

Salcombe Harbour Board, 30th November 2004**VISITOR CHARGING – A REVIEW****Report by the Salcombe Harbour Master****Statutory Powers: The Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954**

Financial Implications : The proposal is primarily a operational issue that will not be a negative effect on the base budget.

Purpose

1. This report has been prepared for Members to consider the introduction of charging bands at 1 metre intervals for visiting craft entering from sea and a simplification of the remaining visitor rates and charges. The contents of this report are linked to CP 6 – ‘the improvement of core services in a cost effective way’.

Recommendation

That the Board RESOLVES:-

- (i) to introduce new charging bands for visiting craft entering from sea based on individual metres;
- (ii) to agree to a simplification of the charging of visitor craft entering the estuary via the slipways as per para. (6);
- (iii) that (i) and (ii) are recommended to Council for approval and the Salcombe Harbour Policy Document is updated accordingly;
- (iii) to ask the Harbour Master to report to the Board following next season to appraise Members of the new charging regime and recommend adjustments if appropriate.

Visitors Entering from Sea – Introduction of Charging Bands

2. Last year the Harbour Master mentioned to the Board that the introduction of charging bands for visiting craft entering from sea was being investigated in order to simplify the collection of harbour income. The current system of collection is to charge a price per metre, calculated on the length overall (LOA) of the visiting craft, and charged to the nearest 0.25 of a metre. This method is thought to be unnecessarily over complicated and assist in the speed of the transaction for both staff

working afloat and those in the harbour office introducing bands of individual metres would help streamline the system. Therefore, it is proposed that the quarter metre charge as of next year is superseded by charging bands of individual metre's.

3. As an example, a vessel whose LOA is 10.5 metre would next year be charged at the 11 metre band and a 11.5 metre vessel would be charged the 12 metre band. Whilst it is appreciated that in year one this may not be popular, but it is standard practise in most other Leisure Ports.
4. The main reason that this proposal was not recommended to the Board last year was that the Harbour Master wanted to use the 2004 season to give the proposal further consideration and an opportunity to bench mark against other Leisure Ports. Although the collection of the income at the quarter metre appears to have been historically an operational decision, it is thought appropriate that since changes to the system are being proposed the Harbour Master should look to the Board for guidance in the first instance and ask their approval to adopt the reports recommendations as a policy decision and recommended them to Council.

Visitors Entering via the Slipways

5. The Harbour Master has also undertaken a detailed review of the charges levied to visiting craft launched onto the estuary via the slipways and boat parks. The present charging system permits visitors to pay for one month and are offered a subsequent month at half price. This practise provides an administrative burden for staff at the Harbour Office and Boat Parks. Again streamlining the system would help enormously. The Harbour Master recommends that a simple seasonal charge is introduced.
6. An analysis of these customers shows that the majority of craft either stay for a shorter period than a month or are here for the season, many being launched and recovered by private boat yards many times throughout the season. Few customers now take up the discounted offer of the subsequent month and this reflects the changing holiday patterns of the harbour customer. A cost analysis exercise of the number of vessels, length and duration of stay was undertaken by the Harbour Authority with assistance from the Council's financial services who make the following proposals.

Current Banding :-

- a. Dues payable by small vessels up to 4.5m with engine below 40hp launched into the estuary for any period up to 24 hours up to a maximum of 3 consecutive days
- b. Dues payable by any other vessels launched into the estuary for any period up to 24 hours Excluding July and August up to a maximum of 3 consecutive days.

- c. Sailboards, canoes and dinghies up to 3.5m in length without engine for any period up to one month from the first day of launching.
- d. Vessels up to and including 4.5 metres in length with engine less than 40hp for any period up to one month from the first day of launching.
- e. Vessels over 4.5 metres and under 6 metres in length with engine less than 40hp for any period up to one month from the first day of launching
- f. Vessels up to and including 4.5 metres in length with engine of 40hp and over for any period up to one month from the first day of launching.
- g. Vessels over 4.5 metres in length with engine of 40hp and over for any period up to one month from the first day of launching
- h. Second or subsequent month - half the charge of 3 above.
- i. Second or subsequent month - half the charge of 4 above.
- j. Second or subsequent month - half the charge of 5 above.
- k. Second or subsequent month - half the charge of 6 above.
- l. Second or subsequent month - half the charge of 7 above.

Proposed Charges:-

- a. Daily dues for any vessel launched into the estuary.
 - b. Sailboards, canoes, sailing dinghies and any vessel without an engine up to 6 metres in length for the summer season.
 - c. Any vessel with an engine up to 6 metres in length for the summer season.
 - d. Any vessel over 6 metres in length for the summer season.
7. The groupings of craft and their bands have been given careful consideration and the analysis indicates that a cost neutral position will most likely be obtainable if arrival rates remain constant. The Boards' approval is therefore sought for the introduction of the above new charging system.

Risk Assessment

8. The improvement of services in the most cost effective way is one of the core priorities of the Council. This review of the administration of visitors with proposed operational benefits is in line with Council policy. The research undertaken by Officers to support these proposals will help minimise the risk to the Council.

Human Rights

9. There are no human rights issues arising from this report.

Conclusion

10. It has been recognised for some that the existing number individual visitor charges is over complicated and not only is it confusing for the customer it is not administratively effective. This review of the visitor charges has been brought to Board having benchmarked against other Ports in the Leisure Sector and with valuable assistance from Harbour staff.
11. The Board may wish to consider keeping both proposals under review and ask the Harbour Master to report back after the season next year with reaction from both staff and customers to the streamlining of visitors charges and make any adjustments thought appropriate.

S E Tooke
Harbour Master

Salcombe Harbour Board
30th November 2004

Paula Brooks
Strategic Director (Operations)

Background Documents

None