

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD
HELD AT THE MAIN HALL, CLIFF HOUSE, SALCOMBE ON MONDAY 7 JULY
2008**

MEMBERS

* Cllr J Brazil – Chairman

ø 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

ø Denotes apology for absence

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour), Principal Accountant and Harbour Office Manager.

Also in attendance:

2 members of the public

SH.11/08 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.

SH.12/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none were made.

SH.13/08 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that he had agreed for one item of urgent business to be raised at this meeting. The item related to the wish of Winters Marine to pile their pontoons and was considered urgent due to the need for the Board to provide a direction of travel to the Harbour Master before the next scheduled meeting.

In detailing the background relating to the matter, the Harbour Master made particular reference to:-

- Winters Marine deeming it to be both safer and more cost effective to pile their pontoons;
- The subsequent need to obtain greater security of tenure, than the current one year provision available from the Harbour, to warrant investing monies in piling;
- The wish of the Duchy to set up a direct leasing arrangement with Winters Marine, therefore potentially resulting in a consequent approximate £5,000 loss of income to the Harbour;
- The Harbour being almost powerless to prevent the arrangement. The Harbour Master felt that the Harbour had little option than to accept this arrangement, as such a course of action was entitled under the current lease.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In expressing their concern, some Board Members felt that representations should be made to the Duchy to state that this arrangement would be unacceptable. In response and in sympathising with the predicament, other Members echoed the comments of the Harbour Master and felt that the Harbour, due to the terms of the current lease, was in a weak position on this matter. Nonetheless, a majority of Members felt that this could set a worrying precedent and felt there still to be merit for negotiations to take place with the Duchy;
- (b) It was confirmed that a new lease was in the process of being compiled, which was intended to include a clause to challenge such arrangements from taking place in the future if they adversely affected the Harbour's Business;
- (c) The Board wished to stress that its frustrations were with the Duchy and not Winters Marine.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Harbour Master write to the Duchy Land Steward in an attempt to set up a meeting with Board representatives to discuss the matter of claw back of a proportion of the fundus.

SH.14/08 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

Mr Peter Stratton, Batson Resident

Prior to making his main point, Mr Stratton advised of his support regarding the Board's wish to undertake negotiations with the Duchy regarding security of tenure (Minute SH.13/08 above refers).

Mr Stratton proceeded to express concern with regard to the proposal to remove the exemption on harbour dues (Minute SH.18/08 below refers) for Tenders of 3.65 metres and under. Such tenders were considered to be an essential piece of equipment and had always been exempt from dues. Mr Stratton believed that such a proposal would prove to be very unpopular and felt that it would fail to generate significant additional income. In response, the Chairman advised that numerous cases of abuse were apparent, with such classifications of tenders being used frequently throughout the Estuary. Furthermore, the Chairman of the Working Group for this matter informed that this proposal was intended to both meet the brief of simplifying harbour dues and also to reflect the time and resource costs incurred to register all crafts.

Finally, Mr Stratton responded by stating that the crafts had always been registered previously and questioned why Harbour staff, in knowing that such abuse was taking place, did not address the situation.

Mr Tim Tucker, South Sands Ferry

Mr Tucker wished to reiterate the concerns raised by Mr Stratton on the proposal to remove such exemption on harbour dues (detailed above) and emphasised that this would be perceived as purely an income generating exercise.

SH.15/08 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)

- With regard to the recently established e-forum, it was noted that the level of participation on the site was considerably lower than the number of recorded visits to the site. The representative hoped that this trend would change as the site evolved and more site visitors felt that they could not only look on the site, but also make contributions. The most notable issues raised on the e-forum to date were:
 - concern raised regarding the access to Salcombe and in particular, the belief that neither the Board or District Council were doing enough at Batson in terms of current usage and future planning;

- the provision of the Tidal lock at Kingsbridge; and
- an additional 3 people had come forward for the Volunteer Patrol.
- It was agreed that upon publication of the Board's agenda, officers would advise the representative that it was available and provide an electronic link for inclusion on the e-forum.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club

