

Weymouth Harbour Consultation Group (WHCG)
Wednesday 11th of October 2023 (WTC Chamber and Teams, 19:00-21:00)

Present

Andy Sargent	AS	Chair and RNLI Representative
Ken Buchan	KB	Head of Environment and Wellbeing
Ed Carter	EC	Weymouth Harbour Master
Cllr Mark Roberts	MR	Chair of the Harbours Committee
Dave Caddy	DC	Vice Chair and Harbour Traders Representative
Andy Alcock	AA	Commercial Fishermen Representative
Alan Hale	AH	Boat Owners Inner Harbour Representative
Tim Day	TD	Clubs of Weymouth Representative
Will Holmes	WH	Weymouth Beach / Leisure Users Representative
Cllr Colin Huckle	CH	Weymouth Town Council
Dan Bell	DB	Commercial Passenger Carrying Vessels Representative Substitute
Jamie Pullin	JP	Charter Boat Representative
Mary Harris	MH	Harbour Traders Representative Substitute and Weymouth Harbour Watch
Sarah Johnston	SJ	Minute Taker/Admin Support

1. INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

AS opened the meeting and apologies received from Neil Bedwell, Luke White, Ali Roberts and Rob Gray. It was noted that Callum Seggie is currently on holiday.

AH confirmed that substitute Dave McCune has stood down due to ill health and **SJ** to assist with canvassing for a replacement. **AS** wished to pass onto Dave McCune the groups thanks for his contribution.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

AS asked if anyone had any points from the previous minutes and **EC** confirmed that they could be covered by the HM update.

- **KB/EC** – The appointment of a new Chair and Vice Chair. **EC** confirmed the process for the appointment of a new Chair and Vice Chair would commence with a form being sent to the members to signify their interest as per the terms of reference. **AS** has raised some concerns so these will be reviewed prior to the form being emailed out with the deadline of the 30th of November to notify your interest. The appointment will take place as it is laid out in the terms at the next meeting.

4. WEYMOUTH HARBOUR UPDATE

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes:

- **DC** – drain under the Town Bridge flooding. **EC** still chasing Highways for a response as to when this is going to be repaired. Was advised after the summer season but no further information to date, will continue to chase for a response.
- **DC** – Sand Jetty structural integrity, following the report in August upon further discussion with the Coastal Risk Team, it has been decided that a far more in-depth

survey of the sand jetty will be undertaken at low tide with the engineers getting underneath it. There is also the option of the very kind offer from Portland Port to use their underwater drone to do a really good inspection without the cost of a dive team. The walls behind it are outlined in the business case for repair, so when looking at the condition of the jetty these will be included but initially no visual deterioration, cracks or sunken surface area have been seen though it will be continually monitored.

- **DC** – The Artist that was selling pictures on the Cargo stage has been spoken to regarding this and the long-term parking and advised of the required permits, she has confirmed she will be applying to WTC for the relevant permits.
- **DC** – Heras fencing being stored under the Town Bridge. **EC** confirmed now all clear, thanks to DC for following this up and getting it resolved. It will continue to be monitored.

1.0 General Harbour Use

- Recreational berths remain strong with letting peaking but just behind 2022 numbers when compared to the same period. The seasonal decline is now in effect with owners taking their vessels out of the water and selling them. Sarah and Becky are now actively offering berths out to our waiting lists to backfill the vacancies. There are customers on the waiting lists with specific requirements. This is to be reviewed in due course.
- Commercial berths are nearly at 100% let with a few remaining berths that are not popular due to access issues. Customers do not want to be on the midstream pontoon, or we have larger charter vessels that are unable to fit into the smaller berths.
- Visiting vessels in August on and off the water picked up to 40% ahead of figures from August 2022 mainly due to the weather, which has affected all businesses around the harbour.

2.0 Notable Incidents

- The Harbour team have recorded 34 incidents:
 - Swimming in the harbour.
 - Jetski's in the bathing area of the bay.
 - Aggressive use of a mobility scooter.
 - Intoxicated persons.
 - A hammock hung over the pontoon.
 - Engine failures.
 - Vessels running out of fuel.
 - Pier jumpers.
 - Theft of lines from a vessel.
 - Minor vessel collisions.
 - Various minor injuries.
- Notable incident reported at the last meeting regarding a gentleman falling from the wall adjacent to the steps on Trinity Road, only a couple weeks later another person fell from the wall at the Cove onto the pontoon. They were attended by an ambulance and were triaged on scene. We are working with our Health and Safety colleagues and we're investigating that whole area along the South of the harbour now and looking for the recommendations that come from that. We will then review the recommendations to find a way forward to keep everything as safe as possible.
- Ongoing work to streamline and standardise our incident reporting systems with the goal of capturing 100% of the incidents occurring across the harbour. It provides us with really clear and constructive data that can be analysed then in detail, to look at trends. It also strengthens the feedback loop into our port marine safety processes

so when we have an incident it feeds back into the risk assessments which feeds through to our safety plan. To enable us to do that better we are therefore streamlining those processes. We have already streamlined the website to make it much easier for people to report things when I when I first started here, the incident report form was incredibly detailed, but also extremely long, so we've really sort of tried to standardise it now. So, it takes you to the relevant questions rather than having to scroll through page after page of the form that is not relevant to what you're reporting. And again, the data from that website which we put our incidents into, is all automatically created. And as we move forward, I'll have more detailed analysis of the incidents to bring to the panel and the committee going forward. Enabling us to highlight trends of and patterns really to help keep everything nice and safe.

