



COWES HARBOUR
COMMISSION

Annual Report 2020 – 2021





Annual Report

2020 - 2021

Contents

About us	5
Our Responsibility	5
Our Aims	5
Governance	6 - 7
Health and Safety Policy	8 - 9
Chairman's Statement	10 - 11
Chief Executive's Review of 2020	12 - 13
People	14 - 17
Key Financial Information	18 - 21
Yacht Services	22 - 25
Creating Value for our Stakeholders	26 - 27
Harbour Developments	28 - 33
Environment and Sustainability	34 - 35
Safety and Security	36 - 37
Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee	38 - 39





**COWES HARBOUR
COMMISSION**

About us

Cowes Harbour Commission (CHC), constituted under the Cowes Harbour Act and Orders 1897-2012, is the Statutory Harbour Authority for Cowes Harbour on the Isle of Wight. CHC receives no funding from either central or local government and re-invests surpluses into the organisation for the overall benefit of the port and harbour.

Our Responsibility

To ensure that Cowes Harbour continues to be the gateway for the Island and run for the benefit of all harbour users in a safe, sustainable, and commercially viable manner.

Our Aims

- *Provide a safe and regulated environment for all users of the harbour*
- *Implement best practice across the organisation*
- *Proactively engage with external stakeholders and the community*
- *Deliver long-term financial sustainability*
- *Invest in the long-term future of the harbour*
- *Support and develop marine employment*
- *Attract and retain knowledgeable and experienced staff with a strong work ethic*
- *Deliver sector leading user experiences*

Governance

Governance

Cowes Harbour is a Trust Port, designated and recognised by the Department for Transport (DfT). As such, it is an independent statutory body, run by an independent Board of Commissioners for the benefit of stakeholders. CHC is committed to operating within government DfT guidelines, as published in the Ports Good Governance Guidance.

The guiding policies and objectives of Cowes Harbour Commission are set out in the 2016 – 2021 Strategic Plan. Progress towards the Plan's strategic objectives is reported monthly to Commissioners, several times a year to the Harbour Advisory Committee and annually at a public meeting.

Port business for Cowes Harbour is conducted in the interests of all stakeholders with openness, transparency, accountability, and commercial prudence. The DfT requires CHC to operate as a commercial business, seeking to generate a surplus from its harbour operations and marine services. These surpluses are then ploughed back into the port or otherwise directed towards the interests and benefit of Cowes Harbour's stakeholders.

Board of Commissioners

The Cowes Harbour Commission Board consists of nine independent non-executive commissioners and the Chief Executive. The Commissioners are appointed on merit on an open recruitment basis to provide the Commission with the professional skills and experience to determine the policy and business decisions of the organisation. The Commissioners are appointed for a term of three years and can usually serve a maximum of two terms. A maximum of two additional Commissioners can be co-opted at any one time for specific purposes and serve for a period of 12 months.



Gary Hall
Chief Executive
& Commissioner



Ed Walker
Harbour Master

The Commissioners currently serving on the board are as follows:



David Riley
Chairman



Vanessa Clifford
Deputy Chairman
Marketing
& Business
Development



Jason Losty
Safety & Security



Phil Hagen
Strategy
& Performance
/ Personnel
Management



Ra Hennessy
Communications
& Marketing



James Evans
Governance
& Regulatory



**Fiona
Fitzherbert-
Brockholes**
Environment &
Sustainability



Steve Sheridan
Finance



Clive Blount
Marine Services
& Port Development



Health and Safety Policy

CHC's Policy Statement:

Promote and deliver a safety-first culture ensuring the highest standards in health and safety for CHC employees and harbour users and complying fully with the Port Marine Safety Code.



Guiding Policies

Harbour safety: Deliver harbour safety and safe vessel movements by compliance with a robust and integrated CHC Marine Safety Management System devised from formalised risk assessments, procedures and regular review / audit processes.

Health and safety: Operate marine services in accordance with the CHC Health and Safety Plan.

Duty Holders: The Commissioners commit to their collective and individual responsibilities as the 'Duty Holders' for safety by monitoring adherence to CHC's Marine Safety Management Plan.

Accident and incident investigation: Investigate all accidents and incidents in order to identify causes, learn lessons, and identify safety controls to prevent similar events in the future and to comply with statutory reporting requirements to external agencies.

Legislation: Maintain CHC's General Directions in a fit-for-purpose condition.

Enforcement: Promote, educate and enforce CHC's General Directions to deliver harbour safety.

Consultation: Consult harbour users and stakeholders on matters of safety and security in order to determine CHC's performance and share monthly reports on accidents and marine incidents.

Training: Invest in staff safety training to deliver CHC's safety objectives.

Pilotage: Operate a full pilotage service in compliance with the Pilotage Act 1987.

Security: Maintain a Port Security Plan and implement the plan in full compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code.

Audit: Provide independent assurance on safety delivery through the engagement of a Designated Person and periodic independent safety audit.



Chairman's Statement

The coronavirus pandemic and its effects have, like many other organisations, dominated the activities of Cowes Harbour Commission (CHC) for the last 15 months. I hope now matters are beginning to return to normal (or a least a new normal) that Cowes, its businesses, yacht clubs and other organisations will have a successful summer season. CHC is working hard to assist in that.

Throughout the pandemic CHC staff have kept the harbour safe and open and I thank all of them for their efforts and continued understanding.

In early 2021 we appointed a new CEO, Gary Hall and promoted Ed Walker to Harbour Master. Both have settled into their new roles well.

On 8 April 2017 I watched the Isle of Wight Council's Floating Bridge 6 being towed into Cowes Harbour prior to being commissioned. Four years on and many of the issues identified soon after commissioning remain unresolved. Recent reports have suggested the installation of the breakwater in 2014/15 may have increased the tidal flow around the floating bridge but independent surveys have confirmed this is not the case. It is also worthy of note that the previous floating bridge operated satisfactorily for 16 months after completion of the breakwater and that no changes to the required chain depths have been made.

In July 2020 CHC announced a Stakeholder Consultation on a vision for Cowes and for a potential application to the Charity Commission to permit CHC to obtain charitable status. While this announcement was received positively by many stakeholders, there was stiff opposition from some quarters so the proposals were put on hold but will be revisited in due course.

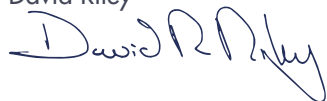
CHC remains financially sound despite the effects of the pandemic and able to continue investment in improving the harbour and to provide stakeholder benefits. However, our Operating Profit (probably the most easily understandable measure of financial performance) declined in 2020 to £191k having been in excess of £500k for almost all of the last ten years. Most of this decline is as a result of reduced activity in the harbour.

As a Trust Port CHC is held for the benefit of stakeholders- those who may interact with the harbour. CHC engages with stakeholders both individually and through the harbour Advisory Committee chaired by John Corby.

