

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD
HELD AT CLIFF HOUSE, SALCOMBE ON MONDAY, 7 JUNE 2010**

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

Also in attendance and participating:
Cllr R J Carter

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour), Member Support Services Manager and Mr Nick Crowther (Estuary Conservation and Sustainable Management Volunteer)

SH.1/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 29 March 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SH.2/10 **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:-

Messrs Harling, O'Brien and Waring each declared a personal interest in Item 8: 'Harbour Facilities – Showers' (Minute SH.6/10 below refers) by virtue of them being members of the Salcombe Yacht Club. Each representative remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

SH.3/10 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Three members of the public were in attendance and wished to utilise the public question time session.

With the agreement of the Chairman, it was felt to be more appropriate for the two representatives from the Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club to address the Board during consideration of the Feedback from Harbour Community Forums agenda item (Minute SH.4/10 below refers).

Therefore, the one remaining member of the public (Mr Greening of Salcombe Yacht Club) wished to make particular reference to the agenda item on the shower facilities item and proceeded to advise that:-

- the current shower facilities at the Yacht Club were under strain. As a consequence, the Harbour Master had been forewarned that the Club may not now be able to offer visiting yachtsmen the same level of facilities;
- the Club had been successful in obtaining grant funding from the South Devon Local Action Group to enable improvements to be made to the existing catering and shower facilities. It was proposed that the existing steward's flat be re-developed into purpose built shower facilities. Whilst it was hoped that the works would be finalised by winter 2011, it may not be completed before the following winter;
- in terms of the conditions of the grant, it was noted that formal confirmation was awaited. However, the Club would need to demonstrate that it could fund the upgrade, would use locally sourced produce and promote the Local Action Group in any subsequent literature;
- the view of the Club Committee was that the Club should also contribute to the project cost, with the Harbour Authority having an agreement in place to ensure that yachtsmen paid a fee to utilise the showers;
- the Club was willing to provide shower facilities and welcome visiting yachtsmen.

In reply, the Chairman thanked Mr Greening for his attendance and on behalf of the Board, wished to extend its gratitude to the Yacht Club for allowing visiting yachtsmen to use its facilities.

SH.4/10 **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:-

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

The representative advised that from a fishing perspective, the Forum was content and he was still striving to make progress on the Fish Quay Feasibility Study. Moreover, there were some issues which the representative did intend to discuss with the Harbour Master in the near future. One such issue was the changing nature of the fishing industry and the particular requirement for additional storage areas. In response, the Harbour Master stated that during winter 2011, it was hoped that increasing the provision of storage boxes could be considered.

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 9 June 2010 and the agenda for this meeting was outlined to the Board.

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Association (SKEA)

The representative advised that he had no issues to raise on behalf of the Forum.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club

The Club representatives made the following points:-

- In respect of the state of the Kingsbridge Slipway, it was felt that the gradient was too flat and its long term condition was a cause for concern. As a short term remedy, the Club hoped that improvements could be made, such as implementing additional mooring bollards or increasing the number of eyes positioned on the slipway.

The Harbour Master advised that the Slipway was a District Council owned asset and he had raised the matter with officer colleagues. Whilst he felt it to be highly unlikely in this budgetary climate for extensive works to be undertaken by the Council, he did consider there to be potential to increase the number of eyes located on the slipway. In addition, the Harbour Master informed that he would talk to colleagues in the car parks team to determine whether there was a way forward to permit cars in lieu of craft on the slipway;

- In terms of a reciprocal mooring arrangement which allowed Kingsbridge boats to utilise the facilities at Salcombe, the Harbour Master stated that boat users were always welcome in Salcombe. Vessels visiting Salcombe should check with the duty boatman or the office prior to berthing on Normandy. Waiting times at Normandy were normally thirty minutes. During busy periods and after a length of time, harbour staff would ask users to move their crafts on, but yachtsmen could drop anchor off Salcombe without any problem;
- The condition of the slipway at Bowcombe was also highlighted as a matter of concern to the Boat Club. Secondly, the bridge side of the Bowcombe Quay was also felt to be particularly steep and slippery and it was queried whether steps could be reconstructed in this area. In reply, the Harbour Master advised that this was also a district council owned asset and therefore the financial constraints were again relevant. Nonetheless, he informed the Board that he would re-raise these issues with his colleagues.

