

Weymouth Harbour Consultation Group (WHCG)
 Wednesday 16th of August 2023 (WTC Chamber and Teams, 19:00-21:00)

Present

Andy Sargent	AS	Chair and RNLI Representative
Ken Buchan	KB	Head of Environment and Wellbeing
Ed Carter	EC	Weymouth Harbour Master
Cllr Mark Roberts	MR	Chair of the Harbours Committee
Dave Caddy	DC	Vice Chair and Harbour Traders Representative
Neil Bedwell	NB	Boatfolk Representative
Alan Hale	AH	Boat Owners Inner Harbour Representative
Tim Day	TD	Clubs of Weymouth Representative
Will Holmes	WH	Weymouth Beach / Leisure Users Representative
Cllr Colin Huckle	CH	Weymouth Town Council
Rob Gray	RG	Commercial Passenger Carrying Vessels Representative
Alison Roberts	AR	Dorset Marine Police
Mary Harris	MH	Harbour Traders Representative Substitute and Weymouth Harbour Watch
Simon Kershaw	SK	RNLI – Substitute Representative

1. INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

AS opened the meeting and introduced Simon Kershaw as substitute representative for the RNLI – round the room introductions were made.

Apologies from Dan Bell, Andy Alcock and Sarah Johnston.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

AS asked if everyone was happy with the previous minutes and that they were accepted.

4. WEYMOUTH HARBOUR UPDATE

Matters Arising from Previous Minutes:

- **JP** – holes in the harbour walls at Cosens Quay. A Coastal Risk Engineer viewed the wall at low tide in July, further investigations required and will check records for voids. This will be fed back into the wall repair plan and outline a business case in September. The current voids are not causing any problems and the wall is structurally stable.
- **DC** – drain under the Town Bridge flooding. Highways Engineers have been tasked to investigate and repair it, but this will not happen during the summer months due to the traffic flow. Due to start in September – **EC** to monitor.
- **MH** – parking spaces fenced off at Brewers' Quay. Highways / Parking are unable to confirm the reason for this other than H & S concerns regarding falling debris. **EC** to continue to pursue.
- **DC** – Heras fencing being stored under the Town Bridge. Licencing / Highways unable to give a definitive answer as to if permission has been given. Issue has been raised and will continue to pursue. **DC** advised more fencing panels have

been added, they stick out causing a potential trip hazard now with rubbish bins under the bridge. **EC** to follow up further.

- **TD** – trees overhanging Hookers dock at the Sailing club, the Arboreal Team have been in contact, and it should be resolved today.
- **DC** – Sand Jetty structural integrity, a low water inspection by Engineers of the top and underneath has revealed no signs of weakening or visible deterioration and is believed to be structurally sound, no risk under current use. Now on their radar and will be monitored. If there are any signs or issues, action will be taken to make it safe.
- **NB** – Westham Bridge sluices and the issues caused to Boatfolk. Flood Defence Engineer has been requested to contact NB. **NB** confirmed that this has happened.

1.0 General Harbour Use

- Visitor numbers low but close to profile, this has been due to the weather in June and July being a wash out. Numbers have been steady with visitors staying longer but the weather has had an effect.
- Large reduction in PWC / small vessel launches 40% behind profile for the time of year, could be due to the weather or anti-social vessel use initiatives involving the Marine Police. At the next Solent HM Association / SW Ports Association meeting will raise this to see if other similar ports have been affected as well. **AH** confirmed that Haven have now banned all PWC from entering their sites.

2.0 Notable Incidents

- The Harbour team have recorded 71 incidents:
 - Life rings thrown into the Harbour.
 - Fishing nets inside the bathing area.
 - Pier jumpers / jumping off the Town Bridge
 - Minor collisions between vessels.
 - Camping underneath the Pleasure Pier.
 - Vessels running out of fuel.
 - Reports of fly-tipping.
 - Reports of debris in the harbour.
 - Reports of missing persons.
 - Various minor injuries.
- Notable incident occurred on Monday 14th of August of a gentleman falling from the wall adjacent to the steps on Trinity Road, only made aware when an ambulance was on scene and treating the casualty. Investigations are being conducted as to what happened, what were the circumstances surrounding it. He has been treated in hospital for suspected leg fracture and various cuts and abrasions. It is believed that he mistakenly went down the steps for a boat trip and fell on his way back up the steps. CCTV is being reviewed to find out what happened.

