

SOUTH HAMS SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Salcombe Harbour Board** held on
Monday, 13th June, 2022 at 2.30 pm at the **Cliff House, Salcombe**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Brazil
Vice Chairman Mr I Stewart

Cllr Brown
Cllr Long
Mr P Brown
Mr A Owens

Cllr Foss
Ms A Jones
Mr C Plant
Mr I Shipperley

In attendance:
Councillors:

Cllr Bastone

Officers:
Salcombe Harbour Master
Monitoring Officer (via Teams)
Head of Finance
Deputy Harbour Masters
Estuaries Officer
Independent Person
Democratic Services Officer

1. **Apologies for Absence and Welcome**
SH.01/22
There were no apologies for absence.

The Chairman then welcomed Mr Paul Brown to his first Board meeting following his co-option to the Salcombe Harbour Board, which commenced on 1st May 2022. The Chairman also welcomed the Independent Person, Mr Andrew Lloyd to this Board meeting.

2. **Minutes**
SH.02/22
The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board, held on 24 January 2022, and the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board, held on 25 April 2022, were both

confirmed as true and correct records.

3. **Urgent Business**

SH.03/22

There were no items of urgent business raised at this meeting.

4. **Board Membership - review of co-opted Members at the end of their terms and appoint a Vice Chair;**

SH.04/22

A review of the Co-opted Members' terms of office was given, with re-appointments voted upon, with the result as below:

Mr P Brown appointed 2022 until 2025 on his first term of office

Ms A Jones re-appointed until 2023 (second term)

Mr A Owens appointed 2021 until 2024 on his first term of office

Mr C Plant re-appointed until 2025 (second term)

Mr I Shipperley appointed 2021 until 2024 on his first term of office

Mr I Stewart re-appointed until 2024 (second term)

There then followed the appointment of Vice Chairman, with Ian Stewart being nominated, seconded, and at the resultant vote, confirmed as Vice Chairman for the remainder of the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

5. **Code of Conduct Dispensations - Monitoring Officer to consider the granting of dispensations for the 2022/23 Municipal Year**

SH.05/22

All Co-opted Members completed the Code of Conduct Dispensation papers which would run for t

6. **Declarations of Interest**

SH.06/22

Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, and the following were made:

Mr I Stewart, Mr A Owens and Ms A Jones declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in all related agenda items by virtue of paying harbour duties. As a result of the Deputy Monitoring Officer having granted each Board Member a dispensation, they were able to take part in the debate and vote on any related matters (Minute SH.05/22 above refers).

7. **Public Question Time**

SH.07/22

In accordance with the Public Question Time Procedure Rules, the following was raised at the meeting.

Mr R Massey, of Chillington, spoke regarding the Kingsbridge pontoon and the increase in rates. Mr Massey stated that any price increase should be reasonable, justifiable with adequate notice given. It was Mr Massey's opinion that there had been no notice given

of the price rise this year, the raise was not justifiable, and the 34% increase in his fees had not been reasonable.

Mr Massey relayed that the Harbour Office had said that price parity was required across the Estuary, but he felt that the cost should be dictated by market forces. Mr Massey then related the difference in provisions between the various pontoons, e.g. fresh water provided at Batson Creek whereas Kingsbridge had buckets, and there was no CCTV coverage at Kingsbridge.

In response, the Harbour Master outlined that the 34% increase on the total bill was comprised of an increase across the board, including for motored vessels. The Harbour was run as a not-for-profit organisation, run for everyone, no matter where they were berthed. Part of the increases were to ensure pontoon berth prices throughout the Harbour were aligned.

There was a 26% increase on the pontoon, with the increase having been held off for two years due to the Covid pandemic. The berths there were for 12 months, which meant no additional winter berthing charges, and included maintenance, dredging and fenders. It was confirmed that CCTV was in operation in Kingsbridge, with additional security patrols.

Fendering had been introduced on day one, and was a one stop shop, which could not be redone each year. It had been broken due to misuse and involved a 30% increase each year to cover repairs. This could be removed and replaced with chains, which would give increased life and be less expensive, but it would mean boats banging against each other with increased risk of damage.

