

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD
HELD AT THE MAIN HALL, CLIFF HOUSE, SALCOMBE ON MONDAY 2 JUNE
2008**

MEMBERS

* Cllr J Brazil – Chairman

* Dr C C Harling – Vice-Chairman

* Cllr J H Baverstock	* Mr J Barrett
∅ Cllr R D Gilbert	* Mr T Bass
* Cllr M J Hicks	* Mr H Marriage
	* Mr M O'Brien
	* Mr P Waring

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Members in attendance and participating:
Cllrs P Coulson and P W Hitchins

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Strategic Director (Operations), Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour), Estuaries Officer and Harbour Office Manager.

Also in attendance:

4 members of the public.

SH.1/08 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman advised that this would be the last Board meeting before Paula Brooks, Strategic Director (Operations), left the employ of the Council. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman wished to record his appreciation for her hard work and wished her all the best for the future.

SH.2/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 31 March 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following minor amendments being incorporated under 'Urgent Business' (minute SH.56/07 refers):

- 1) Paragraph 2 – reference to 'Victoria Key' being amended to read '*Victoria Quay*';
- 2) Paragraph 3 – the first sentence being amended to read: 'Prior to the storms, *sections of the Batson Pontoons* had been replaced with *recycled deep water residents' pontoon*'.

SH.3/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting. These were recorded as follows:

Dr Harling declared a personal interest in Item 7: 'Harbour Bye-Laws' (Minute SH.6/08 below refers) in respect of proposed Bye-law 45.(2)(c) which related to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Dr Harling declared his interest by virtue of him being a member of the RNLI Sub-Committee and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

SH.4/08 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Three members of the public wished to utilise the public question time session. Comments were recorded as follows:-

Mr Peter Stratton, Batson resident

In relation to replacement of the Batson pontoons (Minute SH.7/08 below refers), Mr Stratton expressed concern with regard to the option of the pontoon being supported on piles and urged the Board not to proceed until due processes had been followed. Mr Stratton felt that such an option would be to the grave detriment visually to the quiet and sensitive creek. Moreover, Mr Stratton considered that there had been insufficient awareness raised in the local community and anticipated extensive local reaction to the construction of such proposals, if consultation was deemed inadequate. Mr Stratton also questioned whether such proposals would require planning permission and in acknowledging the cost implications, also emphasised the inevitable incurred costs associated with maintaining such a sensitive area.

In response, it was noted that the Harbour Master would check whether planning permission would be required. The Chairman also acknowledged the point regarding the need for consultation to take place, prior to any such decisions being taken.

Mr Jim Martin, Salcombe resident

With regard to support for rebuilding and maintaining the Ferry Pier, Mr Martin advised that he had collected 1,500 signatories on a petition during a three-week period in August 2007. Mr Martin had proceeded to present this petition to the Leader of Council in January 2008, who had expressed sympathy in relation to the matter, with this view also being shared by Mr Anthony Steen MP. Mr Martin proceeded to question the Board's position on this matter.

In response, the Chairman advised that ideally, the Board would rather the Pier was rebuilt and made reference to the current detrimental affect on Whitestrاند and Normandy pontoon. However, the Chairman advised that such a decision was not for the determination of the Board.

The lead Executive Member for Salcombe Harbour and Asset Management advised that it was his belief that an agreement had now been reached with South West Water and whilst funding was a potential issue, ideally he also supported a total rebuild. The Member also advised that he would keep in contact with Mr Martin with regard to this matter. In addition and subject to the full costings being presented, this viewpoint to support a total rebuild was also echoed by the Council's Strategic Management Team.

Cllr P Coulson, South Hams District Council and Salcombe Town Council

On behalf of Salcombe Town Council, Cllr Coulson wished to thank the Board for its support regarding the appointment of a security patrol, which had already proven to be an invaluable local service.