In April 2020 Jo Gillespie and Chris Preston retired as Harbour Commissioners after six years. They both made substantial contributions to CHC over the period, and I thank them. I welcome Fiona Fitzherbert-Brockholes as a Harbour Commissioner. Fiona was appointed after a competitive selection process and will have responsibility for environment and sustainability. Details of all Commissioners and their responsibilities can be found on our website.

This statement would not be complete without mention of Capt. Stuart McIntosh who retired as CEO and Harbour Master in February 2021 after over 20 years in the role. His contribution to the harbour, its development and success over that time has been nothing short of momentous. I wish him a healthy and long retirement.

David Riley



Chairman
June 2021





Chief Executive's Review of 2020

There has never been a year that has had the word 'unprecedented' used about it as much as 2020. But unprecedented it was and of course, it impacted not just on the work that CHC does but on harbour commissions and harbours globally.

The year began with business as usual, the CCTV system at Kingston continued to be upgraded, annual mooring renewals were as usual, and the Shepards Marina overhaul and maintenance was progressing ahead of the season. With the advent of lockdown which began on March 23rd, as we know, all of our working lives changed fundamentally.

At CHC we quickly implemented new systems for working from home and adapted our operations to meet our statutory obligations; sites were closed down in a safe manner and whilst some staff were furloughed, Patrol Officers continued to patrol the river and CHC sites to ensure the security of the harbour and owner's boats. Fuel berths remained open for commercial users, pilotage continued and the CHC administration and senior management team continued to work remotely supporting our stakeholders and contractors. We reduced costs where we could and put all major projects on hold but we did see an increase in Covid related costs for particularly, signage, PPE, and cleaning.

During the summer as restrictions were partially relaxed and lifted, we revised all of our working practices to enable the marina and boatyard to open up on a limited basis and continued to implement all of the new Covid regulations with regular updates as new government guidelines were issued. All of CHC's staff came back to work and eventually Shepards Marina and Kingston Wharf were fully re-opened, and we were delighted to welcome boat owners back onto the river. The summer was busy despite not having our usual large events like Cowes Week and it was great to have lots of visitors both in the town and on the water.

Of course, as we know, there was a further lockdown at the beginning of November so our previous policies and procedures were revised and reinstated. This did not slow things down however as Shepards Marina remained busy even though we had fewer boats coming ashore to over-winter. The recruitment process for CHC's new Chief Executive was completed and we announced concept plans for the development of Kingston Wharf, the details of which can be found later in this report and we sent out our usual annual renewals.

We were pleased to see there was still a high demand by the end of the quarter despite all the disruption throughout the year and as before, the Patrol Officers continued to patrol the river and all CHC sites to ensure the continued safety of the harbour.

Unprecedented times is a term we will use for many years to come and it is at times like this you really see a team come together. On behalf of the management team and the board of Commissioners, I would therefore like to thank all of the staff at CHC for all their hard work and for coping extremely well with all the demands placed on them during an exceedingly difficult year.

Gary Hall



Chief Executive
June 2021



Strategic Human Resources Review

Following the announcement by Stuart McIntosh in 2020 to retire as Cowes Harbour Master (HM) and Chief Executive (CEO), the board decided to split the combined role of HM/CEO to better reflect the development of the commercial side of the harbour and to ensure continued priority is given to safety and security.

As a result of this change, Gary Hall was appointed as Chief Executive in February 2021 to head up CHC's executive management team with responsibility for the commercial and yachting services side of the Trust Port. At the same time Ed Walker was promoted to the role of Cowes Harbour Master with responsibility for the safety and security of the Trust Port. The Harbour Master reports directly to the CEO, but he also reports to the Board of Commissioners as they have overall responsibility and accountability for the safety and statutory duties of the harbour, its policies, and General Directions.

Following his appointment as CEO, Gary conducted a strategic review of the key responsibilities of the leadership team that also created a shared responsibility for running the organisation – 'Lead As One Team'. This highlighted a need to realign the structure to ensure that roles were fit for the future and that CHC had the right capability to deliver on its ambitions for the future and statutory obligations. New job descriptions have therefore been introduced that reflect the breadth of experience that CHC needs to deliver its ambitious development plans.

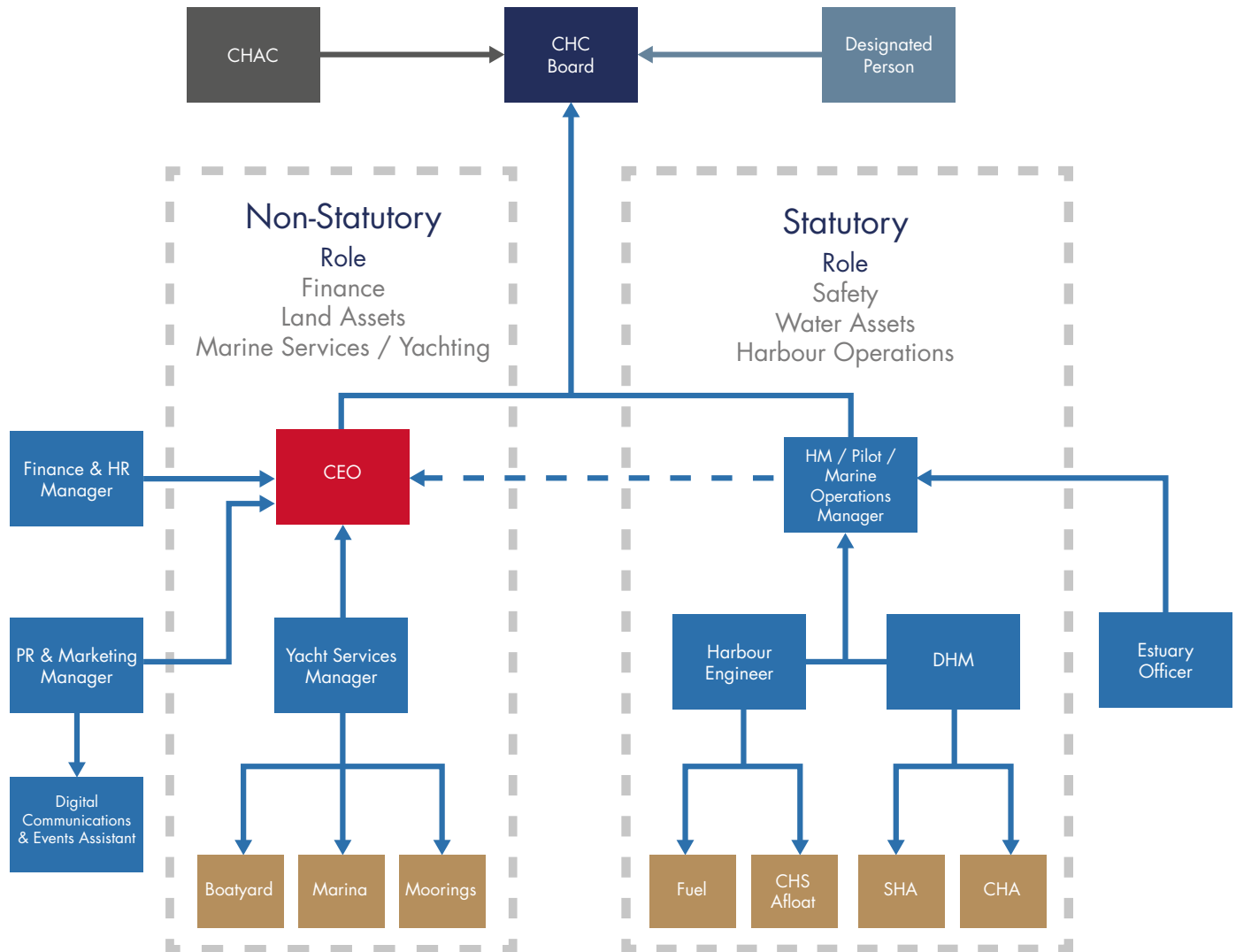
A recent Commissioners review had highlighted a need to develop a strategic PR and Marketing plan to improve CHC's communications and engagement and deliver a step change in the way CHC engages with key stakeholders, harbour users and the wider community.

