

SOUTH HAMS SALCOMBE HARBOUR BOARD



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Salcombe Harbour Board** held on
Monday, 18th September, 2023 at **2.30 pm** at the **Cliff House, Salcombe**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Long
Vice Chairman Mr I Stewart

Mr A Owens
Cllr McKay

Cllr Bonham
Ms K Allen

In attendance:

Director Of Place & Enterprise
Salcombe Harbour Master
Head of Finance
Principal Civil engineer
Deputy Harbour Masters
Head of Democratic Services

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

SH.1/23

Since this was the first Board meeting following the May 2023 local elections, the Chairman welcomed Cllrs Bonham and McKay and Ms Allen to their first formal meeting following their respective appointments.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

SH.2/23

It was noted that apologies for absence for this Board Meeting had been received from Cllr Dennis and Messrs Brown, Plant and Shipperley.

3. **Minutes**

SH.3/23

The minutes of the Salcombe Harbour Board meeting held on 20 March 2023 were confirmed as a true and correct record.

4. **Urgent Business**

SH.4/23

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

5. **Code of Conduct Dispensations**

SH.5/23

In accordance with the adopted Members' Code of Conduct, it was noted that the payment of Harbour Dues constituted a contract with South Hams District Council. As a result, this matter should be declared by Members as a 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interest' (DPI).

Since a number of Board Members were in the position of paying Harbour Dues, it was noted that the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer) had granted a dispensation to each of these Members to enable them to take part in the debate and vote on related matters at Board meetings (in accordance with Paragraph 8.1(c) of the Members Code of Conduct). The granting of this dispensation would ensure that Board meetings were quorate and able to proceed and these would be in place until the date of the South Hams District Council Annual Council meeting to be held on 16 May 2024.

6. **Declarations of Interest**

SH.6/23

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:

Cllrs Bonham, Ms Allen and Mr Stewart each declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in all related agenda items by virtue of paying harbour duties. As set out earlier in this meeting (Minute SH.3/23 above refers), the Monitoring Officer had granted each of these Members a dispensation and they were therefore able to take part in the debate and vote on any related matters.

7. **Public Question Time**

SH.7/23

In accordance with the Public Question Time Procedure Rules, there was no questions raised at this Meeting.

8. **Feedback from Harbour Community Forums**

SH.8/23

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)

Whilst the composition of the Board had changed, the Board Chairman confirmed that he was happy to remain as its SKECF representative.

South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen

The representative advised that the Shellfishermen were generally content and the industry had experienced a good summer season.

Kingsbridge and Salcombe Marine Business Forum

It was agreed that Ms Allen would become the Board representative on the Business Forum.

By way of a general update, it was noted that, largely because of the poor summer weather, tourism footfall in Salcombe had been as much as 40% lower than in previous years.

Kingsbridge Estuary Boat Club (KEBC)

It was noted that the Club and the Harbour Authority enjoyed a very positive working relationship and the Harbour Master put on record how much he valued the support that was given by the Club.

East Portlemouth Parish Council

The lack of recent feedback from the Parish Council was highlighted and the merits of retaining it as a 'Community Forum' were therefore questioned. As a result, it was agreed that contact would be made with the Parish Council before a view was taken over whether or not it should be retained.

9. 2022/2023 Year End Financial Report

SH.9/23

The Board considered a report that advised of the Harbour's final trading position in 2022/23 together with details outlining the main variations from the originally approved Budget. The report also set out a summary of Harbour Reserves and an analysis of the payments that were made between Salcombe Harbour and the District Council during 2022/23.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:

- (a) the 'miscellaneous' heading in the Revenue Outturn. For clarity, the Head of Finance advised that examples of expenditure that fell within this heading were: conference expenses; legal fees; contributions to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) unit; and the Special Responsibility Allowance that was entitled to be claimed by the Board Chairman;
- (b) inclusion of published appendix 3: 'Payments between Salcombe Harbour and South Hams District Council'. Members welcomed inclusion of published appendix 3 and felt that this added value to the Year End report.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the income and expenditure variations for the 2022/23 Financial Year and the overall trading surplus of £156,524 be noted, with the surplus being allocated to the Harbour's General (Revenue Account) Reserve; and
2. That the payment of merit pay to the Harbour Staff of up to £8,000 (to be funded from the Harbour's General (Revenue Account) Reserve) be supported.