3.0 Alpha/Bravo/Charlie Pontoons

- Previously reported the sporadic reports the visitor pontoons marking vessels and fenders has been resolved with the entire replacement of the defendering along the pontoons after various solutions were tried and tested. The last remaining meters of the replacement defendering are to be delivered and installed ensuring that it is all in place before the 2024 season gets under way.

4.0 Winter Berthing

- We currently have 8 vessels that have arrived for winter berthing with more enquiries made.

5.0 North Quay Council Building Demolition

- During the demolition of the old Council building and the upcoming repairs to wall four, while all efforts are being made with contractors to reduce any disturbance or anything from the works, we have put space aside in the outer harbour. So, any of the customers that are berthing in the inner harbour that are near the demolition works/wall repairs, if they wish to have their boat somewhere in the outer harbour, they can come and talk to us, and we can arrange a space for that for that duration. And we have had a couple of berth-holders express interest in this.

6.0 Quay Regeneration Project at Peninsular

- Contractors are due to arrive on Monday and are scheduled to be completely done by spring 2024. We are working extremely intensively with the contractors at the moment, really going into the extremely fine detail of the project, all of the gates and fences and CCTV. A meeting will be arranged very soon with Andy and a couple of other representatives of the fishing community so the management of this area can be discussed. Including bait stores, the catch stores and everything will be covered. We are hoping to have those conversations before Christmas, and we will take that forward and have more information on that soon. We have got a very comprehensive communication plan that we have worked through with the Dorset Council Communications Team. It is about releasing information out to the public about exactly what's going on, a weekly update coming from the harbour into the public domain about what's being done, how the works are progressing etc; Any questions or more details please let me know. Invites have been sent out to form a steering group including Weymouth Town Council, Sealife Centre and Youth Workers to provide input into beautifying the area and involving the youth and community to encourage ownership and management of antisocial behaviour along the quayside at the commercial area up to the Pleasure Pier.

7.0 General Directions

- The General Directions Consultation ran for 6 weeks from June to early August in compliance with the HRO. The RYA had a 2 week extension and due to Chamber of Shipping letter being returned I contacted them directly to ensure that they had all that they needed. Their response was that they had no issue with the General Directions. Unfortunately, due to these couple of delays it has been impossible to collect the responses in time for the September advisory meeting, the RYA response is still being considered by Ashford ZLP Marine Solicitors, who we are working with. It is planned to present all the findings along with the recommendations to the Harbour Advisory Committee meeting in November.

8.0 Pleasure Pier

- The railing replacement on the Pleasure Pier has been completed. **AA** advised that there had been a Junior Angling match event and the railings were impressive. New compliant health and safety signage fitted though some damaged already, but we are working on different locations for the replacements. Further work on this area will be covered in the Steering Group as well. **JP** asked about the structure of the Pleasure Pier – **EC** confirmed that it is structurally sound. Pedestrian footfall should not be a problem as it previously had trains on it, though there are areas where rust and concrete is coming away and looks unsightly due to various repairs over the years. It will be covered by the Coastal Risk Engineers surveys.
- Proposed Control of Access, **JP** raised concern about access for the Anglers – **EC** confirmed that the action of closing off access would be a last resort when antisocial behaviour has been reported and it is not safe. It will be a coded gate to be able to provide people that are registered with the Angling Club, for example, or organised events to have that code so that it doesn't prevent people from using the Pier. The improvements in this area are to encourage more public footfall to discourage this behaviour. Will consider closing it during the hours of darkness due to recent vandalism. **AA** asked about the toilet block at the area as during events facilities are needed. **EC** to look at better facilities to be discussed for the area in the future once it becomes more popular.
- **AA** – Asked if the wooden pilings would be replaced as they are rotting on the pier. **EC** confirmed that they are not structurally required and will not be replaced. Piles are required along Wall B – Custom House Quay. Also is there a consideration for the pontoons being connected to the existing section to the Charlie visitor pontoons? **EC** confirmed that there is a consideration to do this in the future.

