

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD  
HELD AT CLIFF HOUSE, SALCOMBE ON MONDAY, 12 JULY 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

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour), Estuaries Officer. Principal Accountant and Senior Member Support Officer

SH.8/10      **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 7 June 2010 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the addition of a declaration of personal interest by Mr J Barrett in relation to item 8, 'Harbour Facilities: Showers' and signed by the Chairman.

SH. 9/10      **URGENT MATTERS**

The Chairman advised that there were three items of urgent business which he wished to raise. Firstly, the Harbour Master advised of a situation that had arisen during 30 June/1 July when a boat moored in the Harbour created a disturbance. The Harbour Master outlined the events and then asked the Board for approval to go forward with a bye law prosecution. When put to the vote it was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**, and declared **CARRIED**, that the Harbour Master proceed with a bye law prosecution.

The second item of urgent business had arisen following the Annual Inspection held prior to the meeting. The Board felt that the hand railings at Jubilee Pier were not in a good state of repair and, as they were a South Hams District Council asset, it was agreed that a letter be sent to the District Council and copied to Salcombe Town Council, to request improvement.

The final item of urgent business was the invitation to Board members to a leaving presentation for Mr Raymond Rowe, who was retiring after 31 years service to the Council.

SH.10/10      **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

SH.11/10      **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions. However, a Member asked if the Forum that he represented could represent themselves and speak on their own behalf. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that the procedure should remain as it was, and the Chairman would accept a statement instead of a question under this item, if there were a particular issue to raise.

SH.12/10      **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:-

**Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum**

The representative had been unable to attend the meeting and asked that the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Estuaries Officer, who had attended the meeting, give an update on his behalf. The AONB Estuaries Officer advised that the Forum was undertaking a formal review of the Estuary Management Plan for the next five years. They were hoping to dovetail it to the AONB Plan which was a statutory function. The Forum was fairly sure of funding from the Local Action Group (LAG) for estuary projects such as interpretation signs at key sites, the publication of a book on the underwater world and a project related to the awareness of seagrass.

There had been a declaration from Natural England that the upper estuary was failing in terms of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status. A Diffuse Water Management Plan had identified that Gerston Water Treatment Works would have to strip nitrates and phosphates from the effluent. The Estuaries Officer was the local representative on the Marine Conservation Forum; Natural England was pursuing some areas as special areas of conservation. A Member asked for clarification of the impact of becoming a special area of conservation. In response the Estuaries Officer advised that some areas would become 'no take' areas, and some areas would just have the more damaging practices prevented. However, regardless of whether some areas were designated as special areas of conservation, the SSSI designation gave more protection.

**Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Association (SKEA)**

The representative had given apologies for this meeting.

### **Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club**

The representative had no items to report.

### **South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen**

The representative advised that the Forum was happy that South Hams District Council had now gone out to tender for a feasibility study on Fish Quay.

## SH.13/10 **ANNUAL REPORT**

The Board considered a report which outlined the way in which the Harbour Board operated and described the progress made during the previous financial year.

During discussion, the matter of the Harbour Board accounts being ring fenced was raised. Members were concerned that, although South Hams District Council had never taken money from the account, there was no official agreement in place and therefore the Council could take monies if it so minded. Some Members felt that a strong recommendation should go forward that the accounts be properly ring fenced.

Members congratulated the Harbour Master and his team for their excellent work, and the Chairman advised that he was proud to be associated with the team.

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Annual Report 2010 be published;
2. That the Council be approached, outlining the view of the Board that its accounts be formally ringfenced.

## SH.14/10 **FINAL ACCOUNTS 2009/2010**

Consideration was given to a report which advised Members of the Harbour's final trading position in 2009/10 together with brief details of the main variations from the original budget.

The Chairman introduced the item and stated that the accounts were very good considering the bad weather during the summer months.

During discussion points made included the following:

- Members were pleased at the amount of money raised by selling the old chains for scrap metal. The Harbour Master advised that a full tendering exercise was undertaken annually for the supply of chain; this year there was a price range of over 100% between the highest and lowest tenders, demonstrating that the tender exercise was important in obtaining value for money;

- A Member queried the fluctuating amount of rent paid to the Duchy. The Harbour Master explained that this was due to the new lease arrangements. The old lease required that 10% of income be paid to the Duchy, the new lease requires that 17.5% of income derived from the fundus be paid to the Duchy. The amount paid last year was cost neutral in comparison with the old lease;

*[Post meeting note, the increase from the old lease arrangements to the new lease arrangements has been calculated to represent an increase of 1% for the new lease over the old lease arrangements]*

