

## **HARBOURS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs Mark Roberts (Chairman), Rob Hughes (Vice-Chairman), Louie O'Leary, Mary Penfold, Sarah Williams,

**Independent Members:** Lee Hardy, Richard Tinsley and Philip Thicknesse

**Apologies:** Cllrs Dave Bolwell

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

Lara Altree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory), Ken Buchan (Head of Environment and Wellbeing), Claire Connolly (Harbour Office Manager), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Joshua Kennedy (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Penny (Service Manager - Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM)) Ed Carter (Weymouth Harbour Master) and James Radcliffe (Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Master)

**16. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022 were confirmed and signed.

**17. Declarations of Interest**

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

Cllr Roberts declared a non-pecuniary interest 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.

Richard Tinsley declared a non-pecuniary interest as he holds a mooring in Weymouth Harbour.

**18. Public Participation**

There were no public questions or statements.

**19. Questions From Councillors**

There were no questions from councillors.

**20. Chairman's Report**

The committee received a verbal report from the Chairman, who welcomed the new Weymouth Harbour Master to the meeting and also noted the work that had been done by commercial fishermen from Lyme Regis, West Bay, Axmouth and Beer to form a community interest company.

**21. Independent members of the Harbours Advisory Committee**

The committee noted that in accordance with the committee's terms of reference and with the agreement of both the Chairman and the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment, the terms of office for Mr Lee Hardy as a Co-opted member on the Advisory Committee was extended for a further 3-year period until 18 February 2026.

**22. Harbour Consultative Group Minutes**

The minutes of the Weymouth Harbours Consultative Group meeting held on 8 February were presented by Andy Sargent, Chair of Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group.

**23. Consultative Groups - Terms of Reference**

The Head of Environment and Wellbeing presented the Consultative Groups Terms of Reference and explained that this report had come to the committee after further clarification was sought by members of the consultative groups regarding the terms of reference.

In response to a question from a member, the Head of Environment and Wellbeing explained that although the terms of reference did not state that any of the group meetings would be open to the public, the chair of each group could decide to allow public participation at meetings at their discretion.

Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Hughes.

Decision: That the Terms of Reference for Harbours Consultative Groups be recommended to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and the Environment for approval.

[Decision - Approval of the Updated Terms of Reference for the Harbour Consultative Groups - Dorset Council](#)

**24. Harbour Master Updates**

The Bridport Harbour Master delivered the updates for Lyme Regis and West Bay harbours. The Harbour Master provided the statistics for Lyme Regis and West Bay harbours, including the quayside parking, mooring occupancy and pontoon usage, and compared these to the previous year's statistics. Members were also informed of staff training being undertaken in the near future and completed maintenance on the pontoon. The Harbour Master informed the committee of an accident that had occurred at Bridport, where a harbour staff member sustained an injury and the changes to their working practices that had been made as a result.

In response to a question from a member, the Harbour Master explained that the dredging work in Lyme Regis harbour had been completed, despite delays due to the weather and the dredging in West Bay harbour was set to start soon.

One member raised a concern about the reporting of the accident, however, was reassured by the Harbour Master that the accident was reported in the correct way.

The Weymouth Harbour Master delivered the update for Weymouth Harbour to the committee and noted the high mooring occupancy rate and the increase in visiting yachts and visitor numbers. The Harbour Master discussed training exercises that had been undertaken by staff at Weymouth harbour and training exercises that were being planned for the near future. It was explained that incidents had been rare recently and a new incident log had been created to keep a record of any incidents that had occurred. Members were informed of one incident where the pontoon had become unstable due to corrosion and following this a forward plan was put into place for repairs and fishing gear previously stored on the pontoon had been removed. A scheme to help fishermen dispose of their fishing waste responsibly was also in place. In regard to works on the harbour, the Harbour Master reassured members that the pier was structurally sound and suitable for the current level of footfall, however work was being done to replace the railings.

