

Salcombe Harbour Board – 26 January 2009**COMMERCIAL MOORINGS****Report of Head of Service Salcombe Harbour****Statutory Powers: Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954**

Financial Implications: There are no significant financial implications other than moorings let to commercial operators are charged at 150% more than moorings let to private individuals.

Purpose

To gain approval from the Harbour Board to increase the number of moorings within the Harbour for Financial Year 2009/10, to facilitate support to the commercial boatyards during difficult economic trading conditions.

This report supports South Hams objectives of good jobs (CP2), retention of the district's character (CP3), an accessible Council (CP5) and value for money (CP6).

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

- a. **approve a minor exception to the current moorings policy to allow the creation of twelve additional moorings for 2009/10 and to allocate them for commercial purposes.**
- b. **establish a working group to review the issues surrounding commercial moorings as set out in paragraph 6 of the report and make recommendations to the Board for changes to policy, if so advised.**

Background

1. The Board recommended to Council on 25 September 2007 the adoption of the revised moorings policy (SH 32/07). The Policy states in paragraph 6.1.1 "A number of years ago the Harbour Board capped the number of moorings within the estuary in order to limit any further development and maintain the character of the estuary." It also made some fundamental changes to the allocation of moorings to commercial boatyards:
 - Boatyards were removed from the moorings waiting list
 - Boatyards would make a case by 30 November annually for the allocation of additional moorings

The reason for these fundamental changes was that at the time of changing the policy 23% of the harbour's moorings were being operated by boatyards and as the policy stood, so long as boatyards kept requesting additional moorings when they came to the top of the waiting list additional moorings would be allocated. Unchecked, this policy would result in an ever growing percentage of the harbour moorings being in the commercial sector and lost from the pool available for private allocation.

2. The revised allocation process was used successfully for the 2008/09 season, but the feedback from the boatyards was negative, probably because the Board decided not to allocate any additional facilities. There was generally a sense of injustice because the boatyards had been removed from the waiting list and then were not acknowledged or rewarded with any additional facilities and that their development was being constrained. For 2009/10 there were requests for additional facilities from seven boatyards which were considered at a Harbour Board Workshop on 8 December 2008.

Harbour Considerations

3. Prior to allocating any additional mooring facilities to commercial boatyards there is a range of factors that have to be considered; these include but are not restricted to:
 - There are very few moorings relinquished each year
 - There are currently 23% of harbour moorings in commercial boatyard operation
 - Once allocated to a boatyard moorings tend not to be returned to the harbour
 - allocating moorings to boatyards reduces the number available for allocation to the waiting list
 - The Board should support South Hams District Council's Corporate Priorities, in particular CP2 – Good Jobs, CP3 – Retain District's Character, CP5 – An accessible Council and CP6 – Value for Money
 - The Board's Core Principles include being a catalyst for sustainable economic development and providing support to the local community.
 - The self imposed cap on the number of moorings within the harbour.

Commercial Moorings Proposal for 2009/10

4. The current economic situation is posing a considerable challenge to the boatyards around the Salcombe and Kingsbridge Estuary. If the Board were to conform to current Council policy it could seek ways to assist the boatyards as much as possible but without adversely affecting the private moorings waiting list. This can be achieved by utilising some commercial moorings, which are currently being underutilised, in a different way.
5. The proposal is to utilise the four unused houseboat moorings on the Dentrige, which already exist as commercial moorings but will not be used during the 2009/10 season for their intended purpose, to provide additional mooring capacity for commercial boatyards. By using these four fore and aft moorings (overall length end to end 60 metres, 75 metres with a 5 metre gap between each houseboat) to moor the redundant pontoon sections from the Visitors' Pontoon (overall length of 72 metres), sixteen 9 metre berths can be created from the same footprint as the four existing houseboat moorings.

There is therefore a temporary net increase of twelve moorings, for which approval to deviate from the Moorings Policy will be required.

Review of Moorings Policy

6. During the Workshop discussions a number of issues surrounding the allocation and use of commercial moorings were raised; these included but are not necessarily restricted to:
 - What is a sustainable percentage of the harbour facilities to be in commercial boatyard operation?
 - What is the fairest way to assess the requirements of boatyards?
 - What is a reasonable charge for commercial moorings?
 - What are the implications of any potential Local Government Reorganisation on the allocation of moorings, particularly with respect to waiting lists?
 - Is the concept of boatyards providing a full service viable?
 - What should happen to harbour moorings if a business changes ownership?

7. It is proposed that a Board Working Group be formed initially on a “task and finish” basis to consider the policy surrounding the allocation of moorings, in particular commercial moorings, to consider these questions and other related matters that seem to the Working Group to be relevant.

Risk Assessment

Risk / Opportunity	Issues / Obstacles	Benefits
Under utilisation of commercial moorings offers an opportunity to use moorings in a different way for a limited period.	The change of usage will create additional number of moorings, which contravenes the guidance in the moorings policy not to increase the overall number of moorings.	Better utilisation of assets will give a temporary boost to the boatyards without reducing the number of moorings available for private individuals.

Conclusion

8. A flexible approach by the Harbour Board will enable a more effective utilisation of a mooring asset that is already assigned to commercial usage, whilst it is not being used for its assigned purpose. In the short term this can be used to advantage to assist the boatyards through the current economic difficulties. This will not adversely affect the private mooring allocation.

9. There are a number of issues surrounding the allocation, use and charging of commercial moorings, which would be best addressed by a small Harbour Board Working Group.

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Head of Service Salcombe Harbour

Salcombe Harbour Board
 26 January 2009