Expanding that review in detail showed a clear need to develop a digital communications strategy that embraces all modern forms of communication and delivers a compelling narrative with creative content that engages all users of the harbour and visitors to Cowes. As a consequence, two new roles have been created to deliver these strategically important aims for CHC.

A new PR & Marketing Manager will be responsible for the development and delivery of CHC's PR, marketing, and communications strategy, including the development of customer propositions, branding, multi-media marketing and communications in order to maximise income and develop local, regional and national profile.

A new Digital Communications & Events Assistant will develop and implement an events and multi-media strategy for CHC that will improve CHC's digital engagement with key stakeholders, harbour users and the wider community.

Cowes Harbour Commission Structure



Meet the Team

Cowes Harbour Commission (CHC) employs 27 people including a leadership team that has the necessary skills and experience to ensure Cowes Harbour is managed in a safe, sustainable, and commercially viable manner for the benefit of harbour users and the wider community.

Senior Leadership Team



Gary Hall – Chief Executive

Gary was appointed as CEO in February 2021 and is responsible for providing strategic leadership of all CHC's operations. He is also a Commissioner on CHC's Board.

He is responsible for the long-term strategic development of Cowes Harbour, driving growth, change, innovation and improvement, whilst building and developing effective relationships with our highly valued customers and broad ranging stakeholders.



Ed Walker – Harbour Master

Ed was originally appointed as Deputy Harbour Master in 2017 and promoted to Harbour Master in February 2021. He is responsible for marine services, ensuring that CHC meets all of its statutory and Trust Port requirements including pilotage, navigation and other marine activities in the harbour and its approaches including the management of Seaclear.

Ed supports the achievement of CHC's vision to develop Cowes Harbour and its services for the benefit of its stakeholders whilst taking primary leadership responsibility for marine safety.



Theresa Dunford – Finance & HR Manager

Theresa was appointed in 2009 and is responsible for providing the financial management and monitoring of all CHC resources ensuring effective and accurate recording and accounting procedures, good practice and effective audit processes are established that comply with all company, statutory and legal requirements placed upon CHC.

Theresa is also responsible for the delivery of CHC's HR provision, working in partnership with external providers.



PR & Marketing Manager - appointment pending

Following a strategic review in February 2021, this is a new role that will be responsible for the development and delivery of CHC's PR, marketing and communications strategy, including the development of customer propositions, branding, multi-media marketing and communications in order to maximise income and develop local, regional and national profile.

CHC is currently recruiting for this role and anticipates making an appointment in the third quarter of 2021.

Leadership Team



Jock Rafferty – Marine Services Manager

Jock joined CHC in 2013. He is responsible for the day-to-day operation of CHC's yacht and marine services and supports the achievement of CHC's vision to develop Cowes Harbour and its services for the benefit of harbour users and key stakeholders.



Jeremy Smither – Harbour Engineer

Jeremy was appointed in 2020 and is responsible for all the planned and reactive maintenance on CHC's marine and property assets, ensuring they are kept in a safe and useable condition. He supports the achievement of CHC's vision to develop Cowes Harbour and its services, whilst maintaining a safe environment for all CHC staff and stakeholders.



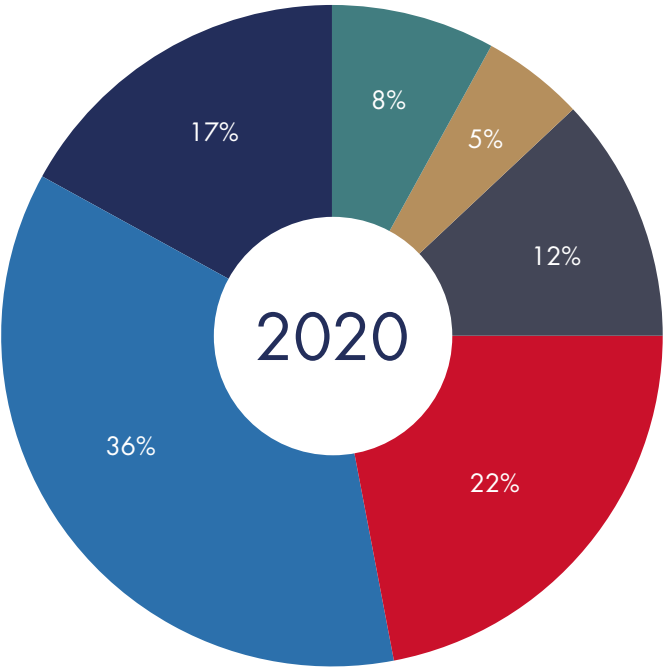
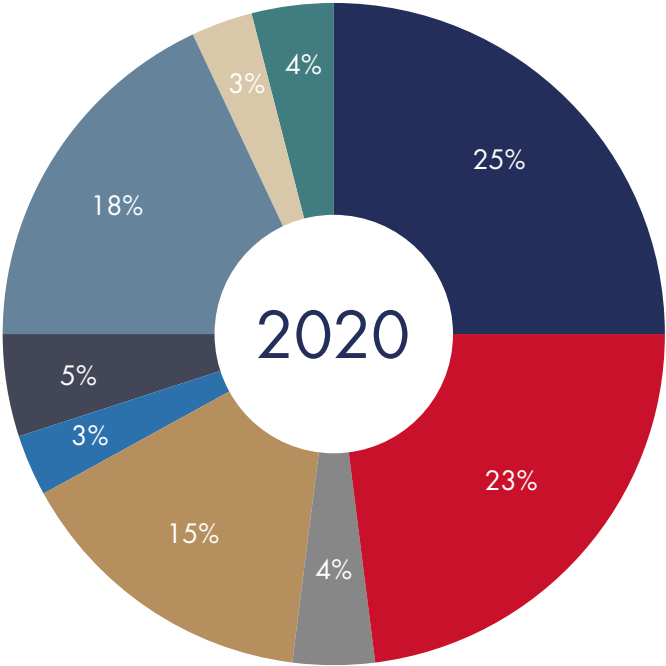
Deputy Harbour Master – appointment pending

The DHM assists the Harbour Master in all aspects of their work including all matters associated with marine safety and all other relevant legislative requirements.

