

Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee

Meeting held by Zoom on Friday 11th June 2021, 15.00 – 17.00

MINUTES

Present

John Corby, Chair, waterside private property owners and West Cowes boatyards, (JC)

Dan Jehan, Cowes Yacht Haven, (DJ)

Julian Shawyer, Williams Shipping, (JS)

Lee Rayment commercial vessel operators, (LR)

Mark Southwell, RNLI, (MS)

David Riley, Chair CHC, (DR)

Tracy Reardon, ECTC, (TR)

Richard Hollis, CTC, (RH)

Gary Hall, CEO, (GH)

Ed Walker, Harbour Master, (EW)

1. Apologies for absence

Peter Jackson, Bob Holt and Rob Stewart.

2. Approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

Approved.

3. Matters arising

None

4. Harbour Safety and General Directions

EW said that the harbour was getting much busier with many visitors, keeping the patrol officers busy. Very few incidents with jet skis, 90% of jet skis are using the river well within the GDs, so a big positive. JC asked about the proposed permit system, EW said they were still working on that with the other harbours around the Solent, but probably each will end up doing its own permit system. Work in progress.

JC mentioned that PJ had raised the issue of the boundary not being updated after the new breakwater was built. EW said this was the MCA categorisation of waters dependent on wave height, with categories C and D in Cowes, which activates liferaft criteria. Changes would require an application with various studies and reports.

RH asked, on behalf of Bob Holt, that if the taxis go beyond the slipway at the globe, eg Trinity Landing, theoretically they are then in a different category which requires liferafts, so could trinity be recategorised to the lesser category.

JC said this is clearly a ludicrous situation. EW agreed and said he would approach the MCA, but it's not a quick process.

MS asked if the general improvement of jet ski behaviour might negate the need to introduce permits in the future. EW said it would still be worthwhile and that it would also help to share information around the Solent. In a small amount of cases they are linked to antisocial behaviour.

RH mentioned that the Harbour handbook 'welcomed jet skis'.

JC mentioned the 'Goodwin' case a few years ago where a judge decreed