- Members were pleased that the amount for HQ Allocations had stabilised. However, Members also felt that the amount charged for financial services and payroll and personnel was expensive, and the Board should look to outsource these functions to an external agency;
- There was concern over the inability of the bank account to accept BACS payments which would cause issues when cheques were phased out. Members felt that a separate bank account that allowed customers to pay by BACS would be a solution. The Principal Accountant agreed that this would be investigated;
- A Member stated that the impact of changes to harbour dues were not apparent. As Members would be expected to set the budget for 2011/12 at the next meeting in September, this information would be needed. A Member raised the issue of methods of accounting, and advised that whilst the accounts were completed thoroughly on a cost basis it would be more helpful to the Board if the accounts were completed on a sales ledger basis to include sales invoicing and credit control. The Chairman added that charges were often raised to control behaviour rather than raise income, and often the feedback from the Harbour Master and his staff indicated the impact of changes and whether they were working.

Finally the Chairman acknowledged the superb job carried out by the Harbour staff in a time of recession for the accounts to look healthy and positive.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Board note the final accounts for 2009/2010 (as set out in the presented appendix A to the agenda report).

## **SH.15/10 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 Ferry service has recommenced, however the boat was not in operation for 50% of the working day because of the tides. Therefore, one hour trips from Whitestrand were now running, and this was being carefully managed in terms of safety. The service from Dartmouth has only run twice because of weather and defects, but these trips have been very popular;
- (b) the Moorings Policy – Installation of Raft Pontoons. The Harbour Master sought advice from the Board on whether pontoon rafts should be allowed. Following a brief discussion, the Board agreed to amend recommendation (b) on the presented report to prohibit individual raft pontoons except in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Harbour Master;
- (c) South Pool Public Landing Pontoon. The Harbour Master advised that he was proposing to replace the sign as detailed in paragraph 6 of the presented report. A Member queried the spelling of South Pool as the village name was two words and in response the Harbour Master advised that the charts show Southpool as one word and he had used this as his reference point;
- (d) South Sand Beach. The Harbour Master advised that he had been trying to reduce the number of tenders at South Sands Beach to twenty. The beach was not big enough for the number of boats and it was irresponsible to sell spaces which did not exist, but then there had been complaints from people who wished to leave their boats there so the Harbour Master had no option but to relent. Staff at the Harbour office had spent a great deal of their time recently, on this issue and the Harbour Master would write to the customers and ask what they require. This was a South Hams District Council issue yet the Harbour Authority was having to deal with it. During discussion, points were raised as follows:-
  - one Member felt that the Harbour Master should do nothing as it was a Council issue and therefore not the responsibility of the Harbour Authority;
  - another Member felt that an indication of risk should be given to people and the Harbour Master confirmed that this had been done in the form of signage. He also stated that boats had got larger, which had exacerbated the problem;
  - A number of Members felt that the Council should be re-charged for all the time spent on this issue as it was being dealt with on its behalf;
  - the Harbour Master advised that the money collected by his staff was in fact for South Sands Sailing School who managed the beach on behalf of the Council. A Member felt that the Harbour Authority should be absolved of collecting the money, which could imply some responsibility, and if there was no charge then there was no liability;

- A Member felt that an officer from the Council should be sent down to deal with the problems, rather than staff from the Harbour office.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the Harbour Master should discuss with officers in the Council a better way forward for future years, and review the agreement which currently exists with South Sands Sailing.

- (e) Speed limit. The Harbour Master began by stating that he felt there was some disquiet amongst Board Members at current levels of enforcement and he had raised this item to ask the Board for its input. During discussion the following points were raised:
- one Member raised his concerns that speeding took place and felt that a plan of action was needed to address the problem. He suggested more yellow buoys to make the line of the Harbour limits more obvious, more signs were to be put up or existing signs better placed, and an information sheet on the speed restrictions and the reason for them should be considered for inclusion in the information provided to all harbour users, issued with their stickers next year to ensure that no-one had the defence of saying they did not know the speed limit. He also suggested that volunteers go out in a boat with megaphones to give attention to the fact that speeding would not be tolerated. The volunteer crews could be supplemented by staff, and the press could be advised so that the message went out that speeding in Salcombe Harbour would be dealt with. The Harbour Master agreed with all points except the volunteers which had been tried in the past and failed due to a lack of willing volunteers;
  - the Harbour Master explained to the Board that if he used seasonal staff to monitor speeding they tended to be verbally abused by the boat owners which made the exercise counterproductive. Senior members of staff therefore had to be used. This was reiterated by a Board Member with previous experience of similar situations who advised that a successful prosecution depended on an experienced person making an assessment of speeding and this being backed up by evidence;
  - the Harbour Master confirmed that the speed gun had been calibrated and he had been trained in its use;
  - a Member stated that it was about priorities and they needed to be rebalanced. Salcombe was a leisure harbour and some activities impacted on others. Previously there had been an aggressive approach to speeding. There needed to be a way of gathering evidence and writing to people. Speeding had got worse over the last few years and it had become time to reprioritise as the Board would like it tightened up;
  - a Member suggested that the use of a camera as photographic evidence could be used as an indication of speed. Another suggestion was to put aside a sum of money to be used to address the speeding issue;