SH.5/08

FEEDBACK FROM HARBOUR COMMUNITY FORUMS

The Board received verbal update reports from the Board Members who attended the Harbour Community Forums, during which reference was made to:-

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Association (SKEA)

- SKEA had been very active recently and a public meeting was held on 14 May 2008 at which the Council's Strategic Director (Community), Alan Robinson, had given a presentation on the Local Government Review which was currently taking place;
- The Board was also informed that SKEA had now established an e-forum, with notable current issues on the site including: waiting lists / moorings; the tidal lock at Kingsbridge; and access to Salcombe via boat.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club

- In light of the Boat Club representative not being in attendance at this meeting, no updates were reported.

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum

- The Forum had met on 24 April 2008 and discussed a number of issues including: recognising the role of the Estuaries Officer; the receipt (and potential impact) of the Draft Marine Bill; a presentation from the Harbour Master which outlined future plans for the harbour; and the increase in bird numbers.

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

- The survey of the Fish Quay had now been received and had illustrated various degrees of corrosion in the piling. The Shellfishermen had expressed a wish for the Fish Quay to be modernised and extended and a meeting to discuss these issues was due to take place on Tuesday, 3 June 2008.

SH.6/08

HARBOUR BYE-LAWS

Members considered a report which appraised Members on the feedback from the Modification Bye-law consultation. The report concluded that the proposed amendments to the Harbour Bye-laws as detailed in Enclosure 1 of the presented report would improve safety and the customer experience of estuary users.

During discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) being exempt from the speed Bye-law. In acknowledging the importance of the RNLI service, some Members questioned whether the Bye-law should be amended to include that the speed limit would also apply to the RNLI, unless it was engaged in a rescue activity. This would ensure that during training purposes, the speed limit was complied with and would also help to differentiate when the service was in rescue operation. In response, other Members made reference to the Department for Transport (DfT) insisting that such a Bye-law be included and highlighted the importance of the lifeboat practising, and being able to, leave the Harbour rapidly. Following a lengthy debate, further reference was made to the need for a common sense approach to be adopted by the Lifeboat and the Board requested that the Harbour Master raise the issue with the Coxswain, and in particular recommend the most appropriate times and locations for practising;
- (b) support for the Bye-laws. A Member welcomed the Bye-laws and specifically approved of the need for registration stickers to be displayed prominently and the prohibition of vessels from berthing on the front of Whitestrand Pontoon;
- (c) publication of the Bye-laws. Due to the close links, and in some instances duplication, a Member felt it to be beneficial for the Bye-laws to be published in the same document as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Bye-laws.

RECOMMENDED

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that Salcombe Harbour Byelaws 19, 42, 43 and 45 be amended as set out in paragraph 5 of the presented report.

SH.7/08 REPLACEMENT OF HARBOUR PONTOONS

A report was considered which informed Members on the progress of the replacement of the Visitors' Pontoon during financial year 2008/09 and sought the approval of the Board to replace the Batson Pontoons during financial year 2009/10.

The report concluded that the replacement of the Visitors' pontoon during the financial year 2008/09 would radically improve the berthing facilities for visiting vessels, which were currently below the expected standard. The rapid deterioration of the Batson Pontoons had increased the urgency for their replacement. Early replacement in the financial year 2009/10 would reduce the risk of a catastrophic failure as well as improving the quality of facilities and reducing maintenance costs.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the estimated cost of dredging works. Whilst an approximate calculation, the Harbour Master outlined his estimations that the cost of dredging could be £450,000 over the next ten years. Based on this quote, some Members stated their belief that the dredging option was too expensive. It was also agreed that the Harbour Master would provide a breakdown of these figures to interested Members;
- (b) the suggested height of the proposed steel piles. The Harbour Master advised that 12 metre piles were being considered, which upon high tides, would see the highest one metre visible above the water. However, the Harbour Master reiterated that at this stage, such details were not being presented for consideration by the Board. The Board was only being asked to recommend that replacement of the Batson Pontoons be advanced by one year and the Chairman stressed that the Board would have plentiful opportunity to discuss the detail (including costings) of any proposals in due course;
- (c) the design elements. A Member requested that the design element of Batson Pontoons be the subject of an in-depth review to ensure that minimal traffic was congregating at the top of the slip;
- (d) the tender process for the Pontoons. For comparative purposes, a Member stated his wish that tenders be invited for both chains and steel piles.

