

# **Weymouth Harbour Management Board Annual Report 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017**

## **Chairman's Review**

Once again it has been a busy year in Weymouth Harbour. In my capacity as the Briefholder for Leisure, Tourism and the Harbour I recognise the tremendous value the harbour is to the town, not only from tourism and visitors' perspectives but also from the commercial aspects for harbour users and the associated supporting industries.

Work continues in the harbour in the wake of Condor Ferries leaving and the failed bid by High Speed Ferries to run a fast ferry from Weymouth to Cherbourg. The Town Centre Masterplan work is providing a focus for developing and modernising the town but this also needs to sit alongside a strategy for the harbour so that the two evolve in tandem to drive the best outcome for the town as a whole.

We are looking forward to seeing Weymouth Harbour in the forthcoming Warner Brothers Dunkirk film and thank all harbour users for their cooperation during the filming.

**Councillor Jason Osborne**  
**Chair Weymouth Harbour Management Board**

## **Board Members**

Until June 2016

Councillor Colin Huckle – Chair

Councillor Jason Osborne – Vice-Chair and Leisure, Tourism and Harbour  
Briefholder

Councillor John Birtwistle

Councillor Paul Kimber

Karen Brain - Independent Member

Jim Clark - Independent Member

Steve Pitman – Independent Member

Dr Neil Humphries – Independent Member

From June 2016

Councillor Jason Osborne – Chair and Leisure, Tourism and Harbour Briefholder

Councillor Colin Huckle – Vice Chair

Councillor Ian Bruce

Councillor Paul Kimber

Councillor Ian Roebuck

Dr Neil Humphries – Independent Member (until September 2016)

Karen Brain - Independent Member

Jim Clark - Independent Member

Steve Pitman – Independent Member

From January 2017

Matt Walkden – Independent Member

Dr Neil Humphreys did not seek re-election for a second term on the Board in September and a replacement Matt Walkden was recruited, approved by Full Council in January 2017.

## **Business Plan and 2013 Port Marine Safety Code Audit**

The Weymouth Harbour Business Plan 2014 – 2019 approved by the Management Committee on 5th November 2013 contained 26 recommendations related to the harbour covering a wide range of aspects from governance to operations. These recommendations still contribute to defining some of the activities of the harbour. The Plan will be updated soon to reflect the end of ferry operations in Weymouth. To date 12 of the Business Plan recommendations have been completed.

A Port Marine Safety Code Audit conducted by Regs4Ships, an external consultant, in December 2013 also generated some recommendations, which continue to be implemented.

Limited resources, particularly spare time capacity amongst key members of the Harbour Team, make progress protracted.

## **2015 MCA Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) Health Check**

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) visited the port in November/December 2015 to conduct a PMSC Health Check, which had specific focus on governance arrangements and the processes that support the Safety Management System (SMS) including policies, procedures, records and risk assessments.

The MCA review helped to benchmark performance and similarly provided reasonable assurance that the development of the SMS is progressing along an approved pathway to full PMSC compliance. The MCA also confirmed that the likely timeframe for full SMS implementation was considerable. The MCA Team will revisit in November 2017 to check on progress. The follow-on work has included completing risk assessments, updating procedures and work instructions, reviewing records and evaluating the system.

Harbour risk assessments were subject to audit in August 2016 as part of a wider review of assessments across Dorset Councils Partnership. Harbour assessments were graded as being of a 'Good' standard passing the industry test of being suitable and sufficient.

### **Stakeholder Involvement**

The Harbour Management Board and harbour staff maintain wide stakeholder involvement. An active Harbour Consultative Group has met quarterly to discuss issues and inform the Harbour Management Board.

### **Finance and Trading**

The Report of Out-turn at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 is given at the Annex. The end of Condor ferry operations in March 2015 continues to impact on the financial profile.

Considerable work has been ongoing to drive the income up and costs down. This is a gradual process which goes on whilst also the future strategy for the harbour is determined and the Town Centre Masterplan also evolves with implications for the harbour. The Harbour produced a surplus for the year of £361,718 against the original planned budget. This surplus, which will be transferred into the Harbour Reserve and used to assist 2016/17's budget, includes the savings. £108,670 of the above surplus will be used for projects approved for 2016/17 but to be completed in 17/18 as carry-forwards.

The following statistics provide some indication of the level of activity in Weymouth Harbour during the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017:

#### **Visiting Yacht Nights:**

5064 visitor nights

- Down 3% compared to 2015/16.
- Down 3% compared to a 3 year average (2013, 14 and 15).
- 127 short stays (up 18 on 2015).
- 328 free of charge given on new loyalty card scheme (up 64 on 2015).

- 80 other free of charge given on existing 4 for 3 scheme (same as 2014).