CHC is currently recruiting for this role and anticipates making an appointment in the third quarter of 2021.

Income Analysis

- Harbour Dues
- Cowes Harbour Services Moorings and Commercial
- Cowes Harbour Services Fuel (net)
- Cowes Harbour Services Boatyard
- Other Income
- Pilotage
- Shepards Marina
- Government Grants (Covid-19)
- Cowes Harbour Services Properties



Expenditure Analysis

- Other
- Services & Supplies
- Depreciation
- Maintenance & Premises
- Staff Costs
- Investment Property Revaluation

Summary Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	2020		2019	
	£	£	£	£
TURNOVER		2,569,035		3,567,230
Cost of sales		1,861,380		2,148,977
GROSS SURPLUS		707,655		1,418,253
Administrative expenses		581,694		777,382
		125,961		640,871
Other operating income		65,149		-
OPERATING SURPLUS		191,110		640,871
Deficit from changes in fair value of investment property	(444,000)		-	
Interest receivable and similar income	3,225		12,629	
Interest payable and similar expenses	(22,984)		(22,667)	
Other finance costs	(9,000)		(13,000)	
		(472,759)		(23,038)
(DEFICIT)/ SURPLUS BEFORE TAX		(281,649)		617,833
Tax on (deficit)/surplus		33,028		118,656
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR		(314,677)		499,177
Actuarial (deficit)/ surplus on pension scheme		(594,000)		70,000
Income tax relating to other comprehensive income		114,760		(6,840)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR		(793,917)		562,337

Summary Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position For the Year Ended 31 December 2020

	2020		2019	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		10,311,568		10,617,527
Tangible assets		1,216,000		1,660,000
Investment property		11,527,568		12,277,527
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stocks	44,570		40,390	
Debtors	292,091		438,192	
Cash at bank and in hand	2,355,673		1,936,042	
	2,692,334		2,414,624	
CREDITORS				
Amounts falling due within one year	1,271,799		1,310,175	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		1,420,535		1,104,449
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		12,948,103		13,381,976
CREDITORS				
Amounts falling due after more than one year		(3,500,828)		(3,634,435)
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES		(339,767)		(450,116)
PENSION LIABILITY		(1,031,000)		(427,000)
NET ASSETS		8,076,508		8,870,425
RESERVES				
Retained earnings		8,076,508		8,870,425

The Financial Statements are a summary of the information taken from the full financial statements. These summary financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Commission.

For further information, the full financial statements, the Auditors Report on these financial statements and the Commissioner's Report should be consulted. Copies of these financial statements can be obtained from the Cowes Harbour Commission website www.cowesharbourcommission.co.uk

The full financial statements were approved on 23 April 2021 and include an unqualified report from the auditors.

The financial statements have been filed with the Department for Transport.

Report of the Independent Auditors of the Summary of Financial Statements 31 December 2020

Auditors: Harrison Black Limited

Independent Auditors' Statement to the Members of Cowes Harbour Commission

We have examined the summary financial statements, which comprise the summary Statement of Financial Position and the summary Statement of Comprehensive Income, that are derived from the audited financial statements of Cowes Harbour Commission for the year ended 31 December 2020.

Opinion

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with (or a fair summary of) the full audited financial statements of Cowes Harbour Commission for the year ended 31 December 2020 in accordance with the requirements of section 427 of the Companies Act 2006, and the regulations made thereunder.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by FRS 102 applied in the preparation of the audited financial statements of Cowes Harbour Commission for the year end 31 December 2020. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements and the auditor's report thereon.

Respective Responsibilities of Commissioners and Auditors

The Commissioners are responsible for preparing the summary financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law.

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent in all material respects, with (or are a fair summary of) the audited financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with International Standard on Auditing (ISA) 810 (Revised).

Our report on the company's full annual financial statements describes the basis of our audit opinion on those financial statements.

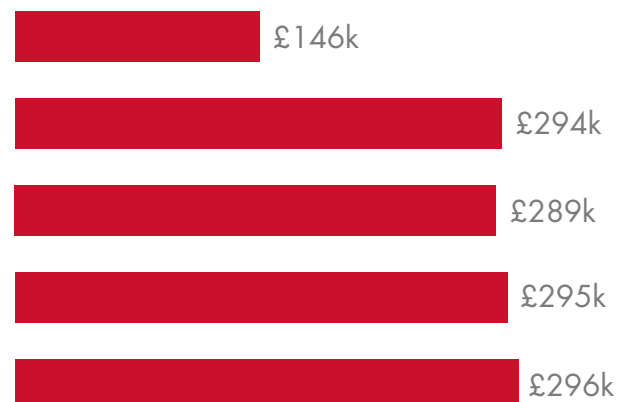
Harrison Black Limited
Statutory Auditor

Yacht Services and Visitor Statistics 2016 - 2021

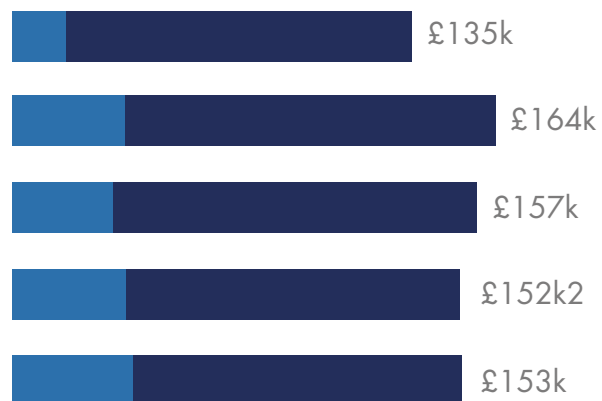
Total Annual Mooring (Harbour and Marina)



Total Visitor Moorings (Harbour and Marina)

