

# **SOUTH HAMS SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD**



## **Minutes** of a meeting of the **South Hams Salcombe Harbour Board** held on **Monday, 25th September, 2017 at 2.00 pm**

Present: **Councillors:**

**Chairman** Cllr Brazil  
**Vice Chairman** Mr H Marriage

Ms A Jones  
Mr M Mackley  
Mr M Taylor  
Cllr Wingate

Mr M Long  
Mr A Thomson  
Cllr Pearce  
Cllr Wright

### **In attendance:**

Councillors:

### Officers:

Executive Director – Service Delivery & Commercial Development  
Salcombe Harbour Master  
Deputy 151 Officer

## 11. **Minutes**

SH.11/17

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 10 July 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A Co-Opted Member, who was not in attendance at the previous meeting, queried to what extent the role of the Harbour Master had been discussed at this meeting (Minute SH.8/17 extract (c) refers). In response, Board Members were content that the minute extract (as written) was a fair reflection, but did advise that an extensive debate had taken place during the Annual Harbour Inspection on the morning of 10 July 2017.

12. **Declarations of Interest**

SH.12/17

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:

Cllr Wright, Ms Jones, Mr Mackley, Mr Marriage, Mr Taylor and Mr Thomson each declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in all related agenda items by virtue of having moorings or paying harbour dues to the Council. As a result of the Solicitor granting each Board Member a dispensation, they were all able to take part in the debate and vote on any related matters (Minute SH.3/17 refers).

13. **Public Question Time**

SH.13/17

In accordance with the Public Question Time Procedure Rules, the following members of the public addressed the Board:

**(a) Anna Turns**

Ms Turns provided Board Members with a paper that she spoke to that outlined the issues associated with tackling the issue of ocean plastics in the Estuary.

Of particular note during her introduction, Ms Turns advised that the current practice of balloons being thrown into the Estuary during the annual Crabbers Race was totally contrary to the Eco Port status gained by the Estuary in 2014. Ms Turns also informed that balloons branded as being 'biodegradable' were not actually biodegradable and there was a need for education and promotion of good working practices to reduce the volume of plastic entering the Estuary. Furthermore, Ms Turns asked the Board to give consideration to imposing some form of penalty on individuals who were found to be throwing plastics into the Estuary.

In the ensuing discussion, reference was made to:-

(i) the role of the Shellfishermen. Members felt that this matter should also be presented to a future meeting of the Shellfishermen Committee. In addition, a Member made the point that the Shellfishermen brought in a great deal of waste and plastic and they were generally supportive of the importance of tackling this issue;

(ii) the imposing of a Marine Litter Byelaw. The view was expressed that use of a Byelaw would be a particularly heavy penalty;

(iii) the Eco Port status. In recognising the importance of the

status, some Members requested that a regular item be included on the agenda for Board meetings in relation to: *'Updates and Issues Relating to the Estuary being an Eco Port'*. Indeed, such was the significance of this matter, that Members commented that it should be taken seriously by both the Harbour Authority and the Town Council;

- (iv) the extent of litter and plastics amassing by the wall at the end of the Charleton Marsh. In expressing concerns, a Member asked that consideration be given to addressing the amount of litter and plastics at the end of the Charleton Marsh;
- (v) the lack of an obvious biodegradable alternative for the balloons used during the Crabbers Race. The Board agreed that Mr Mackley would be assigned the task of looking into potential alternative solutions.

In the meantime, the Board agreed that it would be disappointed to see balloons being used in future races. Moreover, the Harbour Master was directed to co-ordinate an open letter from the District Council; the Town Council; the Board; the Shellfishermen; and other key Stakeholders stating our combined opposition to the use of single use plastics and balloons in particular.

#### **(b) Dick Martin**

Mr Martin introduced himself to Members and, aware that the Egremont had been discussed at recent Board meetings, was in attendance to respond to any questions.

By way of an update, Mr Martin expressed his confidence that the Egremont would return to Salcombe in the future and would be fitted to a very high standard that would be a real asset to the Estuary. However, in light of the project being so extensive, coupled with the vessel needing more repair work than had initially been envisaged, the exact timing of its return was proving difficult to predict.