- a further issue was speeding by family members, so even though the boat owner had been made aware of the speed limit zones, staff were relying on that owner to relay the information to others on the boat to ensure they were all aware of the zones and their speed limits;
- The Harbour Master advised that speeding happened at difficult times of the day and it was not always possible to make staff available at these times for speed patrols. In addition, harbour users take little notice of the night security patrol. Changes to the boatmen's shift times have made them available until 11pm each evening for anti speeding patrols. The only workable solution was for the Harbour Master and the Assistant Harbour Masters to dedicate more time to combating the speeding problem.

To conclude, the Board confirmed their proposal for £2,500 to be spent on signage and £2,500 to be allocated for additional staffing costs for the 2011/12 budget to help combat speeding. The Board reiterated that this was not an awareness issue but that it was an enforcement issue and therefore more resourcing in this area was supported.

- (f) Phosphate pollution. A Member introduced this item and stated that the issue of phosphate pollution had been raised at the Estuary Conservation meeting on 9 June 2010. Phosphate pollution was a problem, and he would like Salcombe Harbour to be phosphate free. He therefore wanted to introduce a pilot scheme where boats were given a sample of phosphate free washing up liquid to use whilst they were in the Harbour. This would be a positive step for the Harbour, and could generate positive PR along the lines of the 'no carrier bag' scheme in Modbury. Another Member supported this pilot and stated that nationally there was a growing campaign for all vessels to use phosphate free detergents. Revised costings had now been produced and the pilot would be cheaper to run than originally thought. In addition, the costings would even allow to pay someone to fill up the bottles with washing up liquid, if no volunteers could be found. The Member who proposed the scheme felt that the bottles could be given out on payment of harbour dues. The Chairman responded that he felt this was a great initiative and was happy for the funding to be allocated but did not want harbour staff taken off their duties to be involved.

It was then:

**RESOLVED:**

That:-

1. the report be noted;
2. the Moorings Policy be amended to prohibit individual raft pontoons except in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Harbour Master; and

3. a pilot scheme be commissioned for the introduction of phosphate free detergents for boats within the Harbour with an initial budget of £2,000.

## SH.16/10 **BOAT PARK – STORAGE OPERATIONS**

Consideration was given to a report which set out the changes to the operation of the South Hams District Council Boat Storage facilities. The Harbour Master introduced the report and a discussion followed during which the following points were raised:

- (a) One Member raised the fact that the report stated staff would need to be trained and he asked whether they would have to be South Hams District Council staff. In response, the Harbour Master advised that the training would be for the workshop and boatpark staff and he expected some activity to be sub contracted out;
- (b) The Harbour Master also advised that there was one issue for guidance regarding exceptions to hull scrubbing over the grid and he asked that the Board make a decision on whether commercial vessels too large and heavy to be lifted to the scrubbing area could be exempted and continue scrubbed down on the slipways. The Estuaries Officer added that any run off could be mitigated if sand bags were used. After a brief debate the Members advised that, bearing in mind basic principles such as 'if it could be hoisted it would be', then they were happy to delegate this decision to the Harbour Master;
- (c) Another Member stated that this was a South Hams District Council responsibility and not the Harbour Authority and they should be careful of using public funds to undercut local commercial operators;
- (d) A Member asked if the Harbour staff time was being recharged to South Hams District Council for this work. He felt that the situation was difficult and would be more comfortable if the asset was brought within the Harbour. In response, the Harbour Master stated that he had asked the question but that it was unlikely that this would be acceptable. In return a Member stated that it was not attractive being a Board Member and tackled about things over which you had no control. As a consequence, it was his view that the governance was in an absolute mess and the structure was poor. The Chairman agreed but stated that it was historic. Another District Council Member added that Council Members who sat on the Board could take issue with the Council if they so wished.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the scale of charges for the Boat Park operation, as set out in the presented report be adopted, and that the principle of Value for Money as described in the presented report be considered when the charges for 2011/12 are reviewed.

SH.17/10 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

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

The Harbour Master brought the Boards attention to the statistics which showed fewer boats had visited, but those that did stayed longer. Further, it was important not to be complacent, when bearing in mind the current uncertain economic climate.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

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

(Meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 5.15 pm).

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Chairman