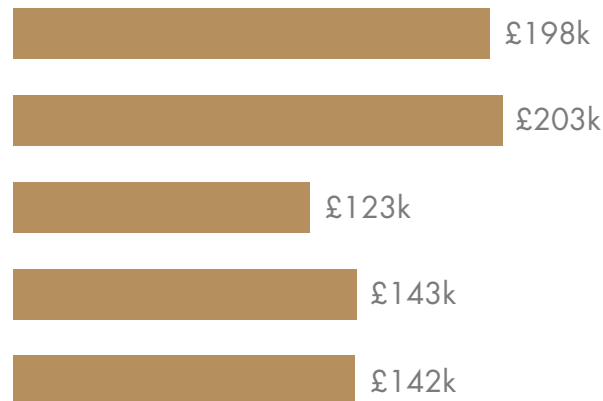


Dry Sailing, Marina Storage and Services

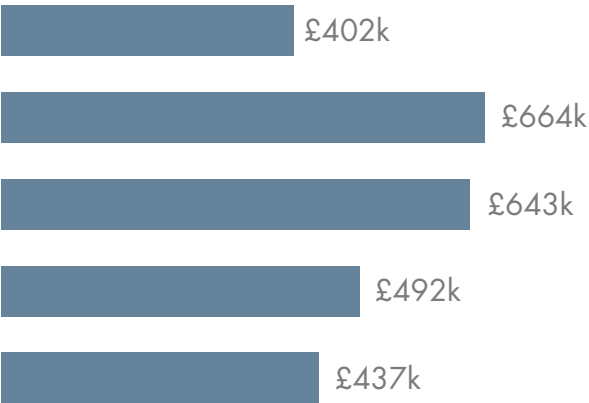


Shepards Storage & Services Dry Sailing & Marina Storage

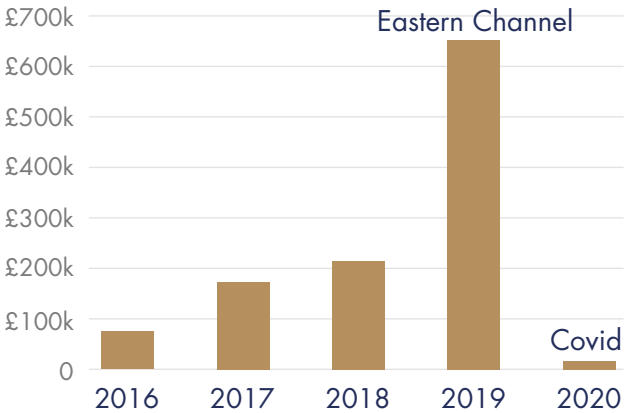
Boatyard Storage



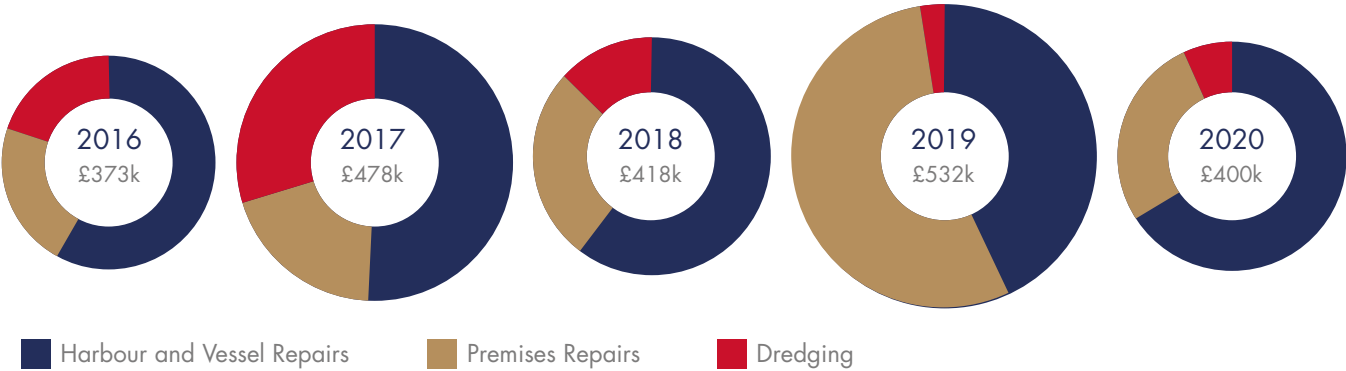
Total Fuel Sales
(Diesel and Petrol)



Capital Spend



Repairs
(Harbour, vessels, premises, and dredging)

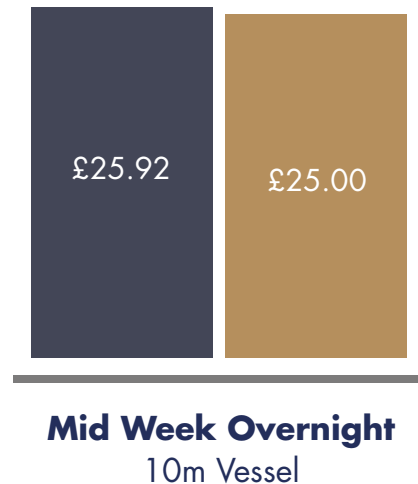


Competitor Analysis

Marina



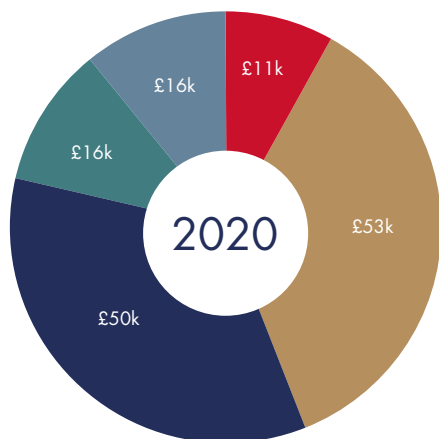
Visitor Moorings



■ Solent Average
■ Cowes Harbour Services

Stakeholder Benefits

Despite operating during the Covid pandemic in 2020, CHC funded £147k of stakeholder dividend projects.



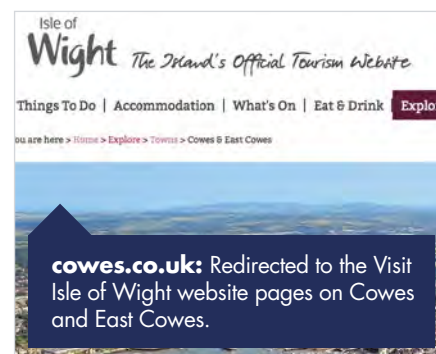
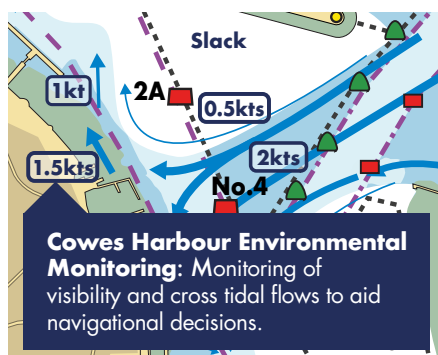
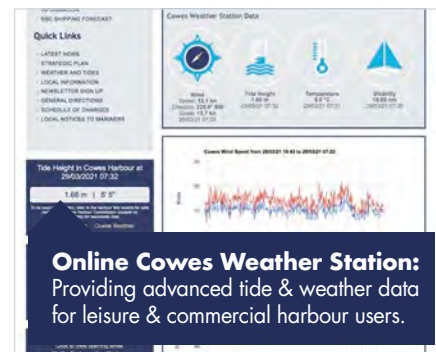
- Harbour safety
- Support to local community and events
- Recreational users of the harbour
- Sustainable management plan
- Environmental

Projects Delivered 2020



Funding 2021

In 2021 CHC created a Stakeholder Benefit fund of £50k has been established to benefit Cowes and its community and which is focused on supporting sailing and other events.



Stakeholder Expenditure

Due to the Covid pandemic and the Eastern Channel having been completed expenditure was down from £478k in 2019 to £147k in 2020.