9.0 Other Notable Marine Events

- Seafood Festival and Ironman reported well attended events. No incidents except for the swim being cancelled due to the weather conditions.
- The Town Bridge repair works are continuing at the moment, scheduled to go on until the end of November with a reduced schedule of three lefts per day during the week. There's further information on local notice of Mariners number 16. It all seems to be going to plan at the moment the welding repairs will be done, and that section will be resurfaced.
- The demolition the Council building at North Quay. The archaeological dig has uncovered, the remains of several buildings, including 18th Century Pub, the Weymouth Arms. Which was closed in 1940, apparently following World War Two bomb damage. The car park is now entirely closed, and it'll remain shut. It is expected to take around 13 weeks, but of course we will notify you and all of our customers, what effects that it might have. But at the moment it all appears to be going to plan.

AS asked if they are planning to close the road, **EC** to check and provide an update by email.

5. CONSULTATIVE GROUP UPDATE

- **DB - Commercial Passenger Carrying Vessels Representative.** As mentioned in previous meetings, car parking charges are putting people off coming to the area and the weather has affected passenger carrying vessels.
- **AH – Boat Owners Inner Harbour Representative.** Advised that people have grumbled about the closure of the NQ car park and has been telling them that you can pay for a space at the ASDA car park for a small fee saving you parking further afield and paying the higher council car park rates.
- **JP - Charter Boat Representative.** Has provided a list of competition dates:
 - 20th to 24th May - WIBAC
 - 6th to 7th July - EFSA
 - 13th to 14th July – British Conger
 - 20th July – Wessex Comp
 - 12th to 14th August – Weymouth Conger
 - 9th to 13rd September – Europeans (will require quayside access)
 - 14th to 15th September – Council FestivalsAnd thanked the Harbour Office and RNLI for their assistance with an incident onboard his vessel – has a donation to be given to the RNLI.
- **TD – Clubs of Weymouth.** The sailing season has started to wind down now. The Weymouth Sailing club season will finish with Boxing Day race, which is the one where we sail up the Harbour and finish in front of the club, will speak to **EC** about this. Then, they will be taking the marks out sometime in early January.
- **WH – Weymouth Beach / Leisure Users Representative.** Has quietened down – NTR.
- **AA - Commercial Fishermen Representative.** NTR.
- **DC - Harbour Traders Representative.** There was a little boost in September otherwise very quiet.
- **MH – Weymouth Harbour Watch.** The security marking event on the 15th September was well attended on WW Rd and NQ pontoons with SJ and Amanda Anderson (AA) from Dorset Police Resilience Communities doing the marking. Another event will take place in the spring at the start of the season. Looking to do an event with WSC and Boatfolk to encourage their members to have items marked. Amanda is busy setting up a similar harbour watch groups at Lyme, West Bay and Portland. Dorset Alert has had 54 new members from the security marking events, requested that any new customer information packs from the harbour team include these details or flyers with the details. **SJ** agreed to include them going forward. It was requested that **AA** is included in these meetings as there may be relevant information from the various harbour watches that could be shared at them.
- **AR – Dorset Marine Police.** Read out by SJ and EC.
 - **No reported crime since August though:**
 - 1 incident of drunk males on fishing boats – apologised to attending officers.
 - Dorset Marine Police would both like to reiterate that reporting any of the following is essential with any vessels:
 - With foreign crew, particularly charter vessels
 - Refuelling multiple times
 - No AIS switched on.
 - Cash only payments
 - Vague on personal details
 - Arriving and movements at odd times, particularly at night
 - An interest in security details

- Ongoing response:
 - Joint water patrols with SIFCA & WHM when conditions allow.
 - Ongoing investigations into marine nominals seeking to take action against them for any offences (land or water based) / develop intel.
 - Joint operation with FSG in the planning stages for multi-site operations throughout the winter for thefts from boats.
 - Regular land patrols of boat yards and yacht clubs during evening shifts – application for drone work over these sites and associated berths will be submitted for consideration during winter months.
 - Prevention engagements – seeking to education members of the public regarding security and byelaws on the water.
- **EC** confirmed that project Sea Bird and Sea Going ensure that there is a lot of presence, but this will be where there are incidents. **MR** advised that the Police in Portsmouth use a drone to disburse groups conducting antisocial behaviour as none of them want their picture taken.
- **CH – Weymouth Town Council.** NTR. **EC** thanked **CH** for making the introductions to Jane Biscoombe, Town Clark.
- **MR – Harbours Advisory Committee.** The Harbours Advisory Committee is 6 elected members and there should be 4 independents. There has been 3 for the last year. We have appointed a new independent member called Mark Saxby. Who is a semi-retired head teacher from Wimborne. He is leisure sailor and he's been at Salcombe all his life sailing, so he's quite a lot of experience of the leisure side. We also had our new designated person for Safety attended our meeting. He's done his report. This is James Hammond of ABPMer because we've changed organisations and it was his first meeting. He's reported on West Bay and it there's a few recommendations, but it meets all the safety requirements and next year he'll be doing Weymouth and then Lyme Regis and it's on a 3-year rota. At Lyme Regis, it's been out to tender for the work on the COB, and as it's about a million and a half more than the Environment Agency had budgeted for because obviously with the work everything's gone up so much on materials and there's going to be a delay. We may have to go back for a whole new scheme to get it approved because it's so much more because you can't do half a job. There is an issue in West Bay on the harbour wall on the harbour side of the Harbour master's office, there's been some cracks in that and suddenly it started moving and now we've classified it as emergency work. That will come from a separate budget, there's even cracks in the wall of the Harbour Master's office, so this requires immediate work. MR confirmed he has been involved in the regeneration planning for the Peninsular and North Quay, using the 19 and a half million levelling up fund. A draft plan will be released soon. They will also be shortly looking at the harbour fees and how to minimise the increases.
- **AS – RNLI.** The Lifeboat has been very busy with an upturn in last few weeks due to the weather. Had 2 dive incidents at the weekend involving the helicopter both incidents had a good outcome though. The boathouse refurbishment is still due in April.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FROM MEMBERS