Whilst the Harbour Master could understand the feelings expressed by Mr Massey, there had been engagement with customers, primarily through the Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club, and the Harbour was not able to consult each individual for their view.

The Chair stated that the Board would be reviewing mooring charges at its September Meeting and the views expressed would form part of the discussions.

Following a question from a Board Member, it was confirmed that pricing parity across the Harbour had been achieved. Another Board Member stated that he thought each stage of the process of the pricing review had been looked at in full, with a view to making things equitable for all. This process had had negative impact on some, but had resulted in a fairer system, through the professional and impartial actions of the Harbour Authority staff.

8. **Feedback from Harbour Community Forums**

SH.08/22

The Board received verbal update reports from those Members who attended the Harbour Community Forums. The updates were given as follows:

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum (SKECF)

As the Board Member had been unable to attend, the Estuaries Officer gave the following update:

- The Estuary Management Plan would be published soon which would allow all to see the impact of the different projects.

- Membership of FiPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes) had increased.
- The recently departed Vice Chair had wanted silt levels looked at and a review regarding the addition of silt traps. The Officer had spoken to Kingsbridge Town Council, and this would be looked at. The Officer would speak to the Board Member representative and then bring to a future Board meeting.
- Three Harbour Guides had been updated.
- Seagrass information was being updated and renewed.
- The next Forum would be held on Tuesday 18th October 2022.

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

The Board Member stated that the fishermen were excited by the possibility of a new set up but appreciated the funding bid to Government may not be successful. Currently there were no issues, and business was good.

Kingsbridge and Salcombe Marine Business Forum

The Board Member updated that two rib suppliers were based in the Ukraine, therefore businesses were concentrating on service. The increase in petrol prices was having a massive impact on all who had fuel needs. Long term bookings were lower than the 2021 summer season now that people could once again travel abroad for holidays.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club (KEBC)

The previous Board Member for KEBC had now departed from the Board. Mr C Plant would now be the Board's representative, which would be facilitated by the Harbour Master.

East Portlemouth Parish Council

The Steps at Ditch End were noted as in need of review, which the Harbour Master said he would perform and report back outside of this meeting.

9.

Water Quality

SH.09/22

The Harbour Master introduced a report which outlined the analysis of trends in water quality in the Harbour over the last six years.

Thanks were given to the previous Vice Chair who had worked hard on this project. He had worked for many years on trying to get current information on water quality from the Environment Agency, and data going back to 2018 was now available. Water quality was heavily dependent upon tide and weather, with rain and low tide having the worst impact. No major areas of concern were identified which was reassuring, and a slight improvement on bathing quality on beaches noted. This was noted as a starting point, with a monitoring paper to be produced going forward. The next step would be taking this information to South West Water and Devon County Council for their comments.

Water quality awareness events would be arranged, recorded, and then hosted on YouTube (South Hams District Council's or Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's sites). The recruitment of a dedicated catchment officer was on-going, and the new post holder would be invited to a future meeting.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- The North Sands beach at low tide trapped a great deal of seaweed which broke down anoxically producing an unpleasant smell. It was confirmed that samples had been tested and all was fine.
- Bathing testing had not occurred during the two pandemic years, but swimming was declared safe as long as it was not after heavy rainfall.
- Whilst water quality was one of the Harbour's most valuable assets, it was also something that the Harbour had least control over. The data would allow the Harbour to approach third parties to facilitate joint projects and campaigns to promote water quality.
- Following discussions regarding emergency releases into the Estuary, it was proposed, and seconded, that the Board would seek comments from the Environment Agency and South West Water on the results obtained, with particular reference made to sewage discharges at West Charleton, as the sewage works did not appear to be working adequately in that area.
- The potential for instituting water testing done by the Harbour Authority in conjunction with a local University was to be explored, including the possibility of slow speed water analysis using the Kingsbridge Ferry to be investigated.

