



**COWES HARBOUR
COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC REPORT
COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION
7 JUNE 2024**

Present: Phil Hagen – Chairman (PH)
Vanessa Clifford (VC)
Fiona Fitzherbert-Brockholes (FF-B) Clive
Blount (CB)
Jason Losty (JL)
Steve Sheridan (SS)
Mark Bew (MB)
Rupert MacInnes (RM)
Gary Hall (GH) – Chief Executive

In Attendance: Jon Kidd (JK) – Harbour Master.
Roger Parrott (RP) - Finance Manager

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest and Declarations of Related Party Transactions for Cowes Harbour Commissioners are documented on the CHC website.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 26 April 2024 having been sent out it was resolved that they be signed as a true and complete record of business transacted.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

- (a) JK has looked at the RORC stump within the RYS area. He confirmed that Rebel Marine will investigate this further but that it is likely that the sleeve, which was put over the top of the stump, just needs an adjustment to straighten it.
- (b) The PMSC audit has now been completed and the draft final report is expected within the next week or so. JK confirmed that CHC is deemed compliant with the PMSC and will report back to the Board at the next meeting.
- (c) PH confirmed that all declarations have now been received.
- (d) Following on from the Board's previous discussion on handling incidents that may involve drink or drug situations, JK reported that he, GH and RM met to discuss what powers are available to CHC, the General Directions and the work undertaken with the Police Marine Unit. There are no additional powers other than those already available, the GDs are comprehensive but there is a wider issue in the marine industry and RM had ascertained that there is legislation written in the Railways & Transport Acts with boating and drinking limits, but it has not been enacted. CHC does not have the powers to take breath or swab samples but CHC can use powers under GDs to order a boat alongside and then call the Police. JK confirmed that CHC is doing everything that it can and unless something changes legally it is working at the limits of its powers. RM concluded that incidents would need to be looked at on a case by case basis and that JK and the harbour patrol have measures in place to try and avoid such incidents in the

first place, including education, signage and information via social media on the dangers. Some discussion also took place on the liaison with the Police. JK contacted Cowes Police Station and offered for them to meet the team and spend some time on the water and become familiar with life jackets but has not yet had a response. Life jackets are available for the Police should they need to go out on the water and JK will also look into the possibility of funding three life jackets to be kept at Cowes Police Station so that life jackets can be worn if they need to go on to Trinity Landing for example.

5. HARBOUR MASTER'S SAFETY REPORT

The HM report and safety analysis was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board. JK highlighted the following:

- (a) The safety topic this month offered advice on swimming in Cowes and a reminder of Rule 9 (COLREGs). There have been five Close Quarters Situations within the last month so reminders have also been issued via the CHC Newsletter. Red Funnel has extended its offer to yachtsman who have been involved in a CQS, plus any race officers, to go on to the bridge of the ferry to see the viewpoint from there. Some race officers have taken up the offer but very few have of those who have been involved in incidents. Most yacht clubs have also received this offer. It would also be useful for those involved in organising regattas if race officers have had experience of being on the bridge. FF-B suggested that it might also be useful to involve youngsters and children, possibly as part of the UKSA training, for example, or sea cadets. JK will put this forward to Red Funnel and will also make arrangements for PH (and other interested commissioners) to visit the bridge.
- (b) Regarding swimming, and in particular around Trinity Landing, the risks will be highlighted again in the CHC Newsletter together with advice on where it is safe to swim. An application has been submitted to the Council for a Public Space Protection Order for around Trinity Landing which will give the Police more powers, allowing for them to make a more decisive approach and arrest on site. Whilst there are still risks, swimming can take place outside of the Shrape breakwater and off the Green around to Gurnard, but there are still very strong tides in these places.
- (c) Nineteen incidents were logged this month mainly relating to speeding and impeding the safe passage of the Red Funnel ferries. JK reported that incidents of near-misses will also start to be logged following a discussion during the PMSC audit.
- (d) Pilotage is on par for the year with 15 acts of pilotage in May.
- (e) Harbour work issues – there are six piles requiring urgent unplanned replacement which has resulted from lack of investment in the past and inspections not being carried out properly. Overall, there are thirteen piles which will need to be replaced, with maybe six or seven of these which could be budgeted appropriately next year. There is now a much stricter regime of inspection in place, particularly at low water, inspecting both pontoons and piles. SS asked how old the piles are and were they beyond their working life. JK responded they are probably 25-30 years old and made of steel. Ideally these would normally have a life expectancy of around 15 years.
- (f) One of the actions from the PMSC audit was to have a Harbour Hazard ID group, made up of some stakeholders that the Harbour Master can share harbour risk assessments with, to ensure they are fit for purpose not only for CHC but for stakeholders as well. The inaugural meeting has now taken place, made up of a range of stakeholders including commercial, passenger and sailing stakeholders, plus Mark Southwell and Martin Phipps. These meetings will continue with regular planned reviews every couple of months and stakeholders will change depending on what risk assessments are being reviewed. In response to a question from PH, JK confirmed that he does receive, and has access to, the racing risk assessments. FF-B commented on the improved communication with everyone in and around the