- The representative advised that the designated work had commenced on the visitor pontoon and wherever possible, crews were met and welcomed, which feedback suggested was well received. It was also noted that positive feedback had been received regarding the total experience and facilities available at Kingsbridge;
- The Board was informed that the Club held the belief that the buoyed channel was insufficiently defined in the upper reaches and concern had also been raised regarding levels of silting. It was felt that priority should be given to undertaking silting works. The representative made particular reference to the restrictions in the Kingsbridge basin, with some users contemplating not renewing their mooring as a result;
- In order to evaluate progress, the Club would also be grateful for receipt of up to date Estuary related crime figures from the Police.

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum

- The representative advised that the Forum had not met since the previous meeting of the Board.

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

- The representative highlighted that concerns still existed with regard to the development progress of the Fish Quay. Officers were currently preparing a business case to apply for an EU Fisheries Grant, which was now available for such purposes. The Harbour Master also advised that through works undertaken, the condition of the Fish Quay was not as poor as was initially thought and immediate remedial work had now been completed.

SH.16/08 **ANNUAL REPORT**

Members considered a report which detailed the Annual Review of Salcombe Harbour which outlined the way in which the Harbour Board operated and described the progress made since the Harbour Board was reconstituted in 2006.

In introducing the Report, the Harbour Master advised that this first annual report was produced to illustrate progress made against the Strategic Plan. The Board welcomed this publication and commended the quality of the document and the minimal production costs incurred.

RESOLVED

That the Annual Report 2008 be published.

SH.17/08 **FINAL ACCOUNTS 2007/2008**

A report was considered which advised Members of the Harbour's final trading position in 2007/2008 together with brief details of the main variations from the original budget.

The report concluded that it was pleasing to report that the Harbour had generated a trading surplus for the 2007/08 financial year. This would bolster retained reserves, and would assist with the financing of future initiatives for the benefit of the Harbour users.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the costs relating to central support services. Since the recent Strategic Management Team reshuffle, Members hoped that this cost would decrease in upcoming years;
- (b) mooring costs. The Board was informed that the costs relating to Moorings had thankfully now been brought under control;
- (c) the surplus generated. On behalf of the Board, the Chairman felt it to be a credit to the efforts of the Harbour staff that in light of the poor weather conditions throughout the 2007/08 financial year, the Harbour still generated a surplus.

RESOLVED

That the final accounts for 2007/2008, as set out within the appendix to the presented report, be noted.

SH.18/08 **STRUCTURE OF HARBOUR DUES**

Consideration was given to a report which appraised Members of the findings and proposals of the Harbour Board Working Group's review of the structure of Harbour Dues.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In reiterating the challenges experienced by the Working Group in attempting to simplify the charges, it was noted that the next predicament related to setting appropriate charging structures. The Group was intending to present its next report to the Board meeting on 22 September 2008, when Members would also have the opportunity to discuss in depth the proposed fees and charges for 2009/10;
- (b) The Board endorsed the wish of the Working Group to remove from its brief the last sentence of paragraph 4 of the presented report. The paragraph therefore concluded at the words: '*wide variety of different options*'. This deletion had been sought and agreed as the initially presented brief was felt to be overly restrictive;
- (c) Whilst accepting that removal of the exemption on harbour dues for Tenders of 3.65 metres and under would be unpopular, the Group had concluded that there was evidence that the current arrangement was being abused. As a consequence, it was considered fair and reasonable to levy a small charge for such tenders;
- (d) To constitute a fairer proposal and overcome the current levels of abuse, a Member requested that the Group gave consideration to the possibility of offsetting this proposed charge against the Deep Water Mooring charge. In effect, this could make the proposals cost neutral for those users who possess a deep water mooring;
- (e) In recommending this structure, the Group had also felt that these proposals would help to improve the quality of information held on the database.

RECOMMENDED

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to modify the Harbour Dues structure, in accordance with paragraphs 5 and 6 of the presented report.

(Meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 4.05 pm).

Chairman