3.0 Alpha/Bravo/Charlie pontoons

- Work has now been fully completed and signed off.
- Sporadic reports have been received regarding marking on fenders of vessels moored along the pontoons from the rubbing strike. As the pontoon is a commercial specification and designed for tugs, we are currently in discussions with the manufacture and Intermarine as if this is just weather off or if it will continue. If it continues options to replace will be explored to minimise the reputation of Weymouth Harbour with visitors.

4.0 Oil Spills & Response

- Quiet for the period with 2 reports in the last 2 weeks of light fuel in the inner harbour. The first was quickly identified as a recreational vessel, that discharged a small quantity in its bilge water. The second was more extensive evident from the Town Bridge to the Marina, a source could not be identified but with monitoring and the weather broke up and evaporated quickly, no containment action was required.

5.0 Commercial Berths

- A recent meeting was held with the berth-holders in the outer harbour that berth along Trinity Road after individuals approached the HM with various suggestions. It went well and follow action is to speak with the skipper of the FV Nicola L about taking a berth in the Commercial Port area during the summer months. This would allow the commercial operators more room as often visitors leave vessels on the waiting pontoon for long periods of time.

6.0 Commercial Port Berths

- VICTORY, the last tug of the Griffin Towage fleet was confirmed sold in April. We are expecting her to leave for Malta at the end of the season.
- The larger Border Force and Navy vessels are being berthed on berth No.1 during the summer months to free up visitor pontoons.

7.0 General Directions

- The General Directions Consultation ran for 6 weeks from the 28.06.23 to 09.08.23 according to article 22 of the HRO notification was sent to the Chamber of Shipping, RYA, the HCG and notices were displayed around the harbour with details promoted on the website, social media and in line with Dorset Council policy through Citizen Space. Due to relevant staff being away the RYA asked for a 2-week extension, after taking advice from a marine solicitor and as primary consultees it was given until 23.08.23.
- We have received good responses from the WSC and 3 from private individuals. These will be considered and responded to with Ashford ZLP Marine Solicitors, and it is planned to present any findings and recommendations at the Harbours Advisor Committee meeting on the 20th of September. Application to the Department of Transport is the next stage to have the General Directions in place prior to the start of next season.

8.0 Pleasure Pier

- The contractor has been working on the railing replacement on the Pleasure Pier, they have nearly got most of the new railings in, once complete the old ones will be removed without requiring the pier to be closed. New signage will also be installed.
- Weymouth Pleasure Pier – Proposed Control of Access, this relates to the antisocial behaviour currently going on and all the resources that have to be involved. The proposal is to allow the Harbour Authority to close the area to make it safe if required, the area is being improved and further improvements are to encourage more footfall to discourage this behaviour. **AS** – mentioned that previously, when asked about the charges to access the pier to be removed he was advised that the charge was to be kept on the tariff in case it was ever to be instigated again. It was suggested that it would most likely be WTC rather than DC charges, but this will need to be investigated. **SK** – asked about the improvements and the knock-on effect of displacement of the persons causing the ASB within the town. **EC** advised that he

has spoken to the Police and CSAS officers who were very much aware of this to potentially happen.

- **CH** – Peninsula Redevelopment work, any updates on this? **KB** confirmed that after the issue with the contractor and going out to tender to find another there should be an increase of activity this winter though the cost of materials and supply have had to be re-evaluated. **EC** confirmed that he will be working closely with the contractors.

9.0 Sea Grass Survey

- A survey was conducted by the Environment Agency in July, it was to map the extent of the sea grass beds in the bay and to ascertain the health of the habitat. The results will be shared at the next meeting.

