

**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND BOROUGH COUNCIL HARBOUR
CONSULTATIVE GROUP**

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 OCTOBER 2016

Present: A Clarke, A Higgins, M Jury, A Sargent, L Stantiford, T Studley, T Pavey, D Caddy and D McCune (Substitute)

Apologies: C James, G Taylor, T Elgar, K Claydon and S Goodwin

Also present: I Bruce

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Keith Howorth (Weymouth Harbour Master) and Elaine Tibble (Democratic Services Officer)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Terry Studley declared that he was Vice Chair of Weymouth Fishing Association.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the last meeting, previously circulated, were approved and it was noted that A Sargent had chaired the meeting.

The minutes of the Harbour Management Board meeting held on 28 September, previously circulated, were received and noted.

The Harbour Consultative Group were pleased that the matter of the Harbour Management Board not having been consulted over the redevelopment plans for the peninsular had been raised and challenged.

Cllr I Bruce addressed the group with regard to balancing the harbour budget. He asked them to come forward with any thoughts they may have on increasing commercial activities. It was looking increasingly likely that the council would have to balance its books without the revenue income from a ferry service.

The Harbour Consultative Group agreed to keep the meeting start time at 7pm.

The Harbour Master updated the group with membership changes.

Businesses that had been affected by the recent filming on the harbour had been put in touch with the film company.

3. HARBOUR UPDATE

Restricted Area

On 20th September Management Committee discussed and approved a paper regarding the future plan for the Peninsular. It can be found at the following link:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/423688/20-September-2016>

Short and medium-term uses are being sought for some of the area and buildings associated with the former ferry service. The longer term plan is for the development of the peninsular as part of the Town Centre Masterplan whilst aiming to incorporate any harbour requirements.

The car parking areas at the Ferry Terminal have been used for the summer to offer a parking facility for berth-holders at a cost of £5 per 24 hours but there has been little interest.

Harbour Walls

An update on the harbour walls was presented to the Harbour Management Board on 28th September. It can be found at the following link:

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/423754/28-September-2016>

Walls C (Nelson's Wharf) & D (Ferry Steps)

Technical Services are focused on generating a solution for the repair of Wall D at the Ferry Steps area in Autumn 2017. Work is ongoing with external contractors to develop the design and refine the costs. There may be some ground investigations taking place this Autumn but little impact is expected for harbour users. Once the design is nearing completion it will be shared with the Group.

Technical Services, Harbour Staff and local operators will continue to monitor any signs of further deterioration.

It is still expected that the building at Ferry Steps will need to be taken down to carry out the repair to the sheet piling. This may present an opportunity to consider whether a replacement is required and if so for what purpose. Any thoughts or suggestions would be welcomed.

This is also an opportunity to review the ways of operating for the Ferry Steps operators to see whether there are any possibilities of improvements.

Radipole Sewage Pumping Station

Wessex Water are leading a project to improve the sewage overflow pumping station which is on Westwey Road adjacent to Weymouth Marina. The project is currently applying for a marine licence for the works. There will be no known impact on harbour users. The work is expected to take place in 2017.

Business Plan

The current focus of the work on the 2014 – 19 Harbour Business Plan Recommendations still remains the updating of the Safety Management System. The next stage is to review the risk assessments and associated work instructions, procedures and records.

The programme to return some investment in to the infrastructure continues:

It is hoped to refurbish the toilets on the Westwey Road pontoons soon. This will include connection to the mains sewage which will remove the need for a sewage tank and empties. A break tank is in the process of being fitted to the water supply.

The North Quay toilets and showers have been decorated.

A new electric metering system is being fitted to North Quay pontoons, Westwey Road pontoons and some commercial berths on Custom House Quay. This will be a card based system with customers buying credit on their cards at the Harbour Office.

Some pontoon lights will be replaced on the Cargo Stage and Custom House Quay.

There will be a rolling programme over several years to replace the electrical bollards on the pontoons.

The slipway pontoons will be replaced in 2016/17.

Harbour Budget

The way ahead for the harbour budget, which remains under considerable pressure, will be discussed at the Harbour Management Board on 2nd November. The Scale of Charges will be promulgated as part of the complete 2017/18 budget request this year.

