

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD
HELD IN QUAY HOUSE, KINGSBRIDGE
ON MONDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2007**

MEMBERS

* Cllr J Brazil – Chairman

∅ Dr C C Harling – Vice-Chairman

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

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Also in attendance and participating:
Cllr P W Hitchins.

Member in attendance but not participating:
Cllr R J Carter.

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items –Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour) and Principal Accountant;

All Agenda items with the exception of Item 7 (minute SH.39/07 below refers)
– Conservation Officer;

Items 1 to 9 (minutes SH.33/07 to SH.41/07 below refers) – Head of Landscape and Leisure.

Officers in attendance for observation purposes:
Harbour Office Manager.

Also in attendance:
5 members of public.

SH.33/07 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed the Board and members of the public to the meeting and thanked Kingsbridge Town Council for hosting the meeting.

SH.34/07 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 25 September 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:-

- That under public question time (minute SH.25/07 refers), it was confirmed that Michael Mutters addressed the Board (as opposed to Michael Matters as noted in the circulated minutes). Furthermore, that it be noted that it was Mr Frank Green, Chairman of South Pool Parish Council, who raised the concern of erosion around South Pool creek;
- That it be formally recorded that Mr John Barton addressed the Board with regard to concerns that the speed limit of 8 knots was being regularly broken in the Bag. In response, and following a discussion, it was noted that this issue would be addressed at a future meeting of the Board.

SH.35/07 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman wished to inform the Board of the following updates:-

Provisioning Afloat

Following the advertisement for expressions of interest to provide a provisioning service to visiting yachts, the Chairman informed the Board that two responses had been received, each of which would be examined further with the involvement of the Board.

Vacancy on the Board

The Board were informed that it was intended that the vacant position on the Board to appoint an additional co-opted Member would be advertised in due course.

Boat Park Operations – Position Statement from Working Group

Tabled to the meeting was a progress report (attached as appendix A to these minutes) of the Working Group established to address the boat storage in Batson Creek Car Park.

SH.36/07 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Messrs Barrett, Bass and O'Brien declared a personnel interest in item 11: Review of Charges (minute SH.43/07 below refers) by virtue of their rental mooring within the harbour and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

SH.37/07 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

Mr Graham Price, Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club

- a) Assurance was sought that there were provisions in place to ensure the longevity of the Harbour Boards Strategic Business Plan, especially in terms of the funding of the various projects outlined in the plan and any proactive works the Council was doing to secure external funding. In response, it was noted that both internal and external funding streams would be looked at as projects were advanced. Moreover, it was intended that the Board receive an annual report on the Strategic Business Plan as a means of monitoring its progress and addressing any issues or related concerns which may have arisen throughout the year.
- b) Assurance was also sought that there would be sufficient funding to secure the proposed AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) Estuary Officer and that there would be continued contribution from the officer to the Kingsbridge and Salcombe Estuary. In response, it was noted that if the Board was minded to support the proposed funding for the Estuary and AONB Partnership, then the position would be for an initial period of three years.

Mr Tim Tucker, South Sands Ferry

- c) Concern was raised over the proximity of the Scallop Ratching Trial within the estuary in terms of it being near the residents' pontoon. In response, it was noted that this issue would be considered under item 9: 'Scallop Ratching Trial' within the Estuary (minute SH.41/07 below refers).

SH.38/07 **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:-

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club

- the continued growth of the Boat Club, along with the continued support it was receiving from the Harbour Office;
- a recent meeting the club had held with the Devon and Cornwall Police Constabulary and their continued support of the boat watch scheme. Moreover, the scheme had succeeded in contributing to the 60% reduction in marine related crime;
- the endorsement of the proposed reduction in the speed limit, although there was a need for additional explanatory signage;
- the increase in visiting yachts in Kingsbridge, although a number had found themselves grounded due to lack of markers;
- the Clubs appreciation of the CCTV which had been installed in Kingsbridge;

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Association (SKEA)

- support for the proposed decrease in the speed limit on the estuary and the possibility of varying the limit in different parts;
- concerns over the harbour's capacity to enforce the speed limit;
- concern over the scallop ranching trial in terms of diving in close proximity to moving yachts;
- a number of concerns in relation to a number of figures in the budget report (minute SH.42/07 below refers);

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum

- the newly elected Chairman of the Forum, Denise O'Callaghan, who was also a fellow Council Member of the District Council;
- a recent Forum meeting where the Conservation Officer gave an update on issues such as eel grass, costal access, scallop ranching and planning applications.

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

It was noted that the Shellfishermen had yet to meet since the previous Board meeting. However, there was continuing dialogue within the group especially in relation to the vulnerability of the steel pylons at the fish quay.

In conclusion, the Executive Member with responsibility for Salcombe Harbour informed the Board that the assets within the harbour were being looked at.