10.0 Nao Victoria

- The Tallship Nao Victoria visited Weymouth at the end of June, visitor numbers were not as high as the El Galeon visit earlier. Both were berthed on the new Alpha pontoon and was proved very successful at that location and benefited the businesses along the quayside. Investigate using that area for future visiting tall ships and opportunities for the public.

11.0 Other Notable Marine Events

- Ironman 17th September – road closures tbc
- Weymouth Rowing Club regatta 14th October

5. CONSULTATIVE GROUP UPDATE

- **DC - Harbour Traders Representative.** Local restaurants have been struggling to get front of house staff and then it rains, and no customers come in. It is picking up now and plenty of people out in the sunshine.
- **RG - Commercial Passenger Carrying Vessels Representative.** Also confirmed that it is picking up now with improvement in the weather.
- **CH – Weymouth Town Council.** Asked EC if he had met the Town Clerk. His response was he had not so **CH** offered to ask the Town Clerk to arrange a meeting.
- **WH - Weymouth Beach / Leisure Users Representative.** Slow start to July but the Monday night fireworks have gone well thanks to Edgar and his assistance. As of Tuesday, there will be 2 qualified SIA security guards within the Resort Team patrolling the seafront. The Air Ambulance was on scene last week for an incident and that was dealt with by the team. Weymouth Beach is now the number 1 beach in the UK !
- **KB - Head of Environment and Wellbeing.** Plans have been drawn up regarding the North Quay walls to be included in the NQ Regeneration Project, currently with Planning.
- **MR – Harbours Advisory Committee.** Following on from the Squib Nationals at Weymouth, Lyme Regis had the OK Internationals with 13 countries with 148 boats in the harbour. Attended the Weymouth Harbour Watch launch event with the PCC, there was a good turnout. Engineers have reviewed the Cob at Lyme Regis and refurbishment of it will commence in 2025, there should be no more deterioration until then allowing it to be open for the summer holidays. An issue to have a pole moved in an SSI area is ongoing. The Town Council raised concerns over the dredging material that was deposited on Lyme Beach as it was dark in colour, it has been tested and confirmed to be safe. West Bay harbour southern walls and toilets have cracks and have been fenced off, work will be started on them in September. All 3 harbours have been suffering due to the weather though there are plenty of

visitors around the harbours.

- **NB – Boatfolk Marina.** Thanks to the Harbour Team for assisting with the oil spill identified from a vessel in the marina. Last week a French registered vessel visited with their dog, this then involved Border Force and it resulted in the dog staying onboard the vessel. Also had an incident when a 92-year-old customer who lived aboard his vessel fell into the harbour. **NB** to provide **EC** with a copy of the incident report. They have seen a decrease in ASB in the marina. Visitor numbers are down generally though there has been a slight increase in the last month.
- **TD – Training & Education Schools.** Squib Nationals went well and thanks to the harbour staff for handling a casualty that was landed. An intruder tried to get into the lower yard by the Rowing Club, this has been pasted onto the Harbour Office and report to the Police. Vessels mooring on the race marker buoys in the bay during the firework displays has also been pasted onto the Harbour Office. **EC** confirmed an evening patrol will be taking place when the next firework display was planned. WSC later summer regatta happening on the 9th and 10th of September, 10 visiting Larks (small dinghy's) will be on club moorings.
- **AH - Boat Owners Inner Harbour Representative.** Nothing to Report.
- **MH – Weymouth Harbour Watch.** The launch event was very well attended with lots of businesses and residents displaying the stickers around the harbour and the sign up for Dorset Alert. The Dorset Echo did a good piece of coverage on it. The next event will be held on the 15th of September on the pontoons. WW Road from 11:00 – 13:00 and NQ 14:00 – 16:00. Details on the website and flyers will be sent out. It will provide security marking for equipment and items, the Ebike Café utilised this with a lot of items being marked at the launch event.
- **AR – Dorset Marine Police.**
 - **9 Reports in the Weymouth Area:**
 - 2 Suspicious persons onboard boats
 - 3 Thefts from boats
 - 1 Drunk in charge of a vessel
 - 3 Youths swimming and jumping into the harbour.
 - Weymouth Harbour Watch / Security marking event on the 15th of September, will be there supporting the Dorset Police cadets doing security marking and promoting Dorset Alert. Thefts are difficult to investigate when items are not marked and when recovered it eases the return of them.
 - Border Force & Dorset Marine Police would both like to reiterate that reporting any of the following is essential with any vessels:
 - With foreign crew, particularly charter vessels
 - Refuelling multiple times
 - No AIS switched on.
 - Cash only payments
 - Vague on personal details
 - Arriving and movements at odd times, particularly at night
 - An interest in security details
 - **MR** asked about the Dorset Marine Police jet ski's – confirmed that the FSG (Fully Support Group) have access to these mainly on the weekends, they will be with us at some point in the future but currently with no reports of ASB on PWC's or speedboats their presence is not required.
- **AS – RNLI.** Lifeboat week raised just under £7,000 and was a success even though the weather resulted in the Bowleaze evening event being cancelled. The story telling at Weymouth Library was very well attended and had a positive impact on the children that went. Shouts have been up and down, busy with the Fastnet Race with 6 incidents, nonserious though a vessel with a fractured mast had to be taken into Portland. Paddleboarders and kite surfers have been assisted by the ILB. The boathouse refurbishment has been delayed due to financial issues but will now be commencing in April for 6 months, it will be out of bounds and an alternative location is needed for the crew. The shop is to be moved out and the area repurposed for the current 32 crew members.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FROM MEMBERS

