



HARBOURS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2022

Present: Cllrs Mark Roberts (Chairman), David Gray, Rob Hughes (Vice-Chairman), Mary Penfold, Sarah Williams and Lee Hardy, Philip Thicknesse and Richard Tinsley

Also present:

Nick Marks – Chairman of Lyme Regis HCG

Cllr Ray Bryan – Portfolio Holder for Environment, Travel and Harbours

Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke – Lead Member for Environment, Travel and Harbours

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

Ken Buchan (Head of Environment and Wellbeing), Claire Connolly (Harbour Office Manager), Philip Crowther (Legal Business Partner - Regulatory), Kevin Evans (Senior Accountant (Place)), Jamie Joyce (Weymouth Harbour Master), Matthew Penny (Service Manager - Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM)), James Radcliffe (Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Master) and Denise Hunt (Democratic Services Officer)

51. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Louie O'Leary and Simon Miles, Chairman of Bridport (West Bay) Harbour Consultative Group.

52. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022 were confirmed and signed.

53. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

Cllr Mark Roberts declared non-pecuniary interests as the holder of a mooring at West Bay Harbour, a member of the LGA Special Interest Group – Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Chairman of Southern IFCA.

Cllr Mary Penfold declared non-pecuniary interests as the Chairman of SCOPAC (Standing Conference on problems associated with the Coastline) and as a member of the Special Coastal Interest Group

Richard Tinsley, Independent Member, declared that he held a mooring in Weymouth harbour.

54. Public Participation

There were no written statements or questions received.

55. Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on his participation in recent harbour related events and activities as well as his attendance at meetings of the 3 Harbour Consultative Groups.

56. Harbour Consultative Group Minutes

The Committee noted the minutes of the Harbour Consultative Group (HCG) meetings held on 22 March 2022 – Bridport (West Bay); 24 March 2022 (Lyme Regis) and 18 May 2022 (Weymouth).

The Chairman welcomed Nick Marks, Chairman of the Lyme Regis HCG to the meeting and also read out a summary report produced by Simon Miles, Chairman of the Bridport HCG who was unable to attend the meeting.

57. Harbour Master Updates

The Harbour Masters presented their updates.

There were no further questions put by members.

Noted

58. Harbours Budget Outturn Report 2021-22

The Committee considered a report setting out the final outturn for the harbour operational budgets for Weymouth, Bridport and Lyme Regis and the position of the Harbour Reserves balance at the end of 2021/22.

The Weymouth Harbour Office Manager reported that the final outturn showed a favourable surplus of £334,813, largely due to a review of the Asset Management Plan, which had been transferred to the harbour reserve. She provided background on operational budget income and expenditure and use of Harbour Reserves for future projects

Following presentation of the report, members questioned whether the amount allocated for maintenance dredging and were given an assurance that this was sufficient at the present time.

It was also confirmed that energy price increases were passed directly to customers.

Bridport & Lyme Regis Harbours

The Harbour Master outlined his report including expenditure, income and reserves for Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbours.

There were no questions from members.

Noted

59. Harbours Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23

The Committee considered a report setting out the current budget monitoring position for the harbour operational budgets for Weymouth, Bridport and Lyme Harbours at the end of May 2022 and the predicted position of the Harbour Reserves for 2022/23.

Following presentation of the report, members queried the reduction in the car parking income forecast.

The Harbour Office Manager explained that although an updated forecast had not been provided by parking services, since parking fees and charges had recently changed, a more accurate forecast could be provided at the September meeting.

Members also questioned why the £229k recharge did not increase and were advised that this was a historical cost related to Dorset Council internal recharges consisting of support costs to the Harbour Authority including HR and IT etc.

The Chairman requested a fuller report on the recharge from the Senior Accountant including a view on whether this would change in light of the harbour becoming more self-sufficient.

The Committee considered that harbour fees and charges should be reinvestigated due to the impact of inflation and the Chairman indicated that this would form part of the finance workshop that took place annually, prior to the December meeting.

Bridport and Lyme Regis

Following a report by the Harbour Master, the Chairman highlighted the need to approve use of the Lyme Regis harbour reserves to progress the construction of a new Harbour Master and Fishermen Store before the planning permission lapsed in September 2023 and the rapid increase in construction materials increased beyond the scope of the reserves.

There was a potential opportunity to bid towards the cost of the building from funding due to be released by the Marine Management Organisation that could secure a portion of the cost if successful, but was not guaranteed.