In response to questions from members the Harbour Master agreed to provide an update outside of the meeting, on the current state of the chartered diving industry in Weymouth and explained that the cause of the pontoon incident related to the bracket of the pontoon catching on the beam due to corrosion and a visual inspection would be carried out when there was a low-tide.

One member raised a concern regarding vessels that had been left unattended in an un-seaworthy condition and the Harbour Master explained that the harbour staff conducted regular checks on all vessels and worked with the owners to encourage responsible disposal of un-seaworthy vessels.

The committee noted the updates.

## 25. **Harbours Budget Monitoring Report 2022-23**

The Harbours Budget Monitoring Report for Bridport and Lyme Regis was delivered by the Bridport Harbour Master, who explained that for Bridport the expenditure was predicted to be adverse due to increases in travel and fuel costs. While income was predicted to be favourable, due to higher income from parking and licences.

Regarding Lyme Regis members were informed that expenditure was predicted to be adverse due to the same reasons as Bridport, in addition to high dredging costs from two lots of dredging in one year and overspend on equipment. Income was also expected to be favourable.

The Harbour Office Manager delivered the Budget Monitoring Report for Weymouth and informed the committee that the budget monitoring for Weymouth

was an improving picture, with revenue associated with car parks thought to be higher than anticipated and cost saving measures being introduced regarding energy usage. Although there were still cost pressures from insurance, salaries and rising energy costs.

Decision: That the budget monitoring position 2022/23 for Weymouth Harbour, Bridport Harbour and Lyme Regis Harbour be noted.

## 26. **Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Engineering Update**

The Service Manager for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management delivered an update on the FCERM for Lyme Regis, West Bay and Weymouth harbours. Inspections to the harbours were carried out in November and all remedial actions had either been completed or were underway. In Lyme Regis the application for funding for the improvement scheme had been successful and construction was due to begin in 2024. The dredging in West Bay harbour was set to begin in the near future and inspections of the Harbour wall had resulted in the closure of a walkway as a precautionary measure. In regard to Weymouth harbour the Service Manager noted that the pleasure pier was in a structurally sound condition and suitable for light pedestrian usage, however some of the railings were in poor condition and were set to be replaced.

In response to questions from members the Service Manager assured the committee that his team were working closely with the levelling up initiative to get the most effective use out of the available funds; current toilet facilities had been closed due to a drainage issue however a temporary solution was currently in place and that he was working with Dorset Council's Communications team to ensure public messaging was clear surrounding works in the harbour.

The committee noted the FCERM update.

The committee adjourned at 11:27 and reconvened at 11:38.

## 27. **Marine Safety Plan**

The Head of Environment and Wellbeing explained that the Marine Safety Plan had come to the committee after members had requested that it become a standing item on the agenda. It was agreed that accidents and incidents were to be reported quarterly to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and the Environment and that the previously mentioned accident at Bridport had been reported in this manner. Members were informed that the audit of Bridport harbour was to be undertaken first, due to compliance issues raised at previous meetings and would be completed shortly.

In response to a question from one member, the Head of Environment and Wellbeing assured the committee that a meeting with the designated person had

been arranged for the end of March and that a review on good practice for incident reporting could be arranged with them.

**28. Dorset Harbours Communication Plan**

Dorset Council Harbours Communication Plan was presented by the Harbour Office Manager, who explained that it had been created with the assistance of Dorset Council's Communications team as part of the harbours strategy and included an action plan that would be continually reviewed by the harbours team.

Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr O'Leary.

Decision: That the Harbours Communication Plan be recommended to the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel, and the Environment for approval.

[Decision - Approval of Dorset Council Harbours Communication Plan - Dorset Council](#)

**29. Forward Plan**

The forward plan was presented by the Head of Environment and Wellbeing, who noted that the Bridport Pilotage report would be presented at the June meeting and the Asset Management Plan for Bridport and Lyme Regis had been pushed back to the September meeting, to allow for further work to be undertaken.

The committee noted the forward plan.

**30. Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**31. Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 - 11.50 am

**Chairman**

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