Maritime Events

Waterfest was held on 3 – 4 Sep 16 and was a very successful event.

Weymouth was the venue for a stage of the British Water Ski Racing national calendar in the Bay on Sunday 18th September. There were some de-brief points for improvements for any future event but the competitors were very pleased with the day.

Harbourside Watersports Clubs/Users

Work remains ongoing 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. This is an extremely complex web due to the way in which they have been set up, making it difficult to make any amendments to. There are inconsistencies because they have been tackled individually and mainly reflect space management but not full water operations.

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 but work has stalled on reflecting the proposal in leases and agreements.

Additionally the RNLI are looking to complete changes by 2019 as their new Inshore Lifeboat will not fit in the current boatshed. Options include modifying the boat shed or looking for an alternative location in the harbour.

Dredging

An application for a marine licence to dispose of the material from dredging of the harbour over the next 5 years has been made to the MMO. Notification has been placed in the Dorset Echo for 4 editions and on the Harbour Office notice board as part of the process. The dredging itself will be conducted using an exemption which applies due to the legal acts associated with the harbour. The extent of the dredging will be dependent on the funding available.

Weymouth & Portland Tourism Partnership

The Tourism Partnership continues to work to promote and improve tourism in Weymouth and Portland. Marine representation is important and falls to the Chair of the Harbour Consultative Group and a member of Portland Port, with support from the Harbour Office. The Partnership is putting together bids to try to obtain funding through the Coastal Communities Fund for projects for regeneration and economic growth. Any suggestions would still be welcome.

Fishing Gear

In the Port. The work to reduce and reorganise the amount of fishing gear stored in the former Port Restricted Area still needs to make progress. There is too much for the space available. It is ultimately intended to develop some fixed-size bays which will be available for rent subject to terms and conditions to be finalised. There will be no gear allowed outside of the bays.

On the pontoons. A near-miss of a serious topple of the pontoons on Commercial Road occurred on Saturday 17th September. This was caused by a fish box becoming jammed under a pile, preventing the pontoon from rising on one edge with the tide. The incident could very easily have had much more expensive consequences. All commercial operators have been informed and reminded of the regulations regarding fishing and other gear storage. Operators have until October 17th to remove excessive gear from the pontoons after which it will be confiscated.

In Weymouth Bay. Despite several requests there is still fishing gear within 5 cables of the harbour entrance. This will also be removed after 17th October. There have been too many instances of boats suffering damage from unmarked fishing gear some of which have even involved lifeboat call-outs. The fishing community are asked to show respect for the other users of the seas. A draft revised Notice to Mariners regarding Weymouth Bay and Harbour will be circulated prior to the next HCG meeting for discussion.

Border Force and illegal imports including people smuggling

The Border Force newsletter is being distributed and highlights the real threat of smuggling or other activities on the South Coast including Weymouth. All harbour users are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity. The Border Force have increased the number of vessels they operate so more regular patrols can be expected.

Weymouth Main Beach RNLI Red/Yellow Flagged Zone

The flagged zone as a safe swimming area that is protected by lifeguards and other criteria on Weymouth Main Beach has proven to be successful and effective. It is intended to review the procedure to identify any improvements and also whether the Greenhill area should also be adopted.

FLAG

News is awaited as to whether the Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) covering the area from Swanage to Beer has been accepted and received financial backing. Bob Summerhayes is now collecting together ideas for projects which could potentially be funded by European Funding controlled by the FLAG with match funding from other organisations.

Quayside Festivals

Bob Summerhayes on behalf of the Weymouth and Portland Fishermen and Licensed Boatmen's Association has written to the Chair of Licensing Committee to voice the concern of fishermen whose boats are perpetually being damaged when Quayside Festivals are taking place. There is a tendency for people to gather outside the Festival with their own drinks and throw bottles and glasses on to the vessels. This issue has been raised several times by the Harbour Master with both licensing officers and the event organiser. The main focus of this activity is outside the licensed areas.