- **EC** – Weymouth Pleasure Pier – Proposed Control of Access. Covered above.
- **DC** – Flooding under the town bridge. Covered above.
- **DC** - Storage of Heras fencing under the town bridge. Covered above.
- **DC** - Lady selling artwork on the pavilion end of the cargo stage, parking her car on double yellow lines and displaying and selling pictures. EC has asked staff to obtain contact details so the lady in question can be asked to come to the Harbour Office to discuss. DC advised that Trading Standards have previously spoken to her. EC has spoken to Cllr Christine James regarding uses of the cargo stage and is happy to explore options but wouldn't be allowing adhoc events. A proposal is to be provided so all the correct licensing can be obtained. EC to follow up. DC confirmed that the art gallery opposite the cargo stage had complained as they are paying business rates and rent, whereas she is not. She is also parking her vehicle on the double yellow lines with the boot open and claiming that she is loading whenever approached by an enforcement officer.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **DC** – It has been observed, particularly in the Cove area that kids and families are going onto the pontoons to obtain sea water in their crabbing buckets and then remaining on the pontoons. He has witnessed people slipping on the pontoons and that they have ease of access where no gates are installed at the access points. Suggested either a tap or pump for sea water to reduce this and the potential risk. **EC** confirmed that Harbour Staff do ask the public to leave the pontoons when they are seen on them but will discuss further as to what can be done to ease access to the water for crabbing.
- **MR** – Advised that the next Harbours Advisory Committee meeting will take place at 2.30pm on the 20th of September.
- **AH** – Confirmed that vessels have been witness, with film clips on social media, travelling at speed inside the white buoys in the bay marking the safe swimming area. They have been parallel to the beach at 15/16 knots and putting swimmers at risk. **EC** to increase the patrols in this area.
- **AS** – A lot of fishing pots have been seen in the area of the Stone Pier on the south and northeastern side, within 100M and has been causing some issues. LNTM states that pots should not be 3.5 cables of the Stone Pier light. There were at least 12 pots there last night. **EC** aware and dealing with the commercial vessel laying the pots.
- **AS** – The Chair and Vice Chair terms are due to end in February 2024. **KB** confirmed that prior to the next meeting the process will be outlined and the request for nominations will be sent up so a vote can be taken at the next meeting and can be handed over at the February 2024 meeting. **EC** to circulate the details.

8. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Harbour Consultative Group

- 11 October 2023 at Weymouth Town Council Chamber and online via Teams.

Harbours Committee

- 20 September 2023
- 22 November 2023