

Report to: **Salcombe Harbour Board**

Date: **18 September 2023**

Title: **Harbour Master's Report**

Portfolio Area: **Salcombe Harbour**

Wards Affected: **All South Hams**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **N**

Date next steps can be taken:
(e.g. referral on of recommendation or implementation of substantive decision) **N/A**

Author: **C Sims-Stirling** Role: **Harbour Master**

Contact: **Tel: 01548 843791**
Email: cameron.sims-stirling@swdevon.gov.uk

Recommendations:

That the Board RESOLVES to note and endorse the content of the Harbour Master's report.

1. Executive summary

This report updates the board on a number of recent issues affecting the Harbour.

2. Performance Indicators

The Harbour Board endorsed the introduction of a set of Performance Indicators (PIs) and to have them reported as a standing agenda item (SH 26/06).

See Appendix 1, 2 & 3

Appendix 1 contains seasonal PIs based around visitor income from the 2022 summer season.

Income from visitors from sea with regard to both Mooring Fees and Harbour Dues is down on last year primarily from changeable weather in July and August which resulted in a gale or near gale falling on consecutive Fridays or Saturdays over a 6-week period. Town landings, used for

overnight stays of a minority of visitors from sea is also slightly down on last year and average, again partly due to the weather and how the shift begins in April as to the timescale Normandy Pontoon is used for berthing, which was short this year.

Figures for Visitor Foreshore moorings and the Boatpark are estimated as a proportion of monies are held in suspension from bookings in the previous financial year and some movement of bookings and resident credits will adjust final figures. Visitor foreshore is expected to be healthy with more bookings throughout the fringe months and more customers requesting to berth at Kingsbridge. These revenue streams are less susceptible to bad weather as they represent vessels arriving by trailer on planned holidays. The Trailer Park, now reduced in size due to the Commercial Marine Units development is up on revenue in comparison to last year when it was temporarily relocated to provide a minimal amount of space to store loose trailers. It is however lower than most years, potentially due to capacity but also the availability of contractor storage options that were encouraged last year.

Appendix 2 highlights the demand for various Harbour Authority and SHDC facilities. This forms a good baseline that can be used in future to plan further development.

Waiting lists continue to increase across the board with many more applicants per year than the turnover of facilities. There is still no availability in Newbridge or Frogmore Creeks, which historically (before covid) had some foreshore moorings unallocated. For the fifth year running we have more people waiting for the Batson Residents Compound and the Foreshore Pontoon facilities than the total number of spaces/berths that those facilities physically have, currently allocated. This is almost now the case for the dinghy rack and ground space facilities also. Having such a high number of people waiting for facilities that have generally low turnover and no accurate way to predict future turnover means we cannot realistically state how long some waiting lists will take apart from advising on how long those currently being allocated have waited.

2.1 Outcomes/outputs.

The Harbour Authority have created a more accurate way of obtaining "logged" information, see **Appendix 3**. The aim is to build a robust monitoring system that will give a greater insight into incidents throughout the harbour, which in turn will highlight areas for future consideration regarding running a safe and efficient harbour.

It is worth noting we are continually improving our methods of logging incidents via various means, in house, as editable electronic forms posted online and available to email and afloat with our staff via remote devices. This will naturally result in a more efficient reporting process and potentially an increase in the number of events logged.

The table in Appendix 3 makes note of particular examples or breaks down particular types of incidents with some trends are noted below:

Collisions: Following the better reporting and follow up of sailing dinghy collisions supported by the yacht club, an independent expert and ourselves it is positive to see this figure has not continued to increase. In fact the number of incidences where damage has resulted appears less than in previous years despite sailing events experiencing windier forecasts, potentially due to the less experienced sailors not venturing afloat. Unfortunately there is still a relatively high number of collisions between larger, predominantly visiting craft, unable to anticipate fast tidal flows.

Damage: As noted above the worst damage has primarily resulted from larger/heavier boats colliding. Other instances include where our own craft have caused or received damage. The most detrimental examples are to our harbour taxi getting alongside the East Portlemouth slipway in a strong cross tide.

Navigational incident: Predominantly poor navigation leading to groundings.

MOB: Whilst relatively uncommon some of these incidents have occurred in busy waterways linked to commercial activities and therefore the operators have been asked to review and update their risk assessments and method statements to reduce the likelihood of this happening in future.

Near Miss: With a couple of current examples of larger, unused and unmaintained vessels being of particular concern and potential liability, one vessel has required harbour authority staff to step in to bail the bilges frequently.

Speeding: Following a targeted improvement in the number and frequency of our own internal staff conducting patrols it is positive to see a reduction in the number of logged speeding instances. Those stopped are logged in detail, this information is reviewed against the individual boats account and the registered owner/helm is informed of how the breach in byelaws is used in relation to our Enforcement Policy. One instance has been forwarded to Ashfords LLP to assess in terms of prosecution and this is ongoing. These patrols are often part of a more rounded approach to improve stakeholder engagement, observation, facility monitoring, security, education and logging of various byelaw offences including speeding, nuisance and antisocial behaviour.

2.2 Options available and consideration of risk.

Monitor and report; periodically review PIs for their utility.