SH.39/07 **ESTUARY AND AONB PARTNERSHIP**

The Board received a report detailing financial information to support the establishment of a new AONB Estuary Management Partnership to deliver relevant environmental management on behalf of the Harbour Board. A number of funding partners had considered working together to ensure that estuary management and environmental considerations were addressed in the working harbours and estuaries of the South Hams. The proposed AONB estuary partnership offered the Board a cost effective option to ensure relevant environmental management could continue at an appropriate level.

Members' attention was drawn to the detailed financial implications of the proposal which were outlined in the exempt appendix to the circulated report. A revised appendix was tabled to the Board who wished to discuss its contents. Due to the exempt nature of the appendix it was:-

RESOLVED

That in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act is involved.

Officers and Members proceeded to discuss the financial implications along with the composition of the proposed steering group which would be formed from the funding partners to guide the work of the officer. During the discussion, Members highlighted concern over potential impacts upon the estuary and its harbour due to the officer dividing working hours between the estuaries within the South Hams. Moreover, in terms of the Harbour Board being represented on the AONB Partnership Estuary Steering Group, Mr J Barrett was proposed.

Once Members were satisfied they had no further question or comments which they wished to raise on the appendix, it was:-

RESOLVED

That the public and press be re-admitted.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

- a) that a financial contribution towards the proposed Estuary Partnership of £10,000 annually for three years from 2008/09 to 2010/2011, index linked for inflation, be made;
- b) that Mr J Barrett be appointed as the Boards representative to serve on the AONB Partnership Estuary Steering Group along with the Harbour Master.

SH.40/07 HARBOUR BYE-LAWS

Consideration was given to a report which appraised Members on the process required to change the Harbour Bye-laws, specifically relating to Harbour bye-law 45 which established a speed limit of 8 knots within the harbour. An amendment to the Harbour bye-laws to reduce the speed limit from eight to six knots would dramatically improve safety and the customer experience of estuary users without adversely affecting an individual user groups' ability to navigate the Estuary. In relation to the enforcement of bye-laws, the Harbour Master informed the Board that he was considering ways of improving enforcement within the Estuary for implementation next season.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- a) a Members revelation that the government was proposing to devolve the amendments of bye-laws to local authorities for their own consideration. If this were to be the case, then the Member felt that events may overtake the process of changing bye-laws as outlined in the presented report. Although Members felt that this was encouraging news, it was considered that the Board should still move forward as outlined in the presented report. In relation to the present process of amending bye-laws, the Harbour Master felt that changes to the speed limit could be implemented by summer 2008. However, the Board was also informed that under the Harbours Act, there was provision for the Harbour Master to changing the speed limit, although this was not as satisfactory as changing the bye-laws;

- b) Members endorsement of the reduction in the estuary speed limit. Following a lengthy discussion in relation to concerns over enforcing the speed limit, the Board noted that although this issue also needed to be addressed further (i.e tactical enforcement), in the first instance the Board should use its discretionary power to work towards reducing the speed limit. Moreover, during discussion on the proposal to have a varied speed limit throughout the estuary, it was noted that this would make enforcement difficult and may also delay the process further;
- c) the importance of a formal consultation process on the proposed reduction in the speed limit being carried out prior to its implementation;
- d) a Members' proposal that a sub-committee be formed to review, and if necessary revise, the harbour bye-laws. This was subsequently **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and on put to the vote declared **CARRIED**.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

- a) That work towards reducing the speed limit within the Salcombe and Kingsbridge Estuary to 6 knots be approved;
- b) That a Working Group to review, and if necessary propose revisions, of the harbour bye-laws be established.

SH.41/07 **SCALLOP RANCHING TRIAL WITHIN THE ESTUARY**

Consideration was given to a report which informed the Board on the operational parameters of the Scallop Ranching Trial prior to its commencement in January 2008 and sought the Board's endorsement for the Trial Specification. It was noted that limited scallop ranching was likely to have little environmental impact on the estuary and would enable a limited number of new jobs within the estuary, at no risk to the present and proven sustainable scallop dredging fishery.

In presenting the report, the conservation officer noted that two survey dives had been conducted on the proposed site and a DVD was available for viewing. It was felt that although this was not the only available site for such a trial, it was seen to be the principal one due to its siting being located away from the majority of estuary traffic flow. Following a query it was noted

that, moving yachts were not seen as a concern especially since the divers would require a safety boat and markers. Moreover, the divers only had a narrow window to dive within which was approximately one hour during high tide. If it became apparent that diving for scallops was directly affecting leisure activities, then the leisure activity would take precedent. The Board was also assured that a notice would be distributed to mariners informing them of the trial and what it entailed. Following a query it was also confirmed that the harbour authority would not be receiving any income from the trial.

RESOLVED

- i) that the progress made to prepare for the scallop ranching trial be noted;
- ii) that the specification for the scallop ranching trial, as outlined in the presented report, and conducted under the supervision of the Harbour Authority, be approved.

