

HARBOURS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2024

Present: Cllrs Rob Hughes (Chair), Sarah Williams (Vice-Chair), Mike Baker, Ray Bryan and Peter Dickenson

Independent Members Present: Mark Saxby

Apologies: Cllrs Sally Holland and Richard Tinsley

Also present: James Hannon (ABPMer)

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

Lara Altree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory), Ken Buchan (Head of Environment and Wellbeing), Ed Carter (Weymouth Harbour Master), Claire Connolly (Harbour Office Manager), Kevin Evans (Senior Accountant (Place)), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Penny (Service Manager - Flood & Coastal Erosion), James Radcliffe (Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Master) and Matthew Turnbull (Democratic and Electoral Services Apprentice)

68. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 12 June 2024 were confirmed and signed.

69. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Hughes declared that he had been appointed as Vice-Chair of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

70. Public Participation

There were no public questions or statements.

71. Chairman's Report

The Chair delivered a verbal report to the committee. He noted that since the last meeting, Philip Thicknesse had resigned from his position as a co-optee on the committee, meaning that there were now two vacancies following the resignation of Lee Hardy earlier in the year. He thanked both members for their contributions to the committee and explained that the posts would hopefully be filled by the end of the year.

72. Harbour Consultative Group Minutes

The Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group minutes for the meeting held on 03 September 2024 were presented by Tim Day, the Consultative Group Chair.

73. PMSC Designated Persons Report

The designated person presented the findings of the audit carried out on Weymouth Harbour. He provided a summary of the current Port Marine Safety Code and explained that the code had been reviewed and an updated version is expected to be finalised by the end of the year.

A summary of the audit findings was provided, it was determined that Weymouth Harbour was fully compliant with the PMSC, three areas of best practice and twelve areas of potential improvements were identified.

In response to questions from members the designated person explained that the only recurring points of improvement that had also been identified on the previous audit were minor and the key areas of improvement had been addressed since the last audit. The next audit was due to be carried out on Lyme Regis in March 2025.

74. Harbour Master Updates

The Harbour Master delivered a verbal update on Bridport and Lyme Regis harbours. He provided a summary of the statistics for both harbours, including the mooring occupancy levels and details on season tickets, quayside parking and visiting vessels. Upcoming works on both harbours were summarised, as well as incidents that had taken place since the last meeting. Some events had been cancelled or partially cancelled due to poor weather.

In response to a question from one member, the Harbour Master explained that the contractor involved in the storage building in Lyme Regis had left during the school summer holidays, so that the road wouldn't be blocked during the busy period.

The Harbours Manager provided an update for Weymouth harbour. A summary of the statistics for Weymouth Harbour was provided and it was noted that events had gone ahead successfully, including the Seafood Festival and Ironman event. There had been 65 incidents recorded since the last meeting. Changes had been made to the incident reporting system to make it easier for incidents to be reported and so that data could be extracted and trends identified to help prevent incidents going forward. The ongoing works on the harbour were listed, including the final connection to the National Grid and the installation of a fuel storage pontoon.

In response to questions from members, the Harbours Manager clarified that the fuel pontoon would be operated by the Harbour Team and that full training was being provided to staff to ensure safe operating of the fuel pumps and associated systems.

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

The Service Manager for Flood and Coastal Erosion presented the engineering updates for all three harbours. Dredging in Bridport and Lyme Regis had been combined into a single operation in order to save costs. Scheduled inspections were set to take place in both Bridport and Lyme Regis over the course of the next few months. In Bridport, Harbour Wall A was showing signs of settlement and being monitored by engineers and emergency works on Harbour Wall B had been completed and further repairs were set to take place.

In Lyme Regis, repairs to the Cobb had taken place and no further movement had been identified. Funding from a central government grant was hoped to be secured for the Environmental Improvement Scheme Phase 5 and a decision was expected in October.

In Weymouth the repair to the Stone Pier wall was set to be completed by the end of September and Wall 2 was being monitored until funding could be secured from the FCERM revenue budget to repair the wall. The FCERM scheme was set to commence in 2028 and there was a funding shortfall for this, however solutions were being looked at.

In response to questions, the Service Manager assured the committee that they would try and avoid any peak periods when carrying out dredging work and that they intended to survey the work while the equipment was on site so that any remedial works could be carried out.

76. Harbours Budget Monitoring Report 2024-25

The budget monitoring figures for Bridport and Lyme Regis were presented by the Harbour Master. In Bridport there was an overspend on staff pay, while there was an underspend on premises and supplies and services, due to the dredging not falling into this financial year. In Lyme Regis, there was also an overspend on staff pay, due to increased hours and an underspend on supplies and services because of the dredging. Lyme Regis was still funded by Dorset Council, so nothing was transferred to the reserves, but approximately £12,000 was returned to Dorset Council.

The Weymouth budget monitoring figures were presented by the Harbours Business Manager, who noted that the performance for Weymouth was generally on track with what was expected. It was explained that the reserve fund for Weymouth had been built up to allow the harbour to operate as self-sufficiently as possible. The budgeted surplus for 2024 was set to be transferred to the reserves and earmarked for dredging and funding the asset management plan.

The committee noted the budget monitoring figures for Bridport, Lyme Regis and Weymouth for 2024/25.

77. Monitoring and Review of the Marine Safety Plan

The Harbours Manager provided a summary of the Marine Safety Plan and explained how it ensured compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code. Amongst the minor changes to the plan were the change in the relevant Cabinet Member, following the Dorset Council election and the added recommendations following the most recent audit.

The committee noted the report.

78. Weymouth Harbour - Future Development and Open Port Duty

The Harbours Manager provided a summary of the report, it was explained that at the last Harbours Advisory Committee it had been agreed that the Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group would be consulted on the Harbour Revision Order proposed for Weymouth and the feedback received from that consultation was included in the report. Concerns were expressed by the group that larger vessels may be discouraged from entering the harbour following the HRO, however they had been assured that clear communication would accompany any implementation to avoid this scenario.

Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Dickenson.

Decision: That the Harbours Advisory Committee recommends the following measures to Cabinet for approval:

- i) That an application be made to the Marine Management Organisation for a Harbour Revision Order in respect of Weymouth Harbour to restrict the Open Port Duty.
- ii) That authority be delegated to the Executive Lead for Place Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services to determine the wording of the Harbour Revision Order based on legal advice and to undertake all procedures for the submission of the Harbour Revision Order to the Marine Management Organisation.
- iii) That a budget of £40,000 is allocated for the work set out in recommendations i) and ii) from Harbour Reserves.

79. Forward Plan

The Harbours Manager explained that in addition to the standing items, a report on the new Harbour Management Software and an updated Harbour Revision Order for Weymouth were expected to be brought to the next meeting.

80. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

81. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.38 am

Chairman

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