

Salcombe Harbour Board, 18th April 2005

ESTUARY USERS' COMMUNITY SAFETY SURVEY

Report of the Salcombe Harbour Master

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

Financial Implications: Contained within existing budgets

Purpose

To provide the Board with details of a survey proposed for this season's Harbour Users centred around the customer's experience and perception of marine crime, marine safety and anti-social behaviour. The survey should provide the Board with a level of baseline data which will enable it to assess current marine safety on the Estuary in line with the perception of users. This type of survey will not only be advantageous to the Harbour Master for operational reasons, but it will also be useful to assist Members in next year's budget setting process in relation to security arrangements.

Recommendation

That the Board RESOLVES to support the proposed customer survey and instructs the Harbour Master to progress arrangements.

Background

1. During the 2005/06 Salcombe Harbour Board budget setting process Members recommended an uplift of the security budget to provide an enhanced level of coverage of the Night Security Patrol that operates on the estuary throughout the year.
2. Evidence from Police figures show that marine crime around the estuary is very limited and is on the decline overall, however it does still occur. The established partnership between Harbour Authority, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary and Water Tight Securities, the night security patrol contractor, must be acknowledged as a benefit to maintaining this low crime rate and indeed reducing those incidents that may have occurred without such a partnership. However, marine crime is only one element that the partnership deals with. The others include marine safety and anti-social behaviour related to marine activity and the water.
3. It is now considered an appropriate time to measure the effectiveness of the partnership's work against all three elements to support the future decision making process of the Board.

The Issues

4. The initiative of conducting a survey of this kind has been sponsored by the Board's co-opted member for the Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Association (SKEA), Dr Peter Goldsworthy, and has been considered at officer level in

consultation with the Safer South Hams Community Safety Partnership through the Council's Community Safety Officer, Mr Peter Dale.

5. The proposed survey of estuary users aims to obtain a clearer understanding of the level of marine related crime, marine safety in its widest sense, and perception of anti-social behaviour. Users will be asked to provide evidence of their experiences of all three elements and feedback on the measures currently in place and comment on their effectiveness by way of a questionnaire.
6. To support this survey meetings have been held with the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary Police Research Officer who has kindly offered assistance to prepare the survey questionnaire and to co-ordinate the compilation of the survey results. The advantage of this is two-fold; that the level of harbour staff time will be minimised to support the survey and, it also adds a high degree of independence to the final outcome of the survey report. The initiative has been progressed thus far with the support of the Salcombe Harbour Board Chairman.

Methodology

7. Capturing as wide a cross-section of estuary users as possible in the survey is essential to its ultimate success. The distribution of the questionnaires forms will therefore fall into three categories:-
 - a. Resident Mooring contract holders – questionnaires will be sent directly by post to all resident contract holders from the harbour office;
 - b. Visitors arriving from sea – harbour staff and the night security patrol, supported by volunteers of the SKEA will distribute questionnaires afloat;
 - c. Visitors entering the estuary via the slipways – boat park staff, supported by volunteers of the SKEA will distribute questionnaires at the estuary's key slipways.
8. However, in advance of the main survey being conducted, it is proposed to issue a limited number of questionnaires as a pilot for the fuller survey. This is in order to test the questions being asked. This will ensure that the type and style of question being asked are appropriate.

Timetable

9. Questionnaires will then be distributed during the summer months asking that users complete and return them in September 2005. This will ensure that the returned information is based upon a customer's experience for the period of time in which they are using the estuary and not just a snapshot. However those visitors that stay for only a short period and indicate that they will not be returning again before the submission deadline may submit their returns at the end of such visit.
10. Once the submission deadline has passed, forms will be handed to the Police Research Unit for analysis. It is envisaged that a report of the results from the survey will be available for the Harbour Board's meeting in October 2005.

Risk Assessment

11. The Council and Salcombe Harbour Board have a statutory duty to safely manage the Salcombe Harbour Kingsbridge Estuary. By measuring customers' perception and experience of marine crime, marine safety and related anti-social behaviour activity, the Board will be in an informed and optimum position to make recommendations to Council to ensure that adequate measures are in place for the 2006/07 season in respect of security and other safety arrangements.

Human Rights

12. There are no obvious Human Rights issues arising from this report.

Conclusion

13. The Harbour Master and the Council's Community Safety Officer, working with the Safer South Hams Community Safety Partnership, have progressed this initiative sponsored by the Chairman of the SKEA. In consultation with the Police Research Officer, the purpose, methodology and timetable have now been established. It is envisaged that the survey results will prove useful both operationally and as part of next year's budget setting process.

P Dale
Community Safety Officer

Salcombe Harbour Board
18th April 2005

S E Tooke
Harbour Master

Background Documents

None