2.3 Proposed Way Forward.

Continue monitoring PIs with regular reports back to the Board.

Continue to improve communication with Salcombe Yacht Club and other organising bodies, including pre and post season/event meetings and where possible independent comment.

Maritime Event Request Form in used to plan and set out the requirements for certain events activities.

3. Procurement update.

3.1 Harbour Security – contract ended

The previous external security contract ended April 1st, 2023. Subsequently this patrol has been facilitated in house by the Senior Moorings Officer and a newly appointed Moorings Officer, who have conducted daily or twice daily patrol shifts of the harbour in addition to the normal staffing rota, partially focussing on High Water tidal access up the creeks. Not only does this cover an element of security but also allows our experienced staff to observe and monitor the quieter areas of the harbour more regularly, improve stakeholder engagement, report problems and enforce byelaws such as speeding. We feel this is successfully accomplishing a wider variety of taskings including security whilst improving resilience and flexibility in house.

3.2 Harbour Barge

Upon completion of Harbour Depot project.

4. Projects Update.

4.1 Commercial Units and Harbour Depot

Verbal update – Dan Field.

Safety compliance agency commissioned to advise, write and monitor all aspects of our shoreside operations in line with moving into the new Harbour Workshop.

4.2 Harbour Office

Consider the key deliverables for improving visiting yacht facilities, including costs, opportunities and constraints, no further progress has been made at this time.

4.3 Vessel disposal

Multiple conversations and actions are underway to ensure 'end of life' (unused/unmaintained) vessels do not become a liability within the harbour.

- The removal of one retired MFV is in progress and she is currently slipped at a private boatyard to be disposed of by contractor. We have both acted as an intermediary in progressing these actions and assisted with some particular elements.
- Another unused MFV remains afloat in a poor condition and we are liaising with the owner as to their plans/options.
- A small yacht has also been left damaged and unregistered by numerous parties following a succession of 'sales and offerings' of questionable intent. Following no contact from supposedly interested parties it may fall to the harbour authority to dispose of.

4.4 Stakeholder engagement

- Building stronger ties with the local Police force who are improving their presence in the local area working with us both ashore and afloat to manage events and provide us with an increased visual deterrent.
- Engaging with local schools to provide education about what we do and safety afloat – via the Senior Mooring Officer.
- Attending various port groups, local estuary forums and KINS networking.

4.5 Water Quality Monitoring

It has been arranged for the Environment Agency to attend the next Harbour Board meeting in November and they will give a joint update with our estuaries officer.

5. Training

5.1 Staff Training update

- Harbour Familiarisation tour, meet and greet and training for the newly assembled Harbour Board and Executive.
- Governance training for the newly formed Executive
- Mini digger course for 4 of our staff to complement our recent purchase.
- Mooring Officer RNLi AEC course
- Further Mini digger and plant training and refreshers scheduled for the Autumn.

6. Governance

6.1 Governance

SHDC's Executive has been identified as the Duty Holder for Salcombe Harbour Authority and following local elections the makeup of the Executive has changed requiring training from Ashfords LLP.

6.2 Harbour Revision Order

Ashfords LLP has drafted and submitted a Harbour Revision Order for South Hams District Council as the statutory harbour authority ('the SHA') for the Harbour.

Because the Council does not currently have the power to give general directions, the Council is seeking to obtain modern powers of General Direction to enable it to have a set of general directions covering the Harbour instead of having separate byelaws and directions. Designation with powers of General Direction is an important tool which will assist the Council with compliance with the PMSC and the environmental duties placed on harbour authorities by virtue of section 48A of the 1964 Act and paragraph 16A of Schedule 2 to that Act, which enables a harbour revision order to confer powers for environmental conservation within the Harbour. This piece of work is due to take between 9-18 months.

7. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	The Council is the Harbour Authority for the purposes of the Pier and Harbour Order (Salcombe) Confirmation Act 1954 and the Harbours Act 1964. As the Harbour Authority the Council is expected to follow the Ports Good Governance Guide. The Guide advises that Local Authority owned Statutory Harbour Authorities should generally operate in an open, transparent and accountable way, making a range of information available to stakeholders about their organisation and activities, subject to commercial and data confidentiality considerations. This report is one of the ways in which the Council seeks to meet the Guide's requirements.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money	N	There are no specific financial implications.
Risk	Y	The Harbour maintains three different reserves, one for replacement of plant and vessels, one for the replacement of pontoons and a general reserve. In the event of the budget not balancing at the end of the Financial year any surplus is transferred into the General Reserve and any shortfall would be funded from this reserve.
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Salcombe Harbour is part of the 'Enterprise Theme', creating places for enterprise to thrive and business to grow, contributing to the marine and tourism economy.
Climate Change – Carbon / Biodiversity Impact		None directly arising from this report.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity	N	None
Safeguarding	N	None

Community Safety, Crime and Disorder	Y	None
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	N	No adverse impacts.
Other implications	N	

Supporting Information

Appendices:

- 1: Performance Markers, Summer 2023**
- 2: Wait List 2023**
- 3: Review of Incident Log, Summer 2023**

Background Papers:

None.