#### **Inner Harbour Marina Moorings:**

Occupancy – 69% of 409. (up 3% on 2015)

#### **Inner Harbour Chain and Sinker Moorings:**

Occupancy – 90% of 30.

#### **Commercial Moorings:**

Occupancy – 83% of 99.

Harbours and marinas along the south coast continue to experience lower levels of trade than some previous years, both in terms of permanent moorings occupied and number of visiting vessel nights. A proactive advertising campaign continues for both commercial and leisure vessels, along with the associated loyalty scheme, hoping to reverse the downward trend in business. The harbour staff had displays in 2016 at Portland Marina's Fish and Ships, Beaulieu Boat Jumble and Poole Boat Show.

### **Harbour Projects and Developments**

The asset and infrastructure plan continues to support the Business Plan so that a structured approach is taken to the upkeep of the harbour and its facilities. This involves payments in to a reserve to save for expensive items in a rolling programme of works allowing the cash flow requirement to be smoothed, whilst also completing an in-year improvements programme. Unfortunately a reduced contribution was made in 2016/17 to balance the budget deficit.

Some of the items achieved in 2016/17 were:

- Replacement of some electrical bollards.
- Replacement of North Quay fire extinguisher bollards.
- Replacement of slipway pontoons and addition of 2 new fingers.
- Refurbishment of Westwey Road toilets.

Planned major items for 2017/18 include:

- Connection of the Westwey Road toilets to a mains sewer to stop the use of a holding tank.
- Connection of slipway pontoons to water supply.
- Refurbishment to Cargo Stage and Custom House Quay pontoon decking.
- Replacement of wood decking on North Quay pontoons.
- Replacing one of the harbour RIBs.

The 15-year Harbour Walls Remediation Package has been focused this year on Nelson's Wharf and the sheet piling at Ferry Steps. The priority is the Ferry Steps

sheet piling which has had a number of repair options proposed and scoped. There is still no decision on the option to be taken forward as the costs and implications are still being considered. It is still hoped to take place in Autumn/Winter 2017. The existing walls continue to be monitored and the restrictions imposed have not significantly impacted on harbour operations. The sheet piling in the vicinity of Nelson's Wharf will be considered for repair after the Ferry Steps' work has been completed. The condition of the harbour walls is a collective concern. Although there is a programme of work to correct some of the issues it is proving to be more expensive than expected and is running later than anticipated.

Work continues to review all the arrangements for the agreements, leases and licences for those organisations on the south shore of the harbour and to try to negotiate a way forward with the aim of re-allocating areas of water to best suit the needs of today and the future. A refreshed allocation of water for Weymouth Sailing Club, Weymouth Rowing Club, Sea Cadets and Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre has been proposed to the clubs and organisations. This has been agreed in principle. As the first organisation to be dealt with in detail, negotiations are ongoing with Weymouth Sailing Club to renew their lease and to reflect the changes from the review. This includes discussion to fit pontoons in the club's Cove area. The aim is to try to include the RNLI's needs as they are looking to complete changes by 2019 for their new Inshore Lifeboat, which will not fit in the current boatshed.

### **Ferry Service**

Negotiations continued until Summer 2016 with a new operator, High Speed Ferries (HSF), who hoped to operate a fast-cat service from Weymouth to Cherbourg, but they were unsuccessful in securing their backing money. This signalled the end of ferry operations in Weymouth. Since then short-term opportunities for the use of the ferry infrastructure in generating income have been sought and some found until the Peninsula is potentially developed as covered below.

### **Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan**

The Town Centre Masterplan project has progressed to the next stage of scoping with the Peninsula and Commercial Road being considered in greater detail. Both of these areas include parts of the harbour operation and so members of the harbour team have been working alongside any developments so that the best can be provided for harbour users. Concerns have already been raised about the needs of harbour users including the local fishing industry and how these needs can be incorporated in to the plan.

### **Harbour Staff**

Simon Powell and Karen Womack were confirmed as Council employees as Berthing Officers rather than agency staff in July 2016.

Jan Ridd assumed the duties of a Berthing Officer from September 2016 as part of an increase to 4 in number Berthing Officers.

Mary Horton retired from her post as Moorings Officer in May 2016.

Corrina Briggs joined the admin team in July 2016.

Rebecca Mustoe went on maternity leave from January 2017.

The staffing levels are being closely monitored as a clearer way ahead is established for the requirements of the ferry port area and peninsula.

### **Navigation, Conservancy, Safety, Pollution and Security**

No significant incidents occurred in relation to the safety of navigation. All navigation lights and marks have been audited by Trinity House in March 2017 and were reported as satisfactory and maintained to a high standard. All defects and points have been rectified.

The annual hydrographic survey of the harbour was completed in December 2016. There have been no significant changes in the depths over the last year. There has been a gradual reduction in the depths of water in the harbour over the years during which no dredging has been completed. A marine licence for disposal of dredged material has been granted by the MMO for use over 5 years. This will allow dredging to take place if funds are available. Dredging is necessary to provide adequate depths for the vessels now operating in certain areas of the harbour.