- **AS** – Replacement of Chair and Vice Chair Process. Covered above by **EC**.
- **DC** – The connection of Westway Road pontoon toilets to the main Sewer. **EC** has made some enquiries but had no response and will chase up. **CH** advised that the Gas Board are currently digging up the road.
- **DC** - Also installing toilets to the North Quay pontoons, which goes back a while and was awaiting confirmation of what was happening nearby. **EC** confirmed that the NQ regeneration project has various options being looked at with input from the Harbour Office as to improvements for berth holders and harbour users in relation to facilities either on the water or land. **MR** confirmed that it is a mix of Harbour and Dorset Council land, the Harbours Advisory Committee are ensuring that the harbour is at the forefront of any future planning. **EC** confirmed he is attending lots of meetings

with working groups to ensure that harbour input is logged. Plans will come out into the public domain for consultation once drawn up. **DC** advised about a plan raised by the previous HM. **EC** to follow up with **KB** on plans provided by the previous HM.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **JP** – Raised the question about the whether the Seafood Festival to return to the harbourside again. **EC** has confirmed that he has had this request before, **JP** confirmed that people have said they won't come to it now in its current location. **MR** advised that the current organisers like the ease of security and charging at the location at the Peninsular. **MR** confirmed that the festival is not organised by the harbour and **EC** advised that the harbourside area is managed by Highways. **AA** said that the seafood festival was run through local businesses and had been doing the festival for the last 20 years when it was actually run by the Fishermen's Association, it was all local businesses, then it was taken over. It was always known as Weymouth Seafood Festival but now it's called Dorset Seafood Festival, which we've lost the character straight away. But the companies that have been there from the beginning have all failed to go into it this year because the fees were so astronomical. The store holder fees have doubled, and the entry fee has gone from £10 to £15. A gold award winning store holder cannot afford to be there with daily fees of over £1,000. **EC** will feed comments back to the organisers.
- **AS** – Raised the blocking off of access to the Pleasure Pier when the Seafood Festival is on, **EC** confirmed the regeneration project should ensure that access is maintained.
- **AS** – Advised that there was a burst water main on Trinity Road this morning with a lot of water on the road surface by the Sand Jetty.
- **AS** - Raised the issue of motor homes staying overnight in the large Pavilion car park and not paying for them. At least 10 campers have been seen there overnight, could charges specifically for campervans be considered to fund improvements in facilities (toilets) which could then be used by WAC for the children when undertaking fishing competitions? **EC** will look into this as it is managed by Parking but the penalty for staying overnight is cheaper than going into a campsite.
- **JP** - Raised the size of vehicles parking in town car parks stating his 4X4 was too long for most spaces. **MR** confirmed that Parking will not penalise vehicles that are longer than the designated space.
- **DB** – Asked about the cruise ship traffic management as when there is a ship in port and they are supposed to be managing the traffic in the pickup/drop off area, they are actually seen in their vans with their feet up not managing the traffic. The road signs are out by they are not actually managing the traffic. **EC** to feed back to Mike Shipley at Portland Port Authority regarding this.
- **MR** – Advised that the asylum seekers are due back in Portland Port, more buses are due, unable to confirm where the termination/collection point will be. **EC** confirmed the request for the this to be a Cosens Quay was turned down.
- **JP** – He has spoken to the owner of Fleetline taxis in regard to them using an area to stop and wait between jobs as they currently stopping at the Slipway. There have been more altercations recently as they are no longer using the old Westerham Bridge parking. They are willing to listen and park at other places if offered to do so. **EC** has this noted.

8. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Harbour Consultative Group

- 31st January 2024

Harbours Committee

- 22 November 2023
- 6 March 2024