Car Parking

The points raised at the last HCG about parking costs were raised to the Harbour Management Board and to the Head of Parking. It has been suggested that a specific permit type could be considered if there was a unique need identified. It is still planned to conduct a parking survey of berth-holders and harbour users.

Harbour Staff

Corrina Briggs joined in July as Berthing Office Admin Support.
Jan Ridd joined in September as the fourth Berthing Officer.

PMSC Items

There are no further PMSC Items to discuss at this stage.

Visiting Vessels and Inner Moorings Statistics from 1 Apr 16 to 31 Aug 16

Visiting Yacht Nights:

Visiting Yachts To end August 2016	
No Visitor Nights	4093
% variance compared to 2015/16	-6.7
% variance on 3 year average (does not incl. 2012)	- 7.0
No short stay (2015: 89)	108
No FOC given on loyalty discount scheme (2015: 214)	265
No FOC on existing 4 for 3 scheme (2015: 76)	32

Inner Harbour Moorings:

- % Berth Occupancy - Inner Harbour Marinas – 299 of 409 at end of period
- % Berth Occupancy – Commercial Berths - 84 of 91 at end of period

Comments about Harbour Master's report:

- The Harbour Master confirmed to T Pavey that he would e-mail the Scale of Charges to members of the Group when they are available and any comments could be forwarded to the Harbour Master or addressed as a member of the public at the Harbour Board meeting.
- T Pavey confirmed that the Ferry Steps' users and kiosk operator would like a replacement building and he provided some ideas to the Harbour Master.

4. PMSC ISSUES

The Harbour Master informed that group that there had been some issues with the water ski racing club event.

He had been given assurances that the skiers would keep within the set boundaries, however this had not been the case.

Although he would like to host the event again it would be necessary to have a long hard look at the suggested course prior to the event.

5. CHANGE OF MEMBERS

The Harbour Master distributed the updated list of Harbour Consultative Group members.

The Terms of Reference were changed in February 2015 and two consecutive membership periods of 3 years each were introduced. It was agreed that the

first 3-year period would nominally end in Feb 15 for those who had been on the Group from the start.

It was important to get fresh people and new ideas involved in the group but the turnover would need to be done fairly. The membership would be revisited again towards the middle of next year with the aim of looking at a maximum of 3 people changing at any time.

6. ITEMS AND IDEAS FROM MEMBERS

Proposed new flood barrage. From the Weymouth Flood Defence Vision Documents it was envisaged that the barrage would leave a gap of approximately one third of the width of the harbour. It was asked whether it should be moved further down the harbour in the absence of a ferry service.

The next steps would include appraisal and public consultation and the group hoped that their views would be considered.

The Harbour Master would check with the Technical Services department for clarification as he was not sure if the document had been superseded due to financial restraints.

Post Meeting Note – Technical Services have confirmed that a flood barrier is still proposed as part of the Weymouth town centre flood alleviation strategy but it is not expected to be within the next fifty years now. A further report into the flood strategy, which will supersede the vision documents is awaited. It looks as if the timing of elements will be revised with beach management and improvements to the harbour walls being carried out prior to raising The Esplanade and building a barrier.

Ironman – it was felt that this event had taken over the town without due prior consultation. It was questioned why the race no longer took place in Sherborne. It was important that the organisers were contacted and given feedback. The Harbour Master would feed in the harbour issues at the WPBC Events Team debrief and advise the group of his findings.

7. ANY OTHER FUTURE BUSINESS

The Harbour Master distributed a draft notice for mariners about fishing gear and requested feedback. A number of vessels had had fishing gear caught around props close to the harbour entrance this year including 2 incidents which required lifeboat call out.

The Chair suggested that he would like to add some structure for future meetings so that the group became more of an ideas based group looking at what could benefit their organisation and put ideas to the Harbour Management Board.

8. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Harbour Consultative Group:-

Wednesday 18 January 2017 at 7pm

Wednesday 12 April 2017 at 7pm

Harbour Management Board:-

Wednesday 2 November 2016 at 3pm

Wednesday 22 February 2017 at 3pm

Duration of meeting: 7.00 - 8.32 pm

Chairman

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