

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD  
HELD AT THE MAIN HALL, CLIFF HOUSE, SALCOMBE ON MONDAY 22  
SEPTEMBER 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
	* Mr P Waring

\* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apology for absence

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Strategic Director (Resources); Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour), Principal Accountant, Marine and Conservation Officer and Member Support Services Manager.

Also in attendance:

4 members of the public

**SH.19/08 VICE-CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

On behalf of the Board, the Vice-Chairman wished to extend his congratulations to the Chairman on his recent wedding.

The Vice-Chairman also introduced and welcomed the Strategic Director (Resources) to the meeting.

**SH.20/08 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 7 July 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

**SH.21/08 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Vice-Chairman advised that he had agreed for one item of urgent business to be raised at the meeting. The item related to a recent incident on Batson Slipway, which was considered to be so significant that the Board needed to be made aware of it before the next scheduled meeting.

The Harbour Master provided details of the incident in which a trailer had broken free of the towing vehicle, run away down the slipway and mounted the Batson Slipway pontoon on 21 September 2008. Fortunately, no injuries were sustained, but damage amounting to an estimated £700 had arisen from the incident. Disappointingly, those responsible left the scene without reporting the incident and the Police had since been contacted.

The Board was informed that immediate running repairs were being made to the area to ensure its safety and it was intended that the pontoon would be fully restored during the winter period.

#### SH.22/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Messrs Barrett and Harling declared personal interests in Item 7: '2009/10 Budget' and Item 9: 'Review of Charges' (Minutes SH.25/08 and SH.27/08 below refer) by virtue of their rental of a mooring and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

#### SH.23/08 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

##### **Mr Patrick Smith, South Pool Resident**

Firstly, Mr Smith wished to congratulate and thank the Harbour staff for their standard of customer service during the summer months. The Vice-Chairman, who had witnessed at first hand the level of service provided by the staff, echoed this comment.

Secondly, Mr Smith questioned whether any progress had been made in respect of navigational marks in South Pool Creek. In response, the Harbour Master advised that he had made progress in this area and awareness had been increased. The Harbour Master also confirmed that it was his intention to progress this issue further during the winter months.

##### **Mr Tim Tucker, South Sands Ferry**

Mr Tucker questioned whether the Water Taxi was a profit generating service. In response, the Harbour Master advised that he was currently working towards producing a report on this matter for the consideration of the Board at its next meeting on 3 November 2008.

**SH.24/08 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)**

- In respect of the replacement of Batson Pontoons, the representative stressed the views of SKEA regarding the importance of consulting both as actively and widely as possible.
- SKEA members considered there to be an urgent need and demand to provide extra capacity in the Batson and Shadycombe Creek Car Park area for boat storage and additional slipway capacity for access to the Estuary.
- The representative advised that SKEA welcomed the new proposal to redefine the category of tenders in the structure of Harbour Dues.
- With regard to the review of charges, SKEA wished to question whether the proposal to freeze the charges for visiting yachtsmen for a third consecutive year was cost effective. In reply, officers outlined that in comparison to other harbours, the residents' facilities still constituted good value for money. Furthermore, despite there being no increase in visiting yacht charges for three years, it was confirmed that the visitor charges were still amongst the most expensive along the south coast. In response to a question, the Harbour Master confirmed that there was frequently spare capacity on the visitors mooring facility in the shoulder months when visitor discounts were offered.

**Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club**

- The representative advised that the Boat Club was generally happy at present and did not wish to raise any matters with the Board.

**Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum**

- Whilst the representative was not in attendance at the Board meeting, it was confirmed that the Forum had not met since the previous meeting of the Board. It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on 6 November 2008.

**South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen**

- The representative highlighted that a meeting had taken place on 11 September 2008 in respect of the refurbishment of the Fish Quay. The meeting was considered to be very constructive and a number of potential enhancements to the Fish Quay had been suggested (e.g. creating a more effective water supply). A follow-up meeting was scheduled to take place during October 2008.