Harbour Maintenance Expenditure

CHC's assets base spans the entire harbour and includes:



Harbour channels and navigational marks



Buildings



Plant and machinery



Vessels



3 different type of moorings



3 CCTV and access systems



IT infrastructure

The maintenance of these assets is a 365 day a year operation and requires a considerable amount of planning, investment, and operational hours and therefore, in 2020 CHC decided to create the dedicated role of Harbour Engineer to oversee this task.

Each year CHC sets both a repair and capital replacement budget to ensure all assets can be kept in a safe and presentable condition. In the past few years CHC has invested over £250k in new moorings for visitors and events. CHC has also invested £230k since 2017 in CCTV coverage for the harbour and associated sites. Most recently this included a partnership installation with the Isle of Wight Council to provide coverage for the Whitegates public pontoon.

CHC has also invested, as part of its statutory obligation, in the removal of old or abandoned boats. Sometimes these boats are simply just abandoned by their owners or repossessed due to owed debts or failure to comply with harbour regulations. Rather than leaving the boats, which are eyesores, on moorings or the shore, CHC takes ownership of them and then removes them for disposal. As most boats are considered to be hazardous waste the cost of disposal can be considerable, therefore all efforts are made to re-home them first. Where this isn't possible, a registered contractor is engaged to ensure the boats are disposed of correctly and where possible, items recycled.

CHC's 5-year financial plan was updated in October 2020 to ensure the continuation of this investment and keeping the facilities maintained for sailors visiting Cowes.

Harbour News

New and Improved Facilities at Shepards Marina

In 2019 CHC decided to completely refurbish the toilet facilities at Shepards Marina which had been identified through feedback from visitors as an element of the Marina that could be improved upon.

CHC went through a tender process where companies were invited to submit proposals that not only modernised the existing facilities but also considered a rafting marina because of high throughput during events and busy weekends. After awarding the £170k+ contract it was decided to split the refurbishment into two stages to allow continued service for Shepards throughout both winter and summer seasons. Unfortunately, due to Covid, stage 2 had to be delayed slightly but due to the efforts of the contractor works were all completed by November 2020.

The new facilities have already received great feedback and have allowed Shepards to continue to provide a fantastic location for sailors to visit Cowes. The new design and materials used also allow for easy cleaning and maintenance, which in the current climate is essential.

The Eastern Channel Project Reaches Completion

In 2019 CHC undertook the £350k Eastern Channel Capital Project by reconfiguring the 'Small Craft Channel' into a new dredge channel called the 'Eastern Channel'. This Capital Project was in line with the Commission's priority and overriding responsibility for navigational safety and strategic objective to deliver improvements to harbour access.

The new channel was designed to give a minimum chartered depth of 2.25m which would allow most vessels less than 20m in length to gain access to the harbour at all states of the tide. Along with the dredged channel a new navigational buoy layout was designed to ensure the channel was easily navigable by all users.

As part of CHC's statutory obligations we are required to ensure all fairways and channels are kept in a safe navigable condition. Part of this obligation is satisfied through dredging operations which are split into two types: Capital and Maintenance. As the name suggests, Maintenance dredging is the type used to ensure fairways and channels are kept at the advertised depth and shape. Capital dredging is the type used to create a new channel or feature that historically hasn't existed.

New Berths in Discussion

CHC is in negotiations with East Cowes Sailing Club regarding the potential upgrade of facilities for both the Club and Commission. The proposal will create approximately 40 new berths with walk ashore access and services. This project is a joint venture between the two parties with considerable investment that will benefit both local stakeholders and visiting yachtsman. The project is in the final stages of planning and it is hoped that work can be completed during winter 2021/22.

PONTOONS

£100K INVESTED IN THE
LAST 18 MONTHS



£500K SET ASIDE FOR
THE NEXT 3 YEARS



COWES HARBOUR SERVICES 01983 299385



Kingston Wharf Regeneration

Cowes Harbour Commission (CHC) has had a harbour workshop at the Kingston Wharf site in East Cowes since 2000, and the 10-acre waterfront marine employment site is home to the Cowes Harbour Services Boatyard, Commercial Marine Operations, and self-storage facility, as well as a number of onsite independent business tenants.

The last two years have seen significant changes with the departure of the two largest commercial tenants and the former aggregates site and wharf has been marketed for a couple of years but without significant resulting interest. CHC has therefore been considering alternative and strategically beneficial opportunities for further developing the potential of the site and commissioned a feasibility plan from a project manager led team of architects and civil and structural engineers to investigate the potential for partial redevelopment as a marine business park and boatyard facility.

Due to a shortage of marine based industrial accommodation on both sides of the River Medina and in the Solent region, the CHC Kingston project team considers there is an opportunity to redevelop parts of the site to attract new commercial marine tenants and an outline plan has been developed that maximises the potential of the site in terms of new development, whilst also retaining CHC's existing boatyard storage facility on the middle terrace.

In the short to medium term, new income streams can be achieved with this development by erecting new purpose built engineering workshops, expanding the boat storage facilities onto the lower terrace and utilising the two wharves for larger vessels and the potential addition of pontoons. There is also capacity to increase the size and number of boats that can be lifted by investing in an additional hoist for small vessels and in time increasing the size of the current hoist. In the medium to long-term, sustainable income can best be derived from investment in new commercial units where there is proven demand from occupiers.

The first step is to make this strategic intention clear by submitting an outline planning application to enable CHC to react to market demand. At the CHC Board meeting in October 2020, Commissioners reviewed the latest proposals for the regeneration and redevelopment of Kingston Wharf and agreed a recommendation to consult with the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee (CHAC) prior to commencing the process for seeking outline planning permission from the Isle of Wight Council. The Board also agreed to progress the initial estimate costings into detailed costings.

Cowes Harbour Development Proposal

In July 2020 Cowes Harbour Commission (CHC) announced a Stakeholder Consultation on an overall vision which would bring CHC together with Cowes Town Waterfront Trust (CTWT), the charity which owns Cowes Yacht Haven (CYH) into one charitable body and a potential application to the Charity Commission to permit CHC to obtain charitable status.

The consultation outlined plans to create a single not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the development and improvement of Cowes as a thriving port, a centre for leisure sailing and a destination of choice for tourists and events both on and off the water.

Cowes as a destination for yachting has faced a number of challenges in recent times, including a decline in yacht racing, demand from visiting yachtsmen and reduced participation in events. Cowes has a number of organisations with responsibility for different parts of the overall offer for harbour users who compete for limited resources.

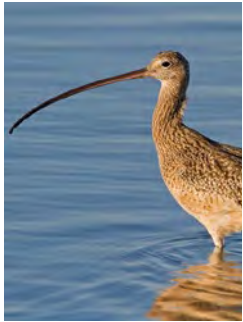
The respective boards of CHC and CTWT/CYH believed that by coming together to form a single organisation, which combined the marine facilities, services, assets and strengths of both organisations, there was potential to create a more efficient and focused organisation.

