

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD
HELD AT CLIFF HOUSE, SALCOMBE ON MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2014**

Members in attendance			
* Denotes attendance		∅ Denotes apology for absence	
*	Cllr J Brazil (Chairman)	*	Mr G Burrell
*	Cllr M J Hicks	*	Dr C C Harling (Vice Chairman)
*	Cllr K R H Wingate	∅	Mr M Mackley
*	Cllr S A E Wright	*	Mr H Marriage
		*	Mr A Thomson
		*	Mr M Taylor
∅	Cllr H D Bastone (lead Executive Member)		

Item No	Minute Ref No below refers	Officers in attendance and participating
All agenda items		Salcombe Harbour Master, Head of Assets, Principal Accountant and Member Services Manager

SH.21/14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Salcombe Harbour Board held on 7 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SH.22/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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, Dr Harling, Mr Marriage, Mr Burrell, Mr Taylor and Cllr Wingate all declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in all related agenda items by virtue of having moorings or paying harbour dues to the Council.

As the Deputy Monitoring Officer had previously granted a dispensation under Paragraph 8.1 (c) of the Code of Conduct (minute SH.06/14 refers), all Members remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and debate on all agenda items.

SH.23/14 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

During the Public Question Time session the following matters were raised:

In view of the Board being presented with an item that referred to waterskiing in the Harbour (Minute SH.25/14 below refers), a number of members of the public wanted to speak on this matter. The Chairman agreed that the last speaker would be Mr James Heaven, who had prepared a paper supporting waterskiing in the Harbour. The comments made by all speakers included the following:

- One member of the public presented the Board with a petition of 1,636 signatures against waterskiing in the Harbour;
- concern about the noise impact;
- concern that the environmental comments in Mr Heaven's report were based on a bland general statement suggesting birds were not disturbed by waterskiing if they were 50 metres from the bank, but the handbook goes on to state 'in a non sensitive area' therefore that would rule out waterskiing in the Kingsbridge Salcombe estuary. Scientific studies had shown that tolerant species of bird were disturbed at 200 metres and intolerant species at 450 metres;
- Mr Heaven's report suggested that club members could help to regulate non club members but to ask amateurs with no powers to regulate could be a recipe for disaster;
- Salcombe Yacht Club unanimously opposed the application to allow waterskiing in the Harbour and had concerns relating to safety;
- Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club opposed waterskiing in the estuary and felt it would do a disservice to this special area;
- Since the area was defined as an AONB; there was a speed limit in place for well established reasons; studies had demonstrated the incompatibility of waterskiing with other activities; the impact on sailing, canoeing, and fishing would be considerable; waterskiing was difficult and costly to police, and finally there would be noise issues. A century or more of building up a reputation would be compromised if waterskiing were to be allowed;
- Waterskiing and angling were incompatible with each other;
- SKEA was against the principle of waterskiing in the harbour, which was contrary to the Board's own policy. National, local, and the Board's own designations were in place;
- One member of the public had been counting birds in the estuary for 40 years and some of those birds were exhausted when they arrived having travelled for many miles. A bylaw was put in place 30 years ago to prohibit waterskiing and aquaplaning and there were good reasons for that bylaw, he wished fervently that waterskiing would not be allowed in the Harbour;
- Concerns about safety, and having water-skied in Starehole Bay once, would not do it again. Waterskiing should take place out to sea, not within a protected environment;
- The Harbour Board should not undermine its own vision, but retain the character and expectation;
- Safety aspects were a concern, for example, the impact of a speedboat out of control, would people be happy to let their children and grandchildren on the estuary if waterskiing were to be allowed?;

- Speak to people where waterskiing successfully took place. It would work if waterskiing were to be policed properly and the right environment used. It was suggested to introduce waterskiing for a season as a trial. Children enjoyed it and it did not have to involve large boats. Those saying they do not want waterskiing were mostly old people;
- This meeting was trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. Some would love to see waterskiing activity but how would this be controlled. If club members were allowed to travel at speed on the estuary why not other harbour users;
- The British Waterski Federation had stringent controls and once a test was passed this was recognised with reduced insurance costs. The Federation did a good job in policing this sort of thing;
- The majority of people who wanted to waterski had better waterski facilities where they had come from so why not have it there.

Mr Heaven was then asked to present his written report. It had previously been circulated to Members of the Board and he went through the key sections within the report beginning with an introduction about himself and his experience of waterskiing and water sports in general.

In his view, there was a silent majority of people who were not catered for. Overnight, and without consultation, the Harbour Board had reduced 75% of the water skiing area in 2009. Allowing waterskiing would result in a significant contribution to the economy. Even if those waterskiing were second home owners that did not make them second class citizens. People obtained a great sense of achievement from waterskiing and it could be the highlight of their summer holiday.

Mr Heaven then outlined his options as per the presented report. He concluded that he had a petition of 700 signatures in favour of allowing waterskiing. It was a legitimate request for a significant number of people who deserved to be heard.

On behalf of the Board, the Chairman concluded this agenda item by thanking each representative for addressing the Board.

SH.24/14

FEEDBACK FROM HARBOUR COMMUNITY FORUMS

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

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Association (SKEA)

The representative had given apologies so no update was given.

Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum (SKECF)

The representative for SKECF advised that a meeting was due to be held the following day.

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

The representative advised that there were concerns raised about the way lorries were parked on the Fish Quay, and particularly in that they were parking overnight. There was a perception that some vehicles were parking and not paying.