- On the whole, the representative reported that the Shellfisherman were content and would also wish to add their compliments to the Harbour staff for their standards of service.

SH.25/08 **2009/10 BUDGET**

The Board considered a report that presented a Budget which built upon the principles adopted in the Salcombe Harbour Strategic Business Plan and detailed the financial impact of the proposals contained therein.

The 2009/10 expenditure Budget (as presented to the Board) had been prepared in line with the strategy defined within the Strategic Business Plan. The Budget would allow service levels identified within the Plan to be maintained and improved whilst offering long-term value for money for Harbour users.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Board was informed that the additional expenditure of £17,400 required for Moorings was attributed to the increased costs of steel chain. For clarity, it was noted that the length of mooring chains was the same as the previous year and a competitive tendering exercise had been undertaken;
- (b) The £10,000 Single Status Provision was considered to be financially prudent. In light of indications from other local authorities suggesting an average 3% overall increase in salaries arising from Single Status, officers anticipated that there would be an ongoing cost to the Staffing Budget;
- (c) A number of Members felt that the additional rental sum of £19,900 payable to the Duchy was considered to be a significant increase;
- (d) With regard to the dramatic increase in Headquarters estimates in the revenue budget, officers advised that they would provide a detailed response to the Board in due course;
- (e) In future agenda reports, the Board expressed the view that it would be beneficial if the Budget figures and variations could include more detailed explanatory information and justification;
- (f) Officers stated that the £4,500 variation attributed to the Harbour Guide was not a new expenditure but was simply a means of factoring the costs into the Budget. It was noted that the Guide was almost cost neutral to the Harbour;

- (g) The Board queried why the Central Support and HQ Budget appeared to be continually increasing year on year. In response, officers advised that they would provide the Board with breakdown information on this total to enable it to examine the costs in greater detail;
- (h) Members suggested that a sum for pontoon disposal should be built in to the Budget in the future;
- (i) As a comfort, officers informed that the overall shortfall of £26,200 (approx 3%) was well within the rate of inflation and was a strategically positive outcome for the Harbour;
- (j) In the future, Members wished for the report to outline the officer assumptions reached in respect of the Budget. The Board felt that it could then determine if it agreed with the assumptions made by officers before recommending its approval;
- (k) On the whole, a number of Members stated their surprise at how well the Harbour had performed especially when considering both the current economic climate and the poor summer weather. Officers advised that a number of operating efficiencies had recently been made at the Harbour, which had been factored into the Budget, and the Board noted that it was likely to be harder in the future to attain such levels of performance.

**RECOMMENDED**

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the 2009/10 Budget (as detailed within the presented report) be approved.

SH.26/08      **STRUCTURE OF HARBOUR DUES**

A report was considered which sought to appraise Members of the findings and proposals of the Harbour Board Working Group's review of the structure of Harbour Dues.

The Working Group wished to redefine the tender classification to ensure that boat owners, who had a vessel which was used simply as a tender would be able to continue to do so with no change. However, vessels which were larger than 3.65 metres, with an engine size of over 6 shaft horsepower would be charged at the appropriate rate for the use of the Estuary.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the procedure to rescind a decision. The Board was informed that it was a constitutional requirement for at least one third of the Members of the decision-making body (in this instance full Council) to sign a notice of motion to enable any such decision made at a meeting within the past six months to be rescinded;
- (b) an amendment to the recommendation of the Working Group. An amendment was **MOVED** and **SECONDED** which sought to include an addition to the definition of the category Tender whereby 'only one such Tender to be licensed per parent craft'. In support of this amendment, some Members felt that this provided greater clarity to Harbour staff and would also help to overcome any abuse of the usage of multiple Tenders. In objection to this amendment, other Members felt that such monitoring would be problematic and could become unnecessarily complicated. These Members felt that the amended wording should not be included, but the matter should be reviewed after twelve months to gauge whether the issue was causing a problem. The amendment was subsequently put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

### **RECOMMENDED**

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (a) the resolution determined at the Board meeting on 24 July 2008 (minute 41/08 (c)) in resolving recommendation SH.18/08 of the Salcombe Harbour Board meeting on 7 July 2008 be rescinded; and
- (b) the category Tender be redefined as 'Tenders 3.65 metres and under with an engine not exceeding 6 shaft horsepower, registered to a parent vessel and properly marked T/T (name of parent craft)' be exempt from harbour dues: only one such Tender to be licensed per parent craft.