The announcement was received positively by many stakeholders and the business community, but there was stiff opposition from some quarters, so these proposals were put on hold pending further review.

The range of challenges was therefore considered to include:

- Changing nature of leisure boating
- Declining numbers taking part in yacht and day boat racing
- Decreasing sponsorship for events
- Fewer events and smaller numbers taking part in events
- Fragile retail environment, with High Street and other businesses largely relying on seasonal visitors
- The provision of marine business facilities and supporting /creating jobs in the marine industry
- Lack of clarity as to the boundaries of investment policies / projects and stakeholder dividend / benefits, and a lack of understanding as to the range, eligibility, and accessibility of such benefits





Conservation, Environment and Sustainability

For many of us the past year has highlighted the importance of the coast to our health and well-being and as a coastal community we have a deep connection with the sea.

Increasingly, there is an awareness that the benefits provided by coastal habitats are essential to our way of life, helping us to take positive action in the face of the climate emergency as they absorb and bind large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. Coastal habitats also support flood defence, improve water quality and provide a home for wildlife.

Over the years CHC has been involved with many projects that support sustainable management and conservation of the local natural environment. The current areas of focus include working in partnership to help stabilise and restore saltmarsh and seagrass habitats in the Medina and increasing the attention on sustainability throughout the business with the appointment of a new Environment and Sustainability Commissioner.

Stabilising and restoring saltmarsh

Since 2009, CHC has been working with the IW Estuaries Project to monitor saltmarsh habitat within the estuary. The level of change is not consistent through the years but there has been a general reduction in area of saltmarsh and with additional pressure from rising sea level and algal smothering this is likely to continue. Work is now underway to assess the most appropriate methods to trap and replenish sediment within the marsh areas. It will also look at the potential for longer term options such as supporting natural progression of coastal habitats into inlets and creeks. Some small scale, practical measures to trap and maintain sediment will be trialled once the options have been assessed. There will also be opportunities for larger scale, longer term management that could include the beneficial use of dredged material and identify additional areas for restoration. These will require additional funding and further discussion but could help to support the saltmarsh, and all the benefits it provides, for many years.

Seagrass restoration

Together with partners throughout the Solent and South West of England, CHC has been assisting Natural England with the ReMEDIES project. The project aims to raise awareness of the importance of seagrass meadows, restore past damage and monitor the effectiveness of advanced mooring systems which reduce the detrimental impact of traditional moorings and anchoring. Seagrass meadows, like those at the mouth of the Medina, provide nursery areas for a wide range of commercially important fish species, reduce the impact of waves on the harbour and absorb carbon from the atmosphere and bind it into sediment. Discussions are currently underway to trial the use of advanced moorings in different locations throughout the Solent.

Environment and Sustainability

The arrival of our new Harbour Commissioner for Environment and Sustainability will enable CHC to revisit previous work on increasing efficiency within the business and focus on areas that can be improved. The skills brought to the board by the new Commissioner will also help to embed sustainability into the long-term management of CHC and assist with the delivery of the core policy and strategic plan objectives.

Isle of Wight Biosphere

The Reserve covers 91,496ha of land and coastal waters and is one of only seven in the UK. It is a unique area of environmental significance in which communities work together, innovatively and responsibly to support the local environment and the world we all live in. The Biosphere Reserve status was awarded in 2019 and recognises past achievements and the intention to be more sustainable in future, celebrating a good balance between people and nature. Working in partnership, CHC supports and contributes to the ongoing aims of this important and positive award.

Safety and Security

Harbour Safety Audits

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) Health check

The MCA's Ports & VTS Policy Manager James Hannon and Ports and VTS Advisor Calvin Haugh visited Cowes Harbour to perform a safety 'health check' on Cowes Harbour on 25 November 2020.

The purpose of the visit was to assess whether Cowes Harbour was, on the day of attendance, effectively implementing the PMSC. The PMSC applies to all harbour authorities in the UK with statutory powers and duties. The visit was designed to provide advice and to assist Cowes Harbour in implementing the PMSC and in so doing, enhance port safety at Cowes Harbour.

The outcome of the health check visit was very positive, and the MCA commented:

"CHC were found to have a clear understanding of the requirements of the PMSC and displayed an enthusiastic commitment to safety. Built on the solid foundation of a mature Marine Safety Management System and from the areas covered during the health check, there is clear evidence that a significant amount of work has already been undertaken to ensure that the necessary policy and procedures are in place which support compliance with the PMSC."

PMSC Annual Internal Audit by Cowes Harbour's designated person Martin Phipps M.B.E

The PMSC and its associated Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations, requires that all UK ports and harbours must carry out an internal audit every year. This audit was performed at Cowes Harbour in April 2021 by Cowes Harbours designated person Martin Phipps M.B.E.

Part of the role of the designated person is to provide independent assurance about the operation of the marine safety management system as required by the PMSC.

Following the audit Martin Phipps commented:

"I am pleased to report that Cowes Harbour Commission fully complies with the Port Marine Safety Code."

CHC's priority has always been to safety and the recent audit confirms that this continues to be the case with the harbour operating to the highest standards required by the Code."

Harbour Aids to Navigation

Cowes Harbour owns and maintains some 121 aids to navigation such as buoys and beacons, all registered with Trinity House, the United Kingdom's national lighthouse authority. Over the past 12 months, Cowes Harbour has achieved an availability of local aids to navigation of 98.92% which compares favourably with the industry target of 97% availability.

The annual inspection of local navigation aids was conducted by the General Lighthouse Authority on 9 September 2020. The aids to navigation were found to be in good order, with only minor defects which were promptly rectified.

Improvements to Cowes Harbour's Eastern Channel buoyage were made over the past year to improve the consistency of the navigational marks, resulting in improved consistency and ease of visual recognition.

CHC took the safety measure of repositioning of the CHS race mark to provide a visual indication of where the Cowes Harbour 6kts speed limit applies west of the harbour entrance from Egypt Point to the harbour entrance.

A safe passage through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Keeping Cowes Harbour open for both business and recreational use during the pandemic has brought unique challenges over the last year.

CHC has worked closely with harbour stakeholders and the Isle of Wight Council to ensure the harbour remained at as low a risk from COVID-19 as possible. Allowing local businesses to keep operating as much as was permissible was at the forefront of CHC's efforts.

Restrictions have been imposed where necessary, based upon government advice and regulations, but always with the aim of keeping Cowes Harbour and the Isle of Wight as safe a place as possible for both residents, and visitors alike, where visiting was permitted.

Since CHC's first COVID-19 related local notice to mariners of March 2020, all changes and updates on the Governments constantly changing guidance and regulations have been and continue to be promulgated regularly to keep harbour users informed through both local notices to mariners and Cowes Harbour Newsletters.

Local Notices to Mariners

Cowes Harbour notices contain important navigational information such as chart updates, changes in buoyage, prior warning of activities such as dredging, exclusion zones, and byelaws etc. Cowes Harbour also uses local notices to emphasise safety issues particular to our harbour such as the Chain Ferry, Red Funnel ferry manoeuvring areas and tidal flows within Cowes Harbour.

