the Estuary Forum. We are intending to formally present the plan to the Forum at a special event in the winter; the date, time and venue is still to be organised at the time of writing but possibly with local speakers, refreshments, etc. and hopefully alongside the launch of the new environmentally improved Salcombe Harbour Guide 2006.
8. Obviously, much of the success of the plan will now depend upon its level of uptake and active adoption by the local community.

English Nature Survey of Eel Grass Beds and Underwater Habitats

9. The Marine Conservation Officer helped the marine habitat survey team commissioned by English Nature in October; the survey, as well as looking at the underwater habitats present, also aimed to look at the overall health and condition of the estuary's habitats as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. English Nature, at the time of writing are still awaiting the report, but the survey and the Marine Conservation Officer, were very concerned about the amount of litter that had obviously been deliberately dropped overboard by boats within the Harbour, the worst case being an engine oil filter that must have leaked a significant amount of oil into the estuary. Awareness of this problem will be raised in future Harbour publications, including the harbour guide and be pro-actively policed by staff afloat.

Estuary Gardening - Cord Grass Control

10. As mentioned at the previous Salcombe Harbour Board meeting, the Marine Conservation Officer organised an informal event with local organisations to trial the digging up and disposal of this very invasive plant as a method of its control. The turnout at the event was limited and therefore alternative ways of removal need to be explored.
11. Some suggestion has been made that machinery should be used but this would have an unacceptable impact on the saltmarsh as a whole. However, the help of a local farmer could be used, with trailer, in need of material to build or repair a Devon bank.

Salcombe Harbour Guide 2006

12. With grateful financial assistance from English Nature and the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty unit, we are 'environmentally enhancing' the Salcombe Harbour Guide for the 2006 season. The Marine Conservation Officer and a specialist advisor have been spending a lot of time preparing the new guide and it will have sections on sustainable and responsible boating by the RYA; wildlife spotting and reporting by the relevant organisation – including the Seahorse Trust, local Natural History Society and the Marine Conservation Society; and estuary conservation issues and navigational guidance to the estuary by the Harbour Office team.
13. With the new guide taking shape it has become apparent that there may be opportunities in the future to link in with the Tourist Information Centre's to develop a more rounded approach to promote amenities. This could potentially include a joint sponsorship approach?

Lincombe Boatyard

13. Dredging operations of the access channel and the land claim using the dredged spoil started in early October, and the Marine Conservation Officer has been monitoring the works to ensure that the level of silt resuspended by the works has been kept to a minimum. The work is to be carried out to a high standard because of concerns about the very high levels of tributyl tin (TBT), presumed to be from antifouling, in the mud just off the boatyard and a silt curtain is in place to minimise the resuspended silt from the works yet further. The dredging work is scheduled to be complete by the end of November.

Stephen Tooke
Harbour Master

Salcombe Harbour Board
8 November 2005

Nigel Mortimer
Marine Conservation Officer

Background Documents

Form 3 – Detailed Project Appraisal Form
Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Environmental Plan