In the ensuing questioning, reference was made to:-

- assurances over the funding streams. In response to a request, Mr Martin confirmed that he was happy to provide a cast iron assurance that the funding streams were in place. Furthermore, Mr Martin advised that, as a goodwill gesture, his finance partners were happy to commit 10% towards the Mooring Fee and it was agreed that the Board would make a decision on this matter at its next meeting;
- anticipated timescales. Mr Martin estimated that the works would constitute a 9/10 month project and it was therefore unlikely that the vessel would be able to return before the

May 2018 deadline. Whilst it would be ready to return before October 2018, it was acknowledged that there would be too many vessels in the Estuary to ensure that it could return safely. Nonetheless, Mr Martin assured the Board that all interested parties would be made aware of whether or not the vessel would be ready to return before the start of next summer at the very latest;

- its pontoon. Mr Martin informed that he had received verbal assurances that the pontoon was safe and that this could be supported through written guarantees. The Harbour Master advised that a surveyor was to make a report on the state of all pontoons and the importance of them being secure and safe was emphasised;
- the Kingsbridge / Salcombe Ferry. Having now completed a season of operating, Mr Martin advised that the trading position for the Ferry was far better than he had anticipated. In addition, Mr Martin stated that he was negotiating with the Ferry owner in an attempt to complete a deal with the current owner. In taking encouragement from this update, some Members wished Mr Martin well in this regard and asked that consideration be given to the window of operation being extended. Finally, Members requested that Mr Martin maintain regular lines of communication with the Board and Harbour Master;
- Jubilee Quay. Whilst it served its functional purpose, the Board requested that the Council take a far greater interest in the Quay;
- the 'Plymouth Princess' activity. Mr Martin made reference to an opportunity to bring the 'Plymouth Princess' to Salcombe, which would provide the option of ferry trips to places such as Dartmouth and Plymouth. As a principle, Members felt this opportunity to be exciting but recognised some fundamental constraints (e.g. the lack of room in the harbour to accommodate the vessel safely). As a consequence, Mr Martin was encouraged to make a formal application for discussion by the Board at a future meeting.

#### 14. **Feedback from Harbour Community Forums**

SH.14/17

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

##### **Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum (SKECF)**

The Board was advised that the Forum was next meeting on 26 September 2017 and the main agenda items for this meeting were highlighted to the Board.

##### **South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen**

It was noted that a strategic Fish Quay meeting had been arranged to take place on 11 October 2017 and an agenda had been prepared. The view was expressed that the effectiveness of this meeting should be

gauged with a decision then being taken regarding how frequently future meetings were held. The representative advised that a consistent theme from the Shellfishermen was that their issues and concerns did not currently feed up to the Fish Quay decision-makers.

The operational Fish Quay meetings were progressing well and the Board representative was thanked for his efforts

#### **Kingsbridge and Salcombe Marine Business Forum**

The representative informed that the Forum now comprised of over 40 marine based businesses and dialogue between these continued to improve.

In reflecting some concerns raised by Stand Up Paddleboarders and Kayakers, the representative advised that a vast number of power boats were racing up and down the harbour. To act as a deterrent, the Forum had therefore called for increased speed patrols to take place and an increase in CCTV coverage. In response, a number of Members raised concerns at this apparent trend and concluded that a 'three strikes' approach should be imposed, with a mooring taken away from any repeat offenders.

The Forum had also asked that the Board give consideration to making it compulsory for vessel users to wear kill cords and life jackets. In discussion, the importance of education was highlighted and it was agreed that this matter required further consideration and would be appropriate for consideration at a future Board Workshop. In the meantime, it was agreed that the Harbour Master should raise this matter with colleagues at the upcoming South West Regional Ports Association meeting with the feedback reported back to Members.

Finally, the representative highlighted the need for clarification over the charges for Commercial Pontoon users at Batson and it was agreed that a draft policy would be presented to a future Board meeting.

#### **Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club (KEBC)**

The representative advised that he had no issues to report to this meeting.

#### **East Portlemouth**

The Chairman advised that this new Harbour Community Forum had yet to hold its first meeting.

### **15. Appointment of a Deputy Harbour Master**

SH.15/17

Prior to the report being introduced, Board Members were of the view that there were a number of related issues that would require much greater consideration outside of this Board meeting.

As a result, it was agreed that a Board Workshop would be held to informally consider staffing and remuneration issues with relevant Council officers at 11.30am on Monday, 6 November 2017. It was also

agreed that the outcome(s) of this Workshop would be reported back to the Board.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

That a Board Workshop be convened to enable for informal consideration of staffing and remuneration issues at 11.30am on Monday, 6 November 2017.

