

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD
HELD IN CLIFF HOUSE, SALCOMBE ON MONDAY 14 JANUARY 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

* Denotes attendance

Also in attendance and participating:
Cllr P W Hitchins

Member in attendance but not participating:
Cllr P Coulson

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Strategic Director (Operations); Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour) and Conservation Officer

Also in attendance:
One member of the public.

SH.44/07 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 12 November 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SH.45/07 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

Co-Opted Member

With regard to the vacancy for a Co-opted Member, the Chairman informed the Board that it was intended to advertise the vacant position imminently. It was agreed that the Board would be kept informed when dates to commence the process were established.

New Residents Pontoon

The Board was advised that the new Residents Pontoon was almost complete and would be officially opened by the Salcombe Town Mayor at a ceremony on 13 May 2008.

SH.46/07 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

SH.47/07 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions raised during this time.

SH.48/07 **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:-

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Association (SKEA)

- whether the speed limit on the estuary also applied to sail and other (e.g. rowing) vessels;
- concern over the need for a Dredging Survey. The Association also questioned whether the monies to be allocated to a survey could be used by the Harbour to purchase its own equipment;
- concern was also raised over the exact brief for the Security Patrol. In a presentation to the Association, the security company had given the impression to some SKEA members that they were covering areas which were not directly connected with boats. Notwithstanding that a presence was considered to be a good thing, it was evident from the presentation that there was some confusion regarding the product and service delivery. As a consequence, it was felt that more information on this matter should be put in the Newsletter;
- the Association considered the policing of the slipway during the summer months as being essential and felt that attendants should be issued with appropriate clothing to denote that they were connected to the Council. The member who attended this meeting also requested that there be an increased visible presence at the start of dinghy racing, especially during the summer months.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club

- the Boat Club wished to extend its thanks to the Harbour officers for renewing the War Memorial Life Buoy so swiftly.

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum

- the Board was advised that there were no updates forthcoming from the Forum.

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

At a recent meeting, the construction of a security gate was discussed. The gate would be intended to reduce crime in the Fish Quay. The fishermen felt that there were few crimes committed on the Fish Quay and more often than not, they knew who was responsible. It was felt that a gate would cause a considerable amount of inconvenience to visiting engineers, wholesalers etc who would not have out of hours access to the Quay area. It was therefore decided that there should be no security gate fitted.

The state of the Fish Quay wall was also discussed together with the case for enlarging the Fish Quay and creating a second slipway. It was understood that the Council were undertaking a survey into the state of the existing Quay wall and it was hoped that this would be undertaken at the earliest convenience, as there was considerable concern amongst the fishermen as to both their safety and craft. In response, the lead Executive Member with responsibility for Salcombe Harbour advised that he had followed up on progress of the Survey and it was hoped that Scott Wilson would have a report available by mid February 2008.

On a more general point, concern was raised by the SKEA representative that the Forum was not working the way that he believed it was initially intended. It was felt that the Association was giving too much emphasis to the previous minutes of the Harbour Board and the upcoming Board agenda, rather than being strategic and informing of or presenting pro-active ideas or innovations for the Board to consider. In response, it was agreed that the Terms of Reference for the Harbour Community Forums would be provided to Board members. To set it into context, a Member stated that such detailed scrutiny had previously proven to be very helpful and the view was also expressed that a number of the Forums were working well. The Chairman felt that a more detailed discussion, which would include consideration to possible ways forward, should be undertaken at the next scheduled Harbour Board Workshop on 12 February 2008.

SH.49/07 **CONSERVANCY DUTIES – MAINTENANCE DREDGING**

Members considered a report which set out the process and decisions required to fulfil the Harbour Authority's conservancy responsibilities for maintaining the charted depth within the Harbour and sought approval to start the process with a hydrographical survey of Batson Creek.

During discussion particular reference was made to:-

- (a) support for the recommended approach. A Member made reference to the need for a dredging programme and the consequent need for a survey to be undertaken;

- (b) other possible funding sources. In acknowledging that at this point, approval was only sought to undertake a survey and the resultant scale of the issue was not yet known, some members highlighted potential funding avenue streams from other stakeholders. A Member also highlighted his reluctance for any future funding for such works to be allocated from Harbour Reserves. The Chairman reiterated that such issues would be addressed in the future, once the outcome of the survey was apparent.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

- a) That the report and work towards maintenance dredging of Batson Creek during winter 2008/09 be noted;
- b) That it be agreed to contract a surveyor to prepare a bathythermograph survey of Batson Creek to establish the extent of the maintenance dredging requirement to maintain the charted depth.

