



**COWES HARBOUR
COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC REPORT
COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION
19 JULY 2024**

Present: Phil Hagen – Chairman (PH)
Vanessa Clifford (VC)
Fiona Fitzherbert-Brockholes (FF-B)
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 Director

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

Apologies for absence were received from Clive Blount (CB).

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 7 June 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) PMSC Audit – the report has not yet been received but JK reiterated that the port is deemed compliant. There was concern at the length of time it is taking but is expected imminently.
- (b) Fuel berth incident – immediately after the last Board meeting, a serious fuel berth incident took place with threats to life posed. The incident was brought to a safe conclusion by Cowes Harbour commission staff but concern was expressed at the lack of involvement from the Police until the man was brought ashore. Given the seriousness of the situation, PH wrote to Donna Jones, the Police Commissioner, copying in the former MP and the new MP Richard Quigley, to express concern. So far, no responses have been received. It was agreed that PH will inform the BPA asking for their advice and information and will then write again to the Police Commissioner requesting an immediate response.
- (c) The Sugar Store – this was extremely popular with several hundred visitors over the five-to-six-week period of the Euro football matches. It is hoped to now capitalize on this and keep the momentum going.

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) This month's safety topic offered advice on the chain ferry and the rules surrounding it.

PH asked if more could be done to encourage the use of VHF Ch 69. JK has been looking into the possibility of a large LED sign at the entrance to give wind, tides, safety information and advertising.

(b) Incidents – propulsion failure is reducing and JK will come back to the Board with feedback on whether this was down to the campaign or boats having now spent more time on the water.

(c) Theft from Shepards Marina – the boat has now been returned to the owner but the Police have not been able to identify the person. There has been a spate of stolen ribs on the mainland. JK is kept informed of incidents from other harbours and information is shared so they are able to keep a look-out.

(d) Harbour works and issues – JK is awaiting confirmation that the emergency piling works have been completed,

(e) Following a serious incident with a yacht impeding a tanker during the recent Classics Regatta, JK gave an update on the wording for the Sailing Instruction for Cowes for when a vessel impedes a large vessel. MB had looked at Medway's wording of its SI and JK has drawn up a similar SI which it is hoped to share with the sailing clubs to discourage people from impeding large vessels. ABP and KHM are very supportive of it and he has shared the SI with the RYS who have issued it, although it was felt it had been watered down as it states that the boat would be under protest with a risk of disqualification, or time, or place penalty. JK confirmed that impeding of a vessel would mean that it had to take some kind of action to avoid a collision and the information is sent through via the pilot vessel. For speed of receiving the information during regattas and such like, JL suggested that the vessel could send a text message with the sail number, time of incident and if they were impeded or not.

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) Kingston boatyard – there is some movement in the boatyard now with some gaps allowing for the 48-hour specials to start up. It is busy ahead of Cowes Week.
- (b) AGM video – there was a total of 3,817 opens of which 1,004 viewed the video. It was a huge success and there have been no questions raised.
- (c) Cowes Week CHC Reception – invitations have been issued for Tuesday 30 July 2024.
- (d) Cruise ships – a positive and constructive meeting via Teams took place with Seabourn Cruises. Cruise America has a ship of 210.5m and are keen to get into Cowes. This would be a challenge, but JK is looking into this.

7. FINANCE REPORT FOR JUNE 2024

Copies of the Financial Management Reports for June 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. Regarding the oyster restoration, this relates to the turbidity of the water and not the flow. FF-B explained that the oysters are there to improve water quality and biodiversity. Biodiversity net gain will be a key feature, but it has not been worked out yet where it fits in being ashore and underwater and in an inter-tidal area. Biodiversity does need to be improved but there are struggles around how this is monitored and paid for as it is expensive, and it is a known issue around all harbours. Everything is in place to get the oysters going, but one of the big issues is stopping other things clinging to the cages and the invasive species is a problem.

9. CHAC MEETING

The next meeting is on Wednesday 4 September and the Board discussed various items that they would like to see taken to the meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) Categorisation of waters - JK is currently reviewing the categorisation of waters around Cowes Harbour.
- b) FF-B informed the Board that the MMO have had some recent changes to their non-Executive Board.
- c) SS asked about the business continuity report which had been discussed previously so that CHC could know how resilient their systems are. PH confirmed that the systems are backed up daily but that he and GH would now get together and work on producing the business continuity statement.
- d) JK reported on a serious incident had occurred on Seaclear whereby a member of staff had suffered serious injuries to his hand. This had just happened and so was not in his report. An investigation is underway in conjunction with an external health & safety consultant and a more detailed report will be sent to the board following completion of the investigation. SS reiterated the importance of keeping the Board up to date and fully informed with any safety issues. PH agreed that a succinct message through the CHC WhatsApp group would be the best way to quickly inform the Board of incidents or issues followed by the usual dissemination of reports.

There being no other matters for discussion, the meeting closed at 1250.

Date of next meeting:

Friday 6 September 2024 at 1000, Harbour Office, Cowes, Isle of Wight