## SH.27/08 **REVIEW OF CHARGES**

Consideration was given to a report which enabled it to recommend setting the Harbour rates and charges for 2009/10. The proposed fees and charges had been kept at 2% below the level set out in the Harbour Board's Strategic Business Plan, despite inflation rising above an assumed level of 3%.

The proposals to freeze the fees and charges for visiting yachtsman for a third year, freeze the taxi charges for a fifth year and continue the range of promotions introduced in 2008, should continue to deliver an increased level of value for money and contribute to re-establishing Salcombe as a destination of choice.

The Board welcomed the proposed increase of 4% in Harbour fees and charges and officers assured those present that the proposals were considered to be sound.

### **RECOMMENDED**

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (a) the changes to the charging policy (as set out in paragraphs 5 to 7 of the presented report) be approved; and
- (b) the proposed charges (as detailed in Annex A of the presented report) be approved for implementation from 1 April 2009.

### SH.28/08 **REPLACEMENT OF BATSON PONTOONS**

Members considered a report which sought to inform a debate on the project to replace the Batson Pontoons during financial year 2009/10.

During discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the issue being very contentious locally. In acknowledging this point, an amendment was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** which sought to include the wider community in the consultation process. When put to the vote, this amendment was declared **CARRIED**;
- (b) increasing berthing fees. During the consultation phase, some Members felt that reference should also be given to whether berthing fees should be increased;
- (c) the need for approval from Natural England. Officers advised that a licence would be required from Natural England which was not a foregone conclusion and was likely to take three months to be granted. It was confirmed that this had been factored into the proposed timescale;
- (d) accurate graphic representations. When considering the options, Members emphasised the importance that accurate graphic representations were created;
- (e) the importance of bringing the project forward. Members stressed the need to progress this project in light of the current state of the Pontoons and there being limited scope to continue restoring them;
- (f) the need to consider additional variables. A Member highlighted the need to give consideration to variables including the width of boats and increasing the number of berths;

- (g) Jubilee Pier. A Member emphasised the importance that the Jubilee Pier issue was not lost sight of by the Council;
- (h) establishing a workshop. The Board welcomed the suggestion to set up a workshop in which some Members could work on the project and present the findings and options to the wider community, before taking account of the feedback raised and reporting back to the Board.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the replacement Batson Pontoons be funded with a loan of up to £215,000 from the Council, together with the funds from the Harbour Reserves (as set out in the Annex to the presented report); and
2. That stakeholders and the wider community be engaged with prior to finalising the specification for the replacement Batson Pontoons

SH.29/08 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

A report was considered which presented the Harbour's performance against agreed Performance Indicators (PIs) to the period ending 30 June 2008.

The report highlighted that visitor numbers and the associated income derived from visiting yachtsmen continued to be a cause for concern. In an attempt to address this adverse trend, a range of promotions and discounts were approved (minute SH.43/07 refers) for the 2008/09 season. Whilst it was still too early to make any assessments of the success of these promotions and their impact on visitor numbers, the affects of the removal of the derogation on red diesel and any economic downturn could have longer term future implications.

The report also recognised that Marine Crime had unfortunately returned to the levels during 2006, with the gains made in 2007 being lost. It was noted that considerable work with the Police and a new Night Security Contractor had since helped to address this problem.

**RESOLVED**

That the Harbour performance against agreed Performance Indicators be noted.

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

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Chairman