SH.5/10 TOPICAL HARBOUR ISSUES

The Board considered a report which updated it on developments on a number of operational issues within Salcombe Harbour.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the Kingsbridge Ferry service. As an update, it was noted that the Dart Riverboat Company would now lease the Rivermaid boat from its owners and would operate the same service, with some additional one hour trips from Whitestrand during the season;
- (b) the proposal by the Council to operate in-house a winter storage service at the Creek Car Park. A lengthy debate ensued on this proposal, during which a number of issues were raised which included:
 - the Harbour Authority being responsible for the operation of this scheme. Consequently, this would result in the Harbour Authority having proportionately less officer time. Therefore, Members felt that there would need to be some form of reimbursement arrangement between the Council and the Harbour Authority;
 - from a commercial perspective, and whilst appreciating that it was a Council matter, some representatives questioned the value for money of purchasing the capital equipment against its likely level of usage. In reply, the Harbour Master felt that a meeting was needed with commercial operators to allay some concerns. Furthermore, the Board felt that it would be beneficial for the commercial operators to combine their expertise and establish a group, which could be included as an additional Harbour Community Forum;
 - an acceptance that there were safety implications regarding the existing arrangement in which a mobile crane was operating in a public car park. The Harbour Master informed the Board that it was his firm belief that the proposals, if implemented, would make the area safer for everyone;
 - the associated pollution aspects of the existing arrangements. It was noted that the majority of silt samples which had recently been taken in the vicinity were below the current Environment Agency guidelines on pollution;
 - whether an in-house service would provide a competitively priced operation in the open market. In contrast, a concern was also raised that the proposal could be to the detriment of local businesses;
 - the decision-making process. When informed of the process followed by the Council, the view was expressed that it was regrettable that the matter had not been formally reported to the Board. In reply, the Harbour Master advised that the matter had been previously discussed by the Board on a number of occasions and the Council was the asset owner. However, he did also acknowledge that the process had not been ideally conducted;

- support for the proposal. Some Members expressed their support for the proposal and felt that this was the most sensible option available;
 - the storage area. A Member requested that the potential for the Harbour Authority to lease the storage area from the Council be investigated;
 - the potential wider ramifications of this decision. Members therefore asked for a detailed report on this matter to be presented to a future Board meeting.
- (c) the retirement of the Assistant Harbour Master (Logistics and Maintenance). The Board wished for an additional recommendation to be included to extend its gratitude to Mr Raymond Rowe for almost thirty years of service to the Harbour Authority;
- (d) the Moorings Policy – Installation of Private Pontoons. It was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and on being put to the vote declared **CARRIED**, that the policy be amended to read as follows:-

“The cumulative effect of a proliferation of walk-ashore pontoons would represent a loss of foreshore within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and be detrimental to the appearance of the estuary within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Even when located on private fundus, moored pontoons require a Mooring Licence which will not normally be granted if the pontoon is for private use. Applications for commercial pontoons and pontoons providing public access to the estuary will be judged on their individual merits and environmental impact. However when and if the commercial activity (and/or the public access) cease the mooring licence will be withdrawn and the pontoon should be removed. In no cases will its use as a private mooring be permitted.”

- (e) water skiing within the harbour. It was confirmed that a Board Member had submitted written comments to the Shoreboard representative and was awaiting a response. Once a response had been received, the Member advised that he would ask that the matter be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting thereafter.

It was then:

RESOLVED:

That the:-

1. report be noted;
2. Board receive a report at a future meeting on the operation of the Winter Storage service at the Creek Car Park;

3. Moorings Policy be amended to include provision for the installation of private pontoons, as outlined in the revised terms as outlined in paragraph (d) above; and
4. Assistant Harbour Master (Logistics and Maintenance), Mr Raymond Rowe be thanked for his near thirty years of Harbour Authority service.

SH.6/10 **HARBOUR FACILITIES – SHOWERS**

Consideration was given to a report which outlined four potential options to provide showers for harbour users and which sought the guidance of the Board on its preferred way forward.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) In respect of the Salcombe Yacht Club proposal, the Board felt that it needed to know firm proposals before it could reach a view. It was therefore agreed that the Harbour Master should write to the Club outlining that the Board awaited with interest its firm proposals;
- (b) A fifth option was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and on being put to the vote was declared **CARRIED**. The option sought the Harbour Master to first and foremost, invite any local expressions of interest to provide shower facilities. It was felt that this option could have benefits to the local economy and was in line with the sustainability agenda;
- (c) As a contingency plan, the Board also concluded that there was merit in considering in-depth the option to provide a temporary shower block at either Whitestrand or Shadycombe car parks;
- (d) The view was expressed that the free shower tokens had now served their purpose and should be phased out;

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Harbour Master should firstly invite any local expressions of interest to provide shower facilities. However, as a fallback, consideration should also be given to the option to provide a temporary shower block at either Whitestrand or Shadycombe car parks.

SH.7/10 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Board considered a report which presented the performance of the Harbour against the agreed Performance Indicators.

The report concluded that overall, it had been a difficult year with some extremely challenging weather conditions. This had made port operations and maintenance difficult and had constrained visitor numbers.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) marine crime having reduced by 45% in comparison to 2008/09. In addition, insurance agents had also informed that in the same period, claims had decreased by 80%;
- (b) the performance of the Water Taxi being a cause for concern. The Harbour Master felt that the Taxi was an essential service in a harbour with no walk ashore moorings. Furthermore, the decline in use reflected customer desire to save money on what was a discretionary spend and they always had the option of using their own tenders. It was felt that the future operation of the Yacht Taxi needed to be monitored carefully and constantly reviewed;
- (c) levels of speeding in the Harbour. Some Members advised that the report was slightly misleading as it was their impression that speeding was becoming increasingly prevalent. On a specific matter of detail, it was requested that the Salcombe Yacht Club marker should be replaced by an eight knot speed indicator;
- (d) the Board commended the Harbour Master for the excellent performance in relation to unauthorised staff sickness absence;
- (e) the lack of an office administrator to process applications to obtain Blue Flag accreditations on South Hams beaches. In light of concern, the lead Executive Member for Financial Affairs stated that he would look into this matter.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Harbour performance against the agreed Performance Indicators be noted.

(Meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 4.40 pm).

Chairman