10.

2024/25 Budget

SH.10/23

The Board considered a report that proposed the Salcombe Harbour Authority budget for 2024/25 and provided a budget forecast for 2023/24.

In discussion, particular reference was made to:-

- (a) the proposed Fees & Charges Workshop. Due to being interlinked, a Member questioned as to how the Council could recommend approval of its Budget for 2024/25 at this meeting without making a series of recommendations on its Fees and Charges at the same time.

In response, officers advised that, once the Budget was set, it would then be a matter for the Board to consider its Fees and Charges to fund the identified budget deficit for 2024/25 (£77,000) and thereby achieving the overall objective of a balanced budget.

To provide greater clarity, an amended recommendation 1 was therefore **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** to read as follows:

‘That the proposed 2024/25 Budget (as set out within the published agenda report) be approved, with it being noted that the detailed means of closing the Budget deficit (identified as being £77,000) will be considered by the Board at its next meeting (to be held on 13 November 2023).’

Regarding the date (and time) for the Board Workshop to be held, it was agreed that this should take place during week commencing 16 October 2023 and the Harbour Master was tasked with establishing the most convenient date and time following this Board meeting;

- (b) the total cost of replacing the moorings barge. When questioned, the Harbour Master estimated that a replacement moorings barge would cost in the region of up to £750,000. Once the Batson Project had been completed, the Harbour Master stated that it would be then his intention to produce a report for consideration at a future Board meeting.

It was then:

RECOMMENDED

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

1. the proposed 2024/25 Budget (as set out within the published agenda report) be approved, with it being noted that the detailed means of closing the Budget deficit (identified as being £77,000) will be considered by the Board at its next meeting (to be held on 13 November 2023); and
2. £150,000 be transferred from the Harbour’s General (Revenue Account) Reserve to the Renewals Reserve as part of closing the 2023/24 Accounts, with this funding being earmarked to support the cost of replacing the moorings barge.

11. **Harbour Master's Report**

SH.11/23

The Harbour Master presented a report that provided an update on a number of recent issues that had affected the Harbour. In particular, the report provided specific updates on service performance, major projects and any other issues that impacted upon the Harbour.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) Given the number of fuel thefts from the overflow pontoon, the Harbour Master confirmed that potential preventative measures would be given further consideration during the winter months;
- (b) With regard to water quality monitoring, Members noted the intention for a standalone agenda item on this issue to be included on the agenda for the Harbour Board meeting to be held on 13 November 2023;
- (c) Members welcomed receipt of the incident log (as detailed at Appendix 3 of the published agenda report). In emphasising its particular importance, Members asked that safety be given consideration at the Board Workshop during week commencing 16 October 2023 and, for future incident logs, these be divided between 'human' and 'vessel' safety and placed at the top of the document;

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the Board note and endorse the contents of the Harbour Master's report.

12. **Projects update - Verbal Report**

SH.12/23

In providing an update to the Board, the Principal Civil Engineer advised that:

- we were reaching the conclusion of what had been a prolonged (and particularly resource intensive and testing) process to deliver the Commercial Units and Harbour Depot projects;
- having been completed in May 2023, five tenants had signed up for the Commercial Units, three of which were already in their units and content with their premises;
- the handover date of the Depot was envisaged to be 28 September 2023. The Engineer thanked the Harbour Authority and Board for their patience and was of the view that the completed facility looked excellent and, whilst there had been significant project delays, it had been finalised within the approved project budget. The Engineer also confirmed that financial penalties had been applied to the Contractor;
- there had been a number of lessons learned through the progression of both projects;

Following the update, the Board wished to put on record its thanks to all lead officers who had been so instrumental in delivering these projects.

13.

Marine Decarbonisation - Verbal Update

SH.13/23

In providing an update, the Board noted that:

- a Marine Decarbonisation Officer was now within the employ of the Council;
- representatives from the University of Plymouth had undertaken water and ecology tests in the Harbour;
- a Marine Economy Study was intended to be carried out during February 2024;
- works being underway to establish the carbon footprint of the Harbour;
- an electric vessels project also being underway.

In conclusion, given both the amount of work ongoing and the global emphasis on the Climate Change and Biodiversity agenda, officers committed to providing regular progress updates to the Board.

The Meeting concluded at 4.20 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