RECOMMENDED

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- i) the contract for the replacement of the Visitors' Pontoon during winter 2008/09 be awarded to Walcon;
- ii) the replacement of the Batson Pontoons be advanced to financial year 2009/10;
- iii) the Harbour Master, in consultation with the Chairman of the Salcombe Harbour Board and Lead Executive Member for the Harbour, invite tenders for the replacement of the Batson Pontoons during winter 2009/10.

SH.8/08

LOSS OF BLUE FLAG STATUS FOR SOUTH SANDS BEACH

Consideration was given to a report which informed Members of the background to the loss of the Blue Flag status at South Sands and the progress in seeking to retrieve it. The report concluded that assuming water quality compliance in the 2008 season, a Blue Flag application would be submitted for South Sands beach for 2009.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) A Member expressed his disappointment at the loss of status and his hope that the beach could retrieve this award in 2009;
- (b) In order to establish how near the beach was to retaining its status, officers agreed to provide the Board with the classified reading;
- (c) The Board noted that to ascertain whether the storm overflow was responsible for the water quality failure was a convoluted process. The process tended to be that South West Water reported to the Environment Agency, who in turn reported to both the Shellfish operators and the Council.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

SH.9/08 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the Harbour's performance against agreed Performance Indicators (PIs). The report concluded that overall the Harbour's performance measures up reasonably well against the Performance Standards set by the Harbour Board in 2006.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) Whilst being unsure how to encompass into a Performance Indicator, some Members questioned whether the policing, and subsequent value for money, of Whitestrand could be added. In response, the Harbour Master advised that dedicated staff during the peak season had resulted in a massive impact on controlling boat owners. In addition, investigations were currently taking place into the potential for auctioning off those unclaimed boats which had been towed away and stored by the Harbour Authority;
- (b) The difficulties in improving the visiting yacht nights to Salcombe were highlighted. Such was the more traditional experience enjoyed by users to the Salcombe Harbour, the majority of visitors tended to stay for only one night before moving on;
- (c) Some Members believed that there was a need to improve the current signage provision for visiting yachts using the harbour. The Members considered this to be a major issue, which was supported by the numbers of visiting yachts incorrectly using Whitestrand;
- (d) The Board requested that the number of collisions reported in the Harbour be included within future Performance Indicator reports;
- (e) Whilst to be discussed in detail at 7 July 2008 Board meeting, the Chairman advised that the Harbour had generated a surplus for 2007/08 financial year and extended his gratitude to the Harbour Master and his staff.

RESOLVED

That the Harbours Performance against the agreed Performance Indicators be noted.

SH.10/08 TOPICAL HARBOUR ISSUES

Consideration was given to a report which updated Members on the progress made against a number of operational issues within Salcombe Harbour.

The report concluded that there were a number of actions being progressed which, it was hoped, demonstrates the Harbour Board and Harbour Team's commitment to providing a first class service to the users of Salcombe/Kingsbridge Estuary.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) the dredging of Batson Creek. The Board was informed that the Harbour Master had reached an agreement with the RNLI that the Harbour Authority would incur the costs of dredging to one metre, with the RNLI incurring the additional costs to dredge up to 2 metres and the consultancy costs regarding the tendering exercise;
- (b) the Red Arrows display during the Salcombe Town Regatta. Concern was expressed from a harbour perspective at the booking of the Red Arrows, with issues raised including: the ability of Salcombe and East Portlemouth to accommodate any additional numbers of visitors, the closure of the road between 1pm and 7pm on a holiday home changeover day; and such activity being in contradiction to the harbour's aim of a quality experience to users;
- (c) charging an administrative fee to Regattas for harbour support. Some Members felt it to be part of the Board's remit to support such community projects and events and therefore considered that any such admin fees should be waived. In disagreement, other Members made reference to the additional costs incurred by the harbour (e.g. staff overtime) during such events and questioned as to why the harbour users should indirectly be subsidising events which were taking place elsewhere. Officers advised that there was potential to consider creating a designated budget for such community events during the budget setting process, which was due to commence in September 2008.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

(Meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 4.20 pm).

Chairman