SH.42/07 2008/09 BUDGET

A report was considered on the 2008/2009 budget. The 2008/09 expenditure budget detailed in the presented report had been prepared in line with the strategy defined within the Strategic Business Plan. The budget would allow service levels identified in the Plan to be maintained and improved whilst offering long term value for money for Harbour users.

In presenting the report, the Principal Accountant updated the Board on the cessation of the licensing recharge to the Council. Following the publication of the report it had been agreed that the harbour staff continue to be involved in the collection of boat licensing activity and in doing so the harbour retained the monies. It was therefore felt prudent that this income be incorporated into the harbour's general reserve fund especially in light the pending results of the Single Status project, which included a job evaluation review. It was noted that the review could result in pay increases for staff, but alternatively it could also result in staff getting a decrease in their pay or remaining on the same pay rate.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- a) a Members concern over the increase in expenditure for employee costs. In response, it was noted that due to work demands, a post which had previously been a shared post had been adjusted so that one of the part time positions had become full time. Although this had increased the expenditure for employee costs, it was suggested that this may have also contributed to the reduction in overtime levels;
- b) confirmation that a £31,700 saving generated was part of the Gershon savings which stipulated a 3% cashable saving for each service of the Council;
- c) the central support fund. Members questioned the rising costs of the central support fund along with clarification as to what this fund entailed. In response, officers informed the Board that the fund had taken a steeper increase due to support the harbour was receiving from other Council services such as the Strategic Director (Operations), legal advice, payroll and ICT support. Officers felt that this represented a true reflection of time and costs and moreover, it was subject to scrutiny by the Council's external auditors. The Harbour Master also noted that a positive step had been made to utilise the knowledge and expertise of other Council services such as Property Services. Although Members accepted this, they wished for their concerns to be recorded and that the situation be monitored to ensure that the harbour was receiving value for money.

RESOLVED

That the 2008/09 budget items set out within the details as the presented report be acknowledged with specific concern over the increased expenditure in the Central Support Fund being highlighted by the Board.

SH.43/07 **REVIEW OF CHARGES**

Consideration was given to a report which set out proposed Harbour rates and charges for 2008/2009 which was fundamental to the operation of the Harbour. The fees and charges proposed followed the guidelines set out in the Harbour Board's Strategic Business Plan and went some way to readdress the imbalance which had developed over a number of years, in the fees and charges between residents and visiting yachtsmen. The proposal to freeze the fees and charges for

visiting yachtsmen for a second year and the introduction of a range of promotions was designed to halt the trend of reducing visitor numbers and re-establish Salcombe as a destination of choice.

During discussion, Members welcomed the report and noted that it was in accordance with the strategic business plan. It was felt that the public would accept the increase if, as outlined in the business plan, improvements were evident in the service offered. Members also wished to congratulate officers on the work carried out.

However, a Member expressed the opinion that yachts with powerful engines should be charged more. However, due to the tight deadline for approving the fees and charges for 2008/09, it was felt that this could be considered during the following year. Therefore, the Member requested that when reviewing the fees and charges for 2009/2010, the process begin earlier in the year to ensure the Board had sufficient time to address issues/concerns.

In conclusion, the Board also wished to congratulate those officers who assisted in the development of the Moorings Policy.

RESOLVED

- a) that changes to the charging policy as set out in Paragraph 14 of the presented report be agreed;
- b) that Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the proposed charges in Annex A of the presented report be agreed for implementation from 1 April 2008.

(Meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 4.30 pm).

Chairman

South Hams District Council

Salcombe Harbour Authority

Boat Storage in Batson Creek Car Park

Progress Report of the Working Party - Salcombe Harbour Board

A working party consisting of one elected Member (Councillor Hicks) and three Co-opted Members (Jonno Barrett, Mike O'Brien and Hugh Marriage) was appointed by the Salcombe Harbour Board to examine the boat storage operation in Batson Creek Car Park with a view to producing recommendations as to the future operation bearing in mind the requirements of Health and Safety and the twin Harbour Board considerations of service to the users and support for the local contractors.

Following the setting-up of the working party there was an Health and Safety situation which required urgent action by the Harbourmaster and the Board. This has now been resolved for this year. Therefore, the working party confined itself to considering the operational part of the boat storage provision.

To date the working party has had a number of meetings which have considered in detail the way in which the boat storage service is currently provided and the various options which are open to change the status quo. So far, options have been studied but no firm proposals have been formulated as yet.

It is our intention to collect opinion from the local community in order that a balanced view can be applied to the final recommendation. This process has been arranged for the 12th November.

Once local community views have been sought the working party is proposing to present its recommendations to the Harbour Board at its meeting on 14th January 2008.

Any action that is approved by the Board will be aimed at implementation in time for the 2008/09 storage season.

Cllr M Hicks, Salcombe Harbour Board
12th November 2007