

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD
HELD AT QUAY HOUSE, KINGSBRIDGE ON MONDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2009**

MEMBERS

* Cllr J H Baverstock – Chairman

* Mr C C Harling – Vice-Chairman

* Cllr R D Gilbert

∅ Cllr M J Hicks

* Mr J Barrett

* Mr T Bass

* Mr H Marriage

∅ Mr M O'Brien

* Mr P Waring

* Denotes attendance

∅ Denotes apologies for absence

Officers in attendance:

All Agenda Items: Head of Service (Salcombe Harbour), Principal Accountant, Assistant Harbour Master (administration), and Member Support Services Manager

SH.18/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 13 July 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of the following two amendments:-

Firstly, the surname of the member of the public representing the Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club (Minute SH.14/09 refers) should read '*Alen*' and not '*Abraham*.'

Secondly, on the last bullet point of the Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Association feedback (Minute SH.15/09 refers), reference to the rises in dues of '5%' per annum should be replaced by '*up to 6%*' per annum.

SH.19/09 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman advised those present that the lease had eventually now been signed with the Duchy of Cornwall for the fundus on the terms as agreed until 2028. The Board was assured that the bottom line financial element of the lease was broadly the same as the previous agreement, with a larger proportion of the Mooring Charges being paid in rent, but all of the Harbour Dues remained with the Harbour Authority to discharge the statutory responsibilities.

In addition, the Chairman also stated that it was his intention to reverse the order of published agenda items 7 and 8 (Minutes SH.23/09 and SH.24/09 below refer) to ensure that the Board made its recommendations on the Budget for 2010/11, prior to it considering the fees and charges.

SH.20/09 **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:-

Mr J Barrett declared a personal interest in Item 7: 'Review of Charges' and Item 8: '2010/11 Budget' (Minutes SH.23/09 and SH.24/09 below refer) by virtue of his rental of a mooring and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and vote thereon.

SH.21/09 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

One member of the public wished to utilise the public question time session. His comments were recorded as follows:-

Mr Ian Drinkwater – representative of Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club

Mr Drinkwater advised that the Boat Club continued to have concerns in respect of the condition of the slipway at Kingsbridge. The Club had initially raised its concerns with the Harbour Office, who in turn had advised that, as an asset of the Council, the slipway was its responsibility.

The Harbour Master reported that both the Council's Asset Management Group and the lead Executive Member were well aware of the condition of the slipway. However, due to a number of conflicting projects and tightening budgets, it was currently not at the top of the list of Group priorities. Nonetheless, the area had been cleaned and swept three times during the summer months.

The Chairman stated that he would look at the condition of the slipway and would report the matter back to the Council.

Mr Drinkwater also wished to highlight the increasing problem arising from the apparent lack of safety awareness amongst several boat hirers. In response, the Harbour Master stated that whilst no collisions had been reported, it was a particular concern of his that there was no need to possess any maritime qualifications before being able to use a boat. Whilst confident that they did inform users of safety matters and maritime rules, the Harbour Master advised that he would reiterate its importance to the boat hire companies.

SH.22/09 **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 the absence of the representative, a Member advised that the Forum had not met since the previous meeting of the Board.

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum

The representative stated that the Forum had not met since the previous meeting of the Board.

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

The representative advised that a meeting had been held at Follaton House, Totnes, at which the Fish Quay had been discussed. As an update, the Board was informed that a tendering exercise was imminent in order to determine who would undertake the Feasibility works on the Quay, prior to any consultation taking place with the Shellfishermen.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club

The representative informed that all pertinent points had previously been raised by Mr Drinkwater during the public question session (minute SH.21/09 above refers).

SH.23/09 **2010/11 BUDGET**

A report was considered which presented proposals for the 2010/11 budget, which aimed to build upon the principles adopted in the Salcombe Harbour Strategic Business Plan and detailed the financial impact of the proposals contained within.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) the tendering exercise for moorings maintenance. In stating that a true competitive tendering exercise had been followed, the Harbour Master informed that the current arrangements in place for both the diving and chain tenders had provided the best possible outcome. A Member also requested that officers consider the issue of steel disposal in the future;
- (b) replacement mooring buoys. The Board was advised that this new budget entry reflected that the Harbour was gradually replacing buoys as and when opportunities arose. As a consequence, an interested Member wished to be given comparative costings between the old and new style buoys;
- (c) revenue generated from moorings. A Member stated that there was a need to consider whether the revenue generated suitably covered the cost of moorings. Specifically in respect of the deep water moorings, the Member stated his concern that the estimated costs of maintaining a mooring were to rise by 6%, whilst the proposed price increase of rental was only 2%. Therefore, the Member queried whether the Harbour was charging a sufficient amount for deep water moorings and felt that this issue should be reviewed during 2010/11;