It was then:

RESOLVED

- 1) That the analysis of water quality data provided by the Environment Agency (EA) be noted.
- 2) That comments be sought from the EA and South West Water on the results, with particular respect paid to sewage discharges at West Charleton.
- 3) That the Board investigate the merits of instigating its own programme of water sampling on the Estuary.

10. **2021/22 Year End Financial Report**

SH.10/22

Consideration was given to a report that advised the Board of the Harbour's final trading position in 2021/22 together with brief details of the main variations from the original Budget. Furthermore, the report also presented a summary of the Harbour Reserves.

Thanks were given during the introductions to the Head of Finance for all her help.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that:

- the reserves were closely aligned to the business plans and, whilst there was no upper limit on reserves, if the reserves were to get excessive, then the budget would be reviewed. It was also noted that the costings of future projects would need to be reviewed in light of the current climate of rising costs.
- The 2021/22 surplus was the highest in many years, but it was acknowledged that this needed to be put into context and was mostly due to the Covid pandemic and subsequent ban on overseas travel.
- Although the position of the Chair was entitled to claim a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) in accordance with the South Hams District Council Scheme of Members Allowances, since the current Chairman was also entitled to a second SRA

(by virtue of being a Political Group Leader), he did not claim the Chairs Allowance because the Scheme only entitled a Member to claim one SRA;

- The one-off merit payment to the Harbour Staff was discussed, with thanks given to the team for the hard work they had performed. One Board Member suggested that this merit payment could be reviewed annually.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Board:

1. **NOTE** the income and expenditure variations for the 2021/22 financial year, **NOTE** the overall trading surplus of £119,526 and **RESOLVE** to allocate this surplus to the Harbour's General (Revenue Account) Reserve; and
2. **SUPPORT** the payment of merit pay to the Harbour staff of up to £6,000 funded from the Harbour's General (Revenue Account) Reserve.

11.

Harbour Master Report

SH.11/21

The Harbour Master (HM) gave a verbal update to the Board which outlined:

- Workload had been very high over the last few months, with today's discussions giving a good snapshot of what the team had been occupied with.
- Approaching full season from the coming weekend, with senior management working seven days per week, extra staff employed, security increased, and more hours on the water.
- The 5-year business plan was progressing and dovetailing into South Hams District Council's document, thereby aligning themes. The concept of a rolling 5-year plan was being incorporated and the HM would arrange a workshop at the appropriate time.
- Safety – only two instances to report. The first a couple of weeks before and the second was yesterday: both were knocks and bangs.
 - o One slipped line, stuck in gear, and the boat could not be stopped before it hit the bathing platform of anchored boat. No injuries other than bruising, Harbour Staff responded brilliantly. Boat out of the water next week, with a report to the Captain, as panic exacerbated the situation, and cutting the engine would have helped.
 - o The second instance was during the regatta. Regatta was to have 17 or 19 rigs with 25 to each crew. Start delayed due to swell at harbour edge. After half an hour's delay, the regatta was started, but one rig was caught in a freak wave with seven ending up in the water. All were taken out of the water, the boat righted, and the event eventually continued. The Independent Person was fully aware of the incident and there would be a small investigation, which would hopefully feed into September's report.
 - o Lessons to be learnt – fortunate no fatalities. Quick response from staff and sensible response to get back upright, restricted event going forward. Life jackets were only worn by two and this would form part of the review.
 - o Live investigations therefore event's future would be determined later, once the final safety report was available.

- o It is unusual for rig to capsize, this will ripple through South Hams, British Rowing will undertake their own investigation. Once Cllr Bastone had received the report, he would bring it back to the Board.
- Projects updated on the morning's trip around the Harbour
- CCTV, mooring barge, offices review.
- Training – revalidation on forklift and crane (off season end Sept), SHDC line management development pathway. Legislative training and development training trying to ensure both happen.
- August budget workshop/emails would be arranged similar to the previous year, for financial review in September 2022.
- Following an internal audit, the HM updated on the finances with tools and materials noted as expensive, income had not been audited as such. Chain procurement for this year was about to happen, but recent material price increases were noted as being steep, e.g. steering cable had now doubled in price and only half stock available.

The Meeting concluded at 4.20 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