harbour. PH thanked JK for taking the lead on the much-improved communications and how the work is now so much more proactive.

- (g) SS asked whether the MMO backlog had eased at all relating to dredging. JK reported it had not, but he was able to confirm that CHC now has its own powers to grant dredge licenses although CHC still needs an MMO disposal license. JK is currently working on how CHC will be able to control the issuing of the licenses and liaising with the appropriate authorities. CHC will not be involved in the sampling programme.

6. CEO REPORT

The CEO report was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board. GH highlighted the following:

- (a) Visitor figures – these are down generally because of the weather which has an impact on numbers. Consequently, boat owners at Kingston are delaying putting boats back in the water which has a knock-on effect to the capacity to take out boats that have booked to come in for pre-season boat cleaning and anti-fouling. Consequently, movements at Kingston are down, as is income. It is hoped that things will pick up once the weather improves and moving into summer.
- (b) The Sugar Store is now open Thursday to Sunday, with use clearly currently dependent on the weather. Eazibar are trying out different things to attract people to use the Sugar Store, including showing the Euros 2024 football on TV screens. Promotional information is sent to all those who book at Shepards and it is hoped that this, together with promotions via social media, will help visitor numbers.
- (c) Kingston Boatyard – A small unit became available at the end of April, and this is being turned into a customer lounge which is nearly completed. This will provide tea and coffee, a tv screen etc and will be an area for those people who are having their boats attended to, to relax and have a coffee, plus it can be used in inclement weather and assists with the management of Health & Safety keeping the public safe when boat movements are taking place. It is not a unit that could have been re-let easily
- (d) Annual Report and Video – this has been sent out via social media three times and in three different ways. To date, there have been 681 views. There have been no negative comments and no questions and general feedback has been very complimentary. GH will look into sending the link to the sailing clubs for possible inclusion in their newsletters.
- (e) CHC Newsletter – the next edition will be sent out this evening.

7. FINANCE REPORT FOR APRIL 2024 and 2023 Final Accounts

Copies of the Financial Management Report for April 2024 and 2023 Final Accounts were circulated with the papers for the meeting and fully considered by the Board.

8. ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The Environment and Sustainability Report was received and fully discussed by the Board. FF-B reported that there has been some success with the MMO licence for the saltmarsh dredging in that there has now been a response from them.

9. CHAC MEETING

CB reported that the next meeting is on Wednesday 4 September. He asked Board members for items that they would like to see taken to the meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Falmouth and Dartmouth Harbour visit feedback
GH reported that he and PH had an excellent visit to both facilities. The harbours are very different in the way they approach things and their market is slightly different to CHC's. GH described in detail each of the harbours and how they are managed, and the Board discussed the various interesting developments within each of the harbours. He and PH were warmly

received and believe there will be value in the relationships that will be built up.

There being no other matters for discussion, the meeting closed at 12.50.

Date of next meeting:

Friday 19 July 2024 at 10.00, Harbour Office, Cowes, Isle of Wight