SH.50/07 SECURITY PATROL

Consideration was given to a report which appraised Members of the facts surrounding the night security patrol and present a range of options for the future.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- a) the involvement of the Council's Shared Procurement Officer. Officers advised that for contracts exceeding £30,000, it was a Council Contract Procedure Rule to conduct a market testing exercise with the involvement of the Procurement Officer. In response, a member questioned whether the contract could be reduced to below this £30,000 threshold, to eradicate this involvement, as it was felt that such tendering was not without risk. Officers considered that the present company were the best currently available to carry out the patrol, but it was considered prudent to look at whether any further advantages, or added benefits, could be obtained from the contract;
- b) positive feedback received regarding the published newsletter;
- c) support for Option (b) (as outlined in the presented report). Some members expressed their support for Option (b) and felt it sensible to extend the current contract for a further year. In accepting that the issue was complex, reference was also made of the need to consider the areas patrolled and the factors which could not be quantified (e.g. crimes prevented through patrols being a deterrent);

- d) concerns regarding payment for security. A member felt that a wider review of the product and service offered was required before a market testing exercise was undertaken. This view was expressed in part due to the sensitivity regarding payment for security and it being perceived that individuals could be paying twice for the service, when harbour byelaws could already be used to police the area;
- e) the benefits of Option (d). The Board was supportive of the principle of Option (d), which had no apparent disadvantages and could coincide with another preferred option. Furthermore, the costs associated with option (d) were minimal (e.g. fuel and training costs) and had the support of the town council. In warning that there may be no willing volunteers, officers envisaged that such an operation would patrol during the daylight hours and provide an additional presence to further increase deterrence.

It was then:-

RESOLVED

That the Board selects options (b) and (d) (as outlined in the presented report) for the future of the Night Security Patrol.

SH.51/07 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Consideration was given to a report which informed the Board of the Harbour's performance against agreed Performance Indicators (PIs).

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) Members wished to congratulate officers for the completion in December 2007 of the deep water mooring maintenance programme;
- (b) It was intended that a review of the Water Taxi service would be undertaken in the next year;
- (c) In terms of visiting yacht nights, a Member questioned what public relations activities had been carried out to promote the freezing of prices. In response, officers advised that correspondence had been sent to all Yacht Clubs on the south coast from Poole to Lands End. It was noted that the issue of advertising required a delicate balance, as to over-promote could result in too much take-up which would be counter-productive for the Harbour. A Member felt that marketing ideas should be discussed further at the Board Workshop on 12 February 2008.

RESOLVED

That the Harbour Performance against agreed Performance Indicators be noted.

SH.52/07 **PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE**

A report was considered that appraised Members on Salcombe Harbour Authorities' compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) adequate personal buoyancy. A Member highlighted the recommendation from the auditors to continue to press the Yacht Club to require adequate personal buoyancy to be worn by all competitors. The Member advised that he could not support this recommendation for a blanket ban and referred to the Royal Yachting Association sharing this viewpoint. In response, officers felt that this issue had been pursued as far as was possible, but advised that it was likely that the auditors would continue to keep this recommendation in future reports;
- (b) the decision not to move the Scoble transit lights. In response to a question, officers outlined in detail the reasoning behind this decision;
- (c) a training exercise when the Egremont returned from its refit. In light of member support for this recommendation, officers advised that it would be necessary to revisit the current risk assessment and its consequent mitigating measures.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

SH.53/07 **BOAT PARK OPERATIONS**

Consideration was given to a report which updated Members on the further thoughts of the Harbour Board's Working Group looking at Creek Boat Park winter storage arrangements.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) A Member stated his belief that there was generally little wrong with the current arrangements and expressed his wish for an evolutionary approach to also be carried out in parallel with a revolutionary approach;

- (b) To justify why he considered the current methods to be untenable, the Harbour Master cited an example with regard to the current lack of control held by the Council, in light of changing responsibilities when boats were lifted onto the boat park, which was causing him concern;
- (c) In terms of process, it was anticipated that the Council would invite expressions of interest during January/February 2008, having consulted the Harbour Board, with it being hoped that a final decision could be reached by the Council in March 2008. Accordingly, there would be an information report to the next Board meeting on 31 March 2008, regarding the Council's progress on the situation;;
- (d) To cover the employ costs of a full-time attendant at the Boat Park, it was noted that the Council was proposing to increase boat storage prices by approximately 30%;
- (e) Whilst not opposed to the principle at this stage, some Members expressed their concerns that this course of action could result in a monopolistic arrangement and requested clarity on this issue before any decisions were to be taken. In response, other Members advised that colleagues were speculating on the outcome of the expressions of interest and no commitments would be made until the process had run its course;
- (f) A Member advised that they were uncomfortable with the alterative option to this course of action (as outlined in the presented exempt appendix) and would wish for a further alternative to be put together if necessary.

RESOLVED

That the work of the Harbour Board's Working Group be noted and the way forward, as outlined in the presented report, be agreed in principle.

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

Chairman