An annual statement of compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code was submitted to the Harbour Board in February 2017. Mr Richard Noakes, Dorset Councils Partnership Safety Officer, remained as Designated Person, supporting and reviewing harbour operations.

There is a continued programme of personnel and equipment training.

There were 20 acts of pilotage in the year.

There has been an increased presence in the harbour by Border Force and marine police in the light of people trafficking across the English Channel spreading west from the Dover Straits. There have been no known cases in Weymouth to date.

### **Harbour Events**

Many events over the year continue to take place in the harbour or on its boundaries and are provided support by the harbour team. These have been very successful and attracted large numbers of visitors in to the town both by boat and from the land. Notable events have included the Seafood Festival in July and the third Waterfest in September. The more interesting visiting vessels including Tall Ships continue to be a main attraction.

### **Dunkirk Film**

Weymouth Harbour was used by Warner Bros to film approx. 8 minutes of a major new Dunkirk film. This caused major disruption to both the harbour and the town but there was great cooperation to make it a success. The film is released in July 2017.

### **Significant Incidents**

The following significant incidents have occurred in the harbour during the reporting period:

- In April a visiting offshore support vessel caused damage to some piles at No.1 Berth in strong easterly winds. The damage was repaired locally and the costs covered by the shipping company.
- A motor boat sank at its' berth on the North Quay pontoons in August. There was no pollution. The boat was lifted by a local contractor and taken to Portland.
- A motor boat from Weymouth Marina leaked fuel throughout its passage through the harbour before stopping at the Port. The incident was reported as a pollution incident and dealt with accordingly.
- In October a commercial vessel caught fire at its mooring on Commercial Road. Swift action by the crew of an adjacent boat minimised the damage. The fire brigade were called.
- A RIDDOR report was made in May for a male who cut his head when he slipped whilst helping to launch a boat.
- There have been several injured people treated at the Harbour Office after falling off bikes due to slipping on the railway lines.
- There was 1 attempted suicide from the Town Bridge that was averted by harbour staff with support later from the Police.
- A small number of people have toppled in to the harbour whilst berthing boats. All were quickly recovered.
- There have been a number of vessels caught speeding in the harbour and the crews re-briefed.
- There have been a small number of berthing incidents with boats colliding during the process. No known injuries or significant damage.
- There have been a number of violations of the Weymouth Bay regulations that were dealt with at the time.
- In September a stretch of pontoon along Commercial Road toppled after a loose container became wedged under a section of the harbour fendering. Quick action by local harbour users prevented any significant damage.
- In November an easterly gale caused a concrete float to be detached from a pontoon section at No.4 Berth. The float came to rest without causing any significant damage and was replaced with the help of a visiting buoy maintenance vessel the following day.
- There have been numerous instances of youths swimming at the harbour entrance off the Pleasure Pier. The Police have provided assistance on occasions.
- Several sickness or injuries to visiting boat crews or harbour users requiring first aid treatment and/or assistance from the emergency services.
- There have been repeated pier jumpers from buildings on the Pleasure Pier and the Town Bridge. The police have been involved.
- The North Quay facilities under Trinity Church were broken in to several times during the winter. There was evidence of drug use and homeless activity. The police have been involved.
- Numerous vessels have been towed alongside by the harbour staff after engine failures.
- A number of low key accidents were reported amongst harbour staff. No causal trends have been identified.

## **Workshops and Strategy**

3 workshops have been held by the Harbour Management Board to discuss Future Plans and Developments. The 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop in February 2017 concluded that a long term strategy for the harbour was required, ideally led by an external consultant with the relevant expertise.

Some of the priorities for 2017/18 are:

- To continue working on the recommendations from the Harbour Business Plan and Port Marine Safety Code Audit, in particular the Safety Management System.
- To develop a long term strategy for the harbour.
- To consider the use of the Peninsula, Commercial Road and other adjacent areas to the harbour in conjunction with any Town Centre Masterplan development.
- To address the highest priority faults of the harbour walls and other infrastructure.
- To achieve a balanced budget for 2017/18 and beyond.
- To ensure the staff levels are correct for delivering the harbour service.

## **In Conclusion**

The year has continued its recent pattern of being challenging with a high level of activity. The end of ferry operations, with the associated financial pressures, continues to be the primary driver and this is likely to be the case for some time as the harbour evolves alongside the town developments. The Harbour Staff remain enthusiastic and committed to providing the best service. Consultation with the harbour users and by Councillors remains vital in the way ahead.

(Signed on original)

Keith Howorth  
Harbour Master

Annex:

A. 2016/17 Harbour Budget Outturn Report.