Over the past year, the notices in force have been subjected to thorough review and overall, with some 12 notices being re-written and re-issued earlier this year to keep them accurate and up to date.

Local Harbour General Directions Enforcement

The COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by a change in the type of water-based activities seen in the harbour over the past year. This change in activities has had a knock-on effect on the type of incidents that have been occurring over the past year.

There has been an increase in activities such as swimming and use of personal watercraft and small motorboats and Cowes Harbour has seen an increase in close quarters incidents particularly with regard to the vehicle ferries.

New signage has been deployed around the harbour warning of the dangers of swimming due to the intensity of traffic in the harbour combined with the strong tidal current which may easily overpower the unwary.

Cowes Harbour, like other harbours in the wider Solent area, continue to work closely with both the Hampshire Marine Police unit and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to combat unlawful and anti-social behaviour. Prosecutions are often pursued for the most serious or repeat offending cases.

Cowes Harbour's CCTV coverage has been extended over the past year to improve remote monitoring of the harbour and River Medina with focus on areas with a history of anti-social behaviour and unauthorised activities.

Improvements have now been implemented to how CHC records and tracks safety related incidents in the harbour. Both public and internal CHC reporting of accidents is now input directly into Hazman II: CHC's internationally recognised risk management system. This change allows more structured reporting of an incident particulars, and rapid distribution and notification of incidents internally to CHC staff.

Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee

As recommended by the Department for Transport, Cowes Harbour Commission consults and seeks guidance from an Advisory Committee whose members represent the beneficiaries and stakeholders of Cowes Harbour.

The Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee (CHAC) is a key part of good governance, enabling stakeholders to table ideas and raise concerns to Cowes Harbour Commission and assist in the flow of information to the Cowes community. The CHAC is consulted on all matters substantially affecting the management, maintenance, improvement, conservation, protection, or regulation of Cowes Harbour and its navigation.

The Advisory Committee meets several times a year and aims to provide an effective two-way communication mechanism between CHC and its key stakeholders and harbour users. The CHAC is made up of a number of members from key stakeholder organisations with a self-appointed Chairman. The stakeholder groups listed in the table opposite are represented on the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee meetings enable CHAC members to comment on proposed changes in the operation of the harbour. Regular agenda items include harbour safety, navigational incidents, General Directions, dredging, stakeholder dividend projects, East Cowes slipway, harbour developments, and sustainability.

The principal issue dealt with in 2020 was the proposal in July to re-register CHC as a charity and the vision to bring CHC together with Cowes Town Waterfront Trust (the charity that owns Cowes Yacht Haven) into one charitable body. At the request of CHC, CHAC assisted in gathering responses and hosted a public meeting. The proposals proved to be rather controversial and there was much vocal opposition. With our support CHC agreed to suspend the consultation until 2021.

Other matters dealt during 2020 included:

- **Lockdown Measures:** Obtaining an explanation as to why the measures operated by CHC were different and generally more restrictive than other boatyards.
- **Whitegates Pontoon:** Isle of Wight Council were encouraged to work more closely with CHC to improve security. As a result of our advice, CCTV cameras have been installed by CHC and a number of wrecked boats were removed.
- **Slipway Project for East Cowes:** We have encouraged CHC to liaise with IWC and Red Funnel regarding the provision of a new slipway for East Cowes to replace the one at the Red Funnel yard about which there are serious safety concerns. Thanks are due to Ben Willows for getting some traction on this matter.
- **Kingston Wharf:** We are keen that CHC should continue their support for the DIY boat maintenance facility at Kingston, however some improvements in work practices are needed and we are working with CHC on these matters.
- **Kingston Development:** In 2020 CHC put forward proposals for a larger hoist and brand-new facilities for marine related businesses, so we very much hope these proposals can proceed because of the benefits they will bring to Cowes.
- **Marine Industry Employment:** A major issue for CHAC and we continually monitor all potential waterside developments which might reduce the marine sector.
- **Flare disposal and dredging**
- **Stakeholder benefits / dividends**

Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee Representatives

Stakeholder Groups	Organisations		Representative
Medina Waterfront Freehold Residents			John Corby (Chair), Owner Corby Yachts
Sailing and Training Establishments	UKSA	Red Ensign Training	Ben Willows, CEO UKSA (Vice Chair)
Newport Harbour Authority and IW Council	IWC Newport Harbour Authority		Cllr Lora Peacey-Wilcox
Cowes Town Council	CTC		Cllr Richard Hollis
East Cowes Town Council	ECTC		Cllr Karl Love
Red Funnel Group	RFG		Leanna Lakes, Operations Director Red Funnel
Marina Operators	East Cowes Marina Cowes Yacht Haven (see CTWT)		Mike Townshend, Marina Manager or Jess Olden East Cowes Marina
Cowes Town Waterfront Trust	CTWT		Daniel Jehan, Managing Director Cowes Yacht Haven
Business Associations	Cowes Business Association (CBA)	East Cowes Business Association (ECBA)	Gavin Ford, Chair CBA
Cowes Clubs and Classes Association	CCCA		Giles Peckham, Commercial Director Cowes Classics Week
Cowes Week Ltd	CWL		Laurence Mead, Regatta Director CWL
Medina Combined Clubs	Medina Mariners Association including Ryde Rowing Club East Cowes Sailing Club		Peter Jackson, Chairman Medina Mariners Association
Shipyards and Wharf Operators (Cowes)	Medina Wharf Medina Yard Lallows	Victory Yard South Boats	John Corby (Chair), Owner Corby Yachts
Shipyards and Wharf Operators (East Cowes)	Kingston Aggregate Wharf Kingston Oil Jetty RWE Power Clarence Boatyard	Wight Shipyard Aluminium Marine Consultants (AMC) RNLI Inshore Lifeboat Centre	Rob Stewart, Commercial Director AMC
Commercial Vessel Operators	Solent & Wightline Cruises Seacat Services Faversham Shipping	Carisbrooke Shipping Bladerunner Shipping	Mark Rayment, Solent & Wightline Cruises
Commercial Fishermen and Water Taxis			Bob Holt, Cowes Water Taxis
Cowes RNLI	RNLI		Mark Southwell, Lifeboat Operations Manager Cowes RNLI

At our meeting in January 2020 we raised the need for CHC to have a very visible sustainability menu on its website. We are pleased to see the recruitment of a new Commissioner with an Environment and Sustainability portfolio and hope this will be the beginning of a move to ensure that sustainability becomes a key focus for the harbour.

Finally, all of our agendas and minutes can be viewed on the CHC website, together with a list of stakeholder groups and committee members.

cowesharbourcommission.co.uk/advisory_committee

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VHF Channel 69 - Call sign 'Cowes Harbour Radio' (Not 24hr)

Cowes Harbour Commission includes Cowes Harbour Services and Cowes Harbour Shepards Marina

