

SOUTH HAMS SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Salcombe Harbour Board** held on
Monday, 26th September, 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

Cllr Foss
Ms A Jones
Mr A Owens

In attendance:

Councillors:

Cllr Bastone

Officers:

Director – Place & Enterprise
Salcombe Harbour Master
Deputy Harbour Masters
Deputy Section 151 Officer
Democratic Services Manager

12. **Apologies for Absence**
SH.12/22
It was noted that apologies for absence for this Board Meeting had been received from Messrs Plant and Shipperley.
13. **Urgent Business**
SH.13/22
There were no items of urgent business raised at this meeting.
14. **Declarations of Interest**
SH.14/22
Members were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting, and the following was made:

Messrs Owens and Stewart and Ms Jones each 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 refers).

15. **Public Question Time**

SH.15/22

In accordance with the Public Question Time Procedure Rules, there were no Questions raised at this Board Meeting.

16. **Feedback from Harbour Community Forums**

SH.16/22

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)

The Board noted that the next meeting of the Forum was due to be held on 18 October 2022.

In discussion, specific reference was made to a siltation project query and it was agreed that this should be discussed with the Harbour Master and the Kingsbridge Town Council Clerk outside of this Board Meeting.

Working in partnership with the Environment Agency, it was noted that there was a desire to establish a Steering Group to monitor water quality in the Estuary. Finally, the representative committed to sending additional information that had been produced by the Environment Agency in relation to water quality to all Board Members following this Meeting

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

The representative advised that the Shellfishermen had experienced a positive summer and were generally content.

Whilst a Central Government issue, there were still barriers regarding the transportation of crab to China.

Finally, the Shellfishermen were taking every step possible to minimise the impact of noise in the local area.

Kingsbridge and Salcombe Marine Business Forum

The representative informed that:

- the businesses were working well together and communications and the commitment to work together and support one another were very positive;
- whilst the Harbour Master was already aware of the viewpoint, the Forum felt that the toilet and shower facilities at Whitestrand were sub-standard;
- the dramatic increases in fuel costs were having a detrimental impact on businesses; and
- the Forum wished to pass on its thanks to the Harbour Authority for helping to facilitate an excellent summer.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club (KEBC)

The Board noted that there were two key themes arising from the Boat Club. These were summarised as follows:

1. There being some desire amongst members of the Club for the provision of temporary berths at Kingsbridge; and
2. The Club was of the view that the Kingsbridge Slipway could be better utilised, with a specific request having been made for additional dinghy storage on the Slipway.

Whilst there was currently no provision in South Hams District Councils' Capital Programme for any works on the Slipway, the Board had a great deal of sympathy with the viewpoint that there was scope to make better use of the facility and also considered there to be significant revenue potential. As a result, the Board requested that a formal recommendation be submitted to the Executive as follows:

RESOLVED

That the Board request that, as part of its future considerations into the Council's Capital Programme, the Executive be asked to consider including a revenue generating scheme at the Kingsbridge Slipway.

East Portlemouth Parish Council

The representative confirmed that there were no issues arising from the Parish Council.

17. 2023/24 Budget and Fees & Charges

SH.17/22

The Board considered a report that set out the draft Salcombe Harbour Authority budget for 2023/24 and that provided a budget forecast for 2022/23. In addition, the report also proposed the Fees and Charges for 2023/24 that would ensure that the Harbour achieved a balanced revenue budget for 2023/24.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- (a) A Member wished to make the point that the annual practice of increasing the charges based on horsepower had been ongoing for a number of years. As a result, the Member felt that it would be timely to review this practice as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process;
- (b) Some Members commented that the lack of parking provision in the town was becoming an increased hindrance. In addition, the view was expressed that the Board should write to the Town Council requesting that, if at all possible, a Park and Ride facility should be re-established. Further solutions were suggested that included relocating permit holders. In recognition that there were a number of partner agencies involved, the Board tasked Cllr Long with facilitating a meeting between representatives from Salcombe Town Council; South Hams District Council; Devon County Council and the Harbour Board in an attempt to overcome the current parking problems;
- (c) Given the current Cost of Living Crisis, the Board commended the fact that most fees and charges were being maintained at the current 2022/23 levels;

- (d) In reply to a question, the Harbour Master informed that a benchmarking exercise had been undertaken and the proposed fees and charges compared favourably with other Harbour Authorities such as Fowey, Falmouth and Dartmouth.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

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

1. the proposed 2023/24 Budget (as set out within the published agenda report) be approved; and
2. with effect from 1 April 2023, the proposed 2023/24 Fees and Charges (as set out in Appendix C of the published agenda report) be approved.

18. Harbour Master's Report

SH.18/22

A report was presented that provided the Board with an update on a number of recent issues that affected the Harbour.

In discussion, reference was made to:

- (a) there having been an increase in near misses this year. The Board noted that there were no linkages between the near misses and each occurrence had been looked at in great detail and had resulted in some good lessons being learned;
- (b) the harbour security contract. Support was expressed for the proposal to establish a Working Group of Board Members to shape the direction in which the security contract should be redesigned prior to going out to tender. The Board subsequently agreed that Messrs Owens and Stewart, Cllr Long and Ms Jones would form the Working Group.

Regarding the existing security contract, the Harbour Master informed that the decision to bring forward a presence from 9.00pm last year to 8.00pm (6.00pm during the high season) had been a resounding success. Finally, the Board recognised that instances of drink driving on the water had seemingly been more prevalent this year;

- (c) an update on the commercial units and harbour depot projects. The Board noted that the projects were unfortunately six months behind schedule and, in respect of the depot project, there was now a huge amount of input required from the Harbour Authority. Whilst the Authority was now incurring costs as a result of the delay, it was confirmed that there were penalty clauses associated with the contract. In thanking the Board for its patience and understanding, it was noted that the target date for the end of project completion was 31 October 2022.

With regard to the commercial units project, a lengthy debate ensued over the bidding process. Whilst officer assurances were given over the transparency, weighting and due diligence to be adhered to in the process, it was also recognised

that demand would exceed the five available units and it was therefore inevitable that some parties would be unsuccessful and therefore disappointed;

- (d) the importance of the Duty Holder Training for Executive Members. It was noted that the vital training had been rearranged to be held on Thursday, 13 October 2022. In reply to a question, it was intended that a draft Memorandum of Understanding would be presented to the next Board meeting to be held on 14 November 2022;
- (e) the gig racing regatta capsized incident. The Board discussed the merits of insisting that gig racers in the Harbour should wear life jackets. The Harbour Master advised that opinions were divided on this matter and the Gig Club had already recognised the need to review its risk assessments. Whilst the Harbour Authority would be conducting its own review into the annual event, officers had already met with the report author and representatives from the Gig Club and the RNLI.

As a general point, the importance of ensuring that Board Members were informed of such incidents as soon as was practically possible, the Harbour Master committed to looking into the merits of setting up a Board 'what's app' messaging group for this purpose.

- (f) the use of hydrofoils in the Harbour. The Harbour Master stated that the definition of a 'vessel' was a particularly complicated area of law for which independent legal advice was currently being sought. However, officers advised that they would continue to work with those identified hydrofoil owners.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the contents of the Harbour Master's report be noted and endorsed.

The Meeting concluded at 4.30 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