- (d) the Port Marine Safety Code. In line with the supplementary guidance, Members were informed that the Harbour Master was suggesting the arrangement of a training day with the 'designated person', who would outline the responsibilities of the Board within the Code. Whilst a Member questioned whether £1,000 for a training day was warranted, other Members concurred with the view of the Harbour Master, whereby such an event was almost a requirement of the Code;
- (e) the pricing differentials for tenders. As this budget report was the first since the review conducted on the Harbour Dues, it was noted that the new pricing categorisation had raised an additional £6,000 and had also reduced levels of abuse regarding the usage of multiple tenders;
- (f) Central Support and Headquarter Costs. Members considered the detailed breakdown to explain how the total budget of £53,100 was reached and acknowledged that a number of Costs had either decreased or represented good value for money. However, some Members expressed their concerns at the monies charged by certain services and, in particular, wished to receive a detailed breakdown explanation on the costings behind the Information Technology and Improvement Unit functions;
- (g) Fuel for launches. The Harbour Master assured the Board that despite the cost of red diesel escalating, the £2,500 saving was achievable;
- (h) staff costs. It was noted that the Budget had been based upon an assumption that there would be no pay award for staff. If this was not the case, any pay award, and also potential costs arising from the remaining elements of the Single Status project (e.g. equal pay claims), would have to be supplemented from the revenue budget.

RECOMMENDED

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the 2010/11 Budget items (as set out within the presented report).

SH.24/09

REVIEW OF CHARGES

The Board considered a report (and an updated Appendix A which was tabled for the consideration of the Board) which enabled it to consider the Harbour rates and charges for 2010/11

The report proposed that the increases to fees and charges be kept to 2% on most resident facilities, which was 4% below the level forecast in the Harbour Board's Strategic Business Plan. Moreover, it was recommended to again freeze the fees and charges for visiting yachtsmen and the taxi charges. This coupled with the continuation of the range of promotions introduced in 2008, should continue to deliver an increased level of value for money and ultimately contribute to the aim of re-establishing Salcombe as a destination of choice for visiting yachtsmen.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Board expressed its concern that the area behind Whitestrand was perceived to be a 'free mooring.' It was commented that a number of boats remained there and were not in use. As a means of control, it was felt reasonable to charge a mooring fee in this area;
- (b) Members noted that the Night Security Contract was based upon a minimum number of patrols being undertaken;
- (c) When questioned, officers confirmed that a definition for 'high powered craft' (which equated to 40 horsepower) was stated on the published fees and charges documentation.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

That Council be **RECOMMENDED** to implement:-

- 1. the changes to the charging policy (as set out in paragraphs 5 to 11 of the report presented to the Board); and
- 2. the proposed charges (as presented in updated Appendix A), with effect from 1 April 2010.

SH.25/09

CONSERVANCY DUTIES – MAINTENANCE DREDGING

Consideration was given to a report which presented the outcome (including any environmental impact) of the maintenance dredging conducted in March 2009.

The report concluded that the Water Agitation Dredging method employed at Batson Creek in March 2009 had performed very well and had taken into account the sensitive environmental habitat of the Site of Special Scientific Interest. Furthermore, there had been no negative impact upon the flora and fauna of the Estuary. Therefore, this Dredging method was considered to represent a financially and environmentally sustainable method of Dredging within the Estuary for the future.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Harbour Master advised that he would update the risk assessment in the presented report to make reference to the conservancy duties;
- (b) In the event that this Dredging exercise would be undertaken again in the future, the Board was informed that the same ascent would be required from Natural England on each occasion.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

SH.26/09 OPINION METER SURVEY

A report was presented to the Board which outlined the results of the 2009 Opinion Meter Survey. The report highlighted that whilst the overall trends were positive, the sample size of the survey was disappointingly low.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) support for the use of such a survey. When informed that the future of the Opinion Meter Survey in its current form was in doubt, the Board felt that such a survey could be included within the Harbour Guide;
- (b) the need to increase the awareness of the existence of the Harbour Community Fora;
- (c) marine crime. Some Members highlighted the need to reduce the numbers of marine crime and also emphasised the high proportion of crime which was not reported to the Police.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and the thanks and congratulations of the Board be passed on to the Harbour Master and his team.

SH.27/09 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Board considered a report which informed of the Harbour's performance against its agreed Performance Indicators during the period 1 April 2009 to 30 June 2009.

The report stated that it had been an extremely encouraging start to the season, with the early sunshine bringing increased visitor numbers. Following incidents at the Batson Public Slipway and East Portlemouth (which could have had serious consequences), risk assessments had been reviewed and additional risk mitigation measures implemented.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) health and safety incidents. The Board welcomed the breakdown of incidents to separate Harbour staff and the general public;
- (b) water quality. To ensure it was monitored, Members wished for data relating to Water Quality to be restored to the list of Performance Indicators.

RESOLVED

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

(Meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 4.10 pm).

Chairman