The Assistant Harbour Master advised that agreements were in place in respect of appropriate payments, that Environmental Health had been contacted about noise issues from generators and this issue was being addressed and that the staff did try to communicate with all of the users of the Fish Quay.

Kingsbridge and Salcombe Marine Business Forum

The representative advised that there were three issues to raise being the parking slipway in Kingsbridge which was being used by the same person on a semi permanent basis; there being on average twelve empty berths on the new pontoon each week, and one old mooring which was still in use but appeared to be dangerous.

In response to these issues the representative was advised that the business using the parking slipway would be approached and the matter looked into. The one old mooring was a holding mooring that belonged to a local business and whilst it belonged to the business and not the Harbour Authority, it would still be checked for safety.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club (KEBC)

The representative for KEBC advised that the parking slipway had been raised as an issue by the KEBC and that the other issue raised was the repairs needed to the Quayside wall. The Harbour Master confirmed that a total of seven boats had been trapped but they would be put onto temporary moorings. No boats had been damaged but there was a concern in respect of under water debris.

SH.25/14

PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE WATERSKIING INTO SALCOMBE HARBOUR

The Board was presented with a report that reviewed the desirability and practicality of introducing waterskiing into Salcombe Harbour.

The Harbour Master introduced the report and the Estuaries Officer gave his views. The Harbour Master set out the options as presented in the report.

During discussion, the following points were made:

One Member stated that this was a very emotive subject and that he could not see any justification for introducing water skiing in the upper harbour and was troubled by the potential safety aspects in the lower harbour. The differences between the two sides were irreconcilable and he would recommend that the proposal to introduce waterskiing went no further;

One Member stated that there was great value in the report that had been prepared by Mr Heaven as much research had been undertaken and a great deal of detail had been included. Despite, there being some inaccuracies in the report, there was value in having a study that set out all options in detail. In respect of Bar Lodge and Widegates, waterskiing in those areas was deemed unacceptable on the grounds of safety.

If Starehole Bay was viewed as being dangerous perhaps the MCA should be lobbied. It was important to safeguard the features that had made Salcombe a uniquely attractive place;

Another Member added that seamanship was important and vessels needed to travel at a safe speed. Waterskiing did not fit within the harbour. He also felt that the matter of waterskiing at Starehole Bay should be discussed at a future workshop as perhaps the Board needed to see if there was a way to work with the waterskiing group;

One Member stated that the harbour was within the AONB and the SSSI. Education was always better than legislation in terms of safety. Everyone was entitled to an opinion and his view was that he had seen and heard nothing to persuade him to introduce waterskiing into the harbour;

Another Member reminded the Board that the harbour was also a locally designated nature reserve and Salcombe was regarded as a special place for wildlife and this was directly linked with the quietness of the area;

Other Members also raised safety as a concern.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That that Harbour Board **RESOLVES** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that Harbour bylaw 48 be endorsed which prevents waterskiing within the confines of the Harbour limits.
2. That further investigations be carried out into the issues of waterskiing at Starehole Bay.

SH.26/14 **2015/16 BUDGET**

Members were presented with a report that set out the 2015/16 draft budget that built upon the principles adopted in the Salcombe Harbour Strategic Business Plan and detailed the financial impact of the proposals contained therein.

The Harbour Master introduced the report and took Members through the key parts of it. He also responded to specific queries.

During discussion, the following points were raised:

- A Member suggested that, in light of the collapse of the wall at Kingsbridge, charges should be increased to enable funds to be set aside towards the repairs;

- Other Members agreed with the principle, although the amount that could be raised would be small in comparison with the expected costs;
- Members discussed the Marine Infrastructure Reserve, and concerns over increasing contributions to this Reserve as it had broken a key tradition. The Head of Assets confirmed that this Reserve had been ringfenced;
- One Member asked that if repairs were needed, did it really matter where the funds were generated from, as there was a responsibility to the wider South Hams to make those repairs;
- One Member did not agree with increasing charges at all.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Board **RECOMMENDS** to Council that the 2015/16 budget items (as set out in the presented agenda report) be approved, with the addition of £7,500 being transferred into the Pontoon Reserve, generated from increasing residents fees by 2%.

SH.27/14 **FEES AND CHARGES 2015/16**

Members were presented with a report that had been prepared to enable Board Members to recommend the Harbour rates and charges for 2015/16.

The Harbour Master set out the detail of the report, and advised that he was proposing to increase harbour dues but not mooring fees.

As part of the discussion in relation to setting the budget, the majority of Members concluded that a small increase in the mooring fees should be included, if only to prevent a large increase being needed in future.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Board **RECOMMENDS** to Council that:

- a. The changes to the charging policy as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the presented report be approved;
- b. The proposed charges as presented in Appendix A of the report be approved for implementation from 1 April 2015; and
- c. All residents' fees be increased by 2%.

SH.28/14 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Board was presented with a report that set out the Harbour's performance against agreed Performance Indicators (PIs).

The Harbour Master introduced the report and set out the key points. A Member suggested that the recycling of yacht refuse indicator should be removed, but reinstated if a method of assessing it could be used. A Member also requested that water quality be reported as a performance indicator and this was agreed.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That Harbour performance against agreed performance indicators be noted, with future performance reports removing the 'recycling of yacht refuse' indicator and adding an indicator in relation to water quality.

SH.30/14 **TOPICAL HARBOUR ISSUES**

The Board considered a report that identified a range of topical harbour issues that did not warrant a separate report in their own right. The Board also asked for a vote of thanks to be noted to the Harbour Master and his staff for their hard work.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

(Meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 5.20 pm)

Chairman