## 16. **2018/19 Budget**

SH.16/17

Consideration was given to a report that sought to recommend to the Council that the proposed 2018/19 Budget be approved.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) The Board was informed that the reason for the proposed rent variances was attributed to the Harbour Office having previously been overlooked as a rentable asset. As a consequence, the Harbour Authority had effectively been undercharged by the Council;
- (b) A Member felt that it would be useful in the future to provide the Board with a summary of capital budgets (including current loans);
- (c) In respect of potential increases in employee costs (in the event of the Pay Award being higher than the projected 1%), Members were of the view that reserves should be used during the year before any impacts were then built into the Budget for following years;
- (d) In highlighting that the levels of reserves were looking relatively healthy, a Member asked that future discussions take place regarding how these should be most appropriately used.

It was then:

### **RECOMMENDED**

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the proposed 2018/19 Budget (as set out in the presented agenda report) be approved.

## 17. **Proposed Charges 2018-19**

SH.17/17

Members considered a report that presented the proposed charges to the Council that would take effect from 1 April 2018.

In discussion, particular reference was made to the proposed 6% increase on vessels up to 4.5 metres. As part of a lengthy debate, a Member advised that he was fundamentally opposed to this proposed increase, which would unduly penalise local residents and small boat users. The Member proceeded to make the point that the additional income raised by this increase could be offset by measures such as imposing an additional charge on high horse powered vessels or increasing the monthly charges on pontoons. Some other Members were sympathetic to this view and felt that such a suggestion was in line with the Eco Port status of the Estuary.

Whilst the principle was felt right, other Members recognised the difficulties with assessing the actual horse power of each vessel. Furthermore, a number of Members felt that such detailed discussions should have been undertaken informally before the proposed Charges had been presented to the Board for further consideration.

In conclusion, the majority of Members were unhappy that the time constraints were such that there were effectively being forced into making a recommendation at this meeting and requested that, in the future, an annual Workshop be scheduled well in advance of September to enable for informal consideration of the proposed fees and charges.

It was then:

#### **RECOMMENDED**

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** that the proposed charges (as outlined in the presented agenda report) be implemented from 1 April 2018.

## 18. **Pontoon Development**

SH.18/17

The Harbour Master presented a report that outlined the rationale, business case, procurement model and intended development timetable for the replacement of Dentridge Deep Water (DW) pontoons and extensions to both Shadycome and Batson Pontoons.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (i) A Member stated that the area at Dentridge was a sailing hotspot and the importance of maintaining a small gap was felt to be critical;
- (ii) In respect of the ability to raise the moorings cap at Batson, a Member felt it would be useful for both options to be costed.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That a consultation exercise be undertaken on the detail of the proposed pontoon development; seek invitations to tender and planning approval / MMO licence in tandem; and
2. That it be noted that a formal business case be presented to a future Board meeting, with the intention that it be forwarded to the Council in advance of any works being undertaken.

19. **1st Quarter Performance Indicators**

SH.19/17

A report was considered that summarised Salcombe Harbour's Performance Indicators (PIs) for the period 1 April to 30 June 2017.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the two reported accidents being relatively minor in nature;
- (b) income generated from moorings. The Board requested that the PI relating to income generated from moorings be reinstated.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

1. That the latest Performance Indicators be noted; and
2. That the Performance Indicator relating to 'income generated from moorings' be re-instated to future performance reports.

20. **Harbour Master's Report - standing agenda item.**

SH.20/17

The Harbour Master presented a report on topical harbour issues that were of interest to the Board or that directly affected the Harbour.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) staff changes. The Board noted that replacement members of staff had now been appointed to replace the two previous employees who had recently left the employ of the Harbour Authority;
- (b) Egremont. Further to Mr Martin's responses to Member questions earlier in the meeting (Minute SH.13/17(b) above refers), the Board was of the view that it needed further discussions with Mr Martin in respect of the future business model for the Egremont;

- (c) the next South West Regional Ports Association meeting. The Harbour Master extended an invite to any interested Members to attend the next Association meeting in Salcombe on 11 October 2017;
- (d) the Annual Report. The 2017 Annual Report was felt to be a positive reader friendly document that provided a useful current position statement for the Harbour;
- (e) the merits of combining the Harbour Guide and the Tourist Information Guide. Whilst noting that this would be further discussed over the winter months, a Member did wish to highlight that there were potential ramifications associated with combining the Guides;
- (f) the Shadycombe Car / Boat Park review. Interested Members were invited to attend a Workshop on the review at 9.30am on Wednesday, 11 October 2017. With regard to timescales for this review, the Harbour Master advised that these had not yet been confirmed.

It was then:

**RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

The Meeting concluded at 5.35 pm

**Signed by:**

**Chairman**

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