In response to questions put by members it was confirmed that Lyme Regis Town Council wished to terminate the lease in order to use the existing store to house their own tractor and sand rake which were currently uncovered and therefore open to the elements.

It was confirmed that if approved, the timescales would allow a new store to be in place prior to the lease ending in January 2023. Contractors had already been appointed and the project would be managed by the Council's Assets and Property Team.

Proposed by Cllr Sarah Williams, seconded by Cllr Mary Penfold.

Decision:-

- a) That the current budget monitoring figures for 2022/23 for Weymouth, Bridport and Lyme Regis harbours be noted; and
- b) That use of reserve for Lyme Regis Harbour Master Store be approved.

Reason for Recommendation: The Harbours' budget monitoring and regular reporting to the Harbours Committee helped manage the risks of under or overspending the budget.

60. Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Engineering Update

The Lead Manager – FCERM presented an update report for the three Dorset Council harbours.

Arising from the report, the following points were confirmed in response to questions from members:-

- an agreement in progress with Natural England regarding the timing of marine licences for dredging in West Bay and Lyme Regis;
- that spoil from dredging remained on the sea bed in Weymouth and was placed back on the beach in West Bay and Lyme Regis.

Noted

61. Weymouth Harbour Pilotage Review

The Committee considered a report outlining the review of harbour pilotage that was undertaken by consultant Marico Marine and based on an earlier review in 2014. This resulted in a number of findings in relation to the operational challenges in continuing a pilotage service including:-

- The economic feasibility of employing a full time pilot, meaning that the Harbour Authority is reliant on contracted personnel who require considerable notice periods to ensure availability.
- The fall in commercial traffic levels resulting in the infrequency of vessels requiring pilots.
- The lack of economic feasibility to maintain the required infrastructure.
- There was insufficient demand to enable pilots to maintain their skills and an inability to train new pilots to the required standard.
- The Harbour Authority no longer employs any officers suitably qualified to train or assess new pilots.

- The level of pilotage would generate sufficient revenue to cover any ongoing costs of pilotage.

The review further concluded that the removal of pilotage services would not have undue impact or significantly affect a low level of risk.

A number of improvement measures were identified following this review that would improve the safety for all vessels transiting through the harbour to be implemented in 2022 including:-

- AIS monitoring
- installation of CCTV covering Weymouth Bay and harbour and channel entrances – 25 June 2022
- a weather station at the harbour entrance, providing tidal information, wind speed and direction, pressure and temperature – 25 July 2022
- updated digital and aerial VHF equipment – 16 June 2022
- new internationally recognised harbour entry light system – end June 2022
- recruitment of 2 Assistant Harbour Masters to increase the operational management coverage of the Harbour
- use of the Harbour Revision Order to formulate General Directions, which would become enforceable once pilotage ceased.

The navigational risk assessment would be kept under review, including the need for pilotage should the traffic profile of the harbour change in future.

The Harbour would remain a Statutory Harbour Authority with powers of directions.

Following the presentation, an Independent Member suggested that it would be worthwhile to understand the cost and time implication associated with revert back to a Competent Harbour Authority if the harbour was required to operate differently in future

The Weymouth Harbour Master stated that the financial implications in the report contained the costs associated with the Competent Harbour Authority status, however, the recruitment and training costs associated with pilotage were harder to quantify.

The Chairman highlighted that the Statutory Harbour Authority status would allow vessels carrying up to 70 passengers to enter the harbour (rather than 12 for a Competent Harbour Authority) meaning that cruise ship tender operations could come directly into Weymouth from ships located in the bay.

Members were supportive of the outcome of the review and all the proposals outlined in the report,

Proposed by Cllr David Gray, seconded by Cllr Sarah Williams.

Decision: Considering the current and expected future traffic profile of Weymouth Harbour and the result of the formal navigation risk assessment, the following actions be approved:

1. Commence the process of removing the Harbour Authority's Pilotage functions, as provided for under The Marine Navigation Act 2013;
2. Before the Pilotage service is removed, fully review and, if possible, enhance relevant existing control measures, in particular:
 - a) Make use of the 2021 HRO to issue General Directions which will become enforceable as soon as pilotage ceases.
 - b) Review the Harbour's Local Traffic Service provision.

62. Forward Plan

The Committee noted its forward plan.

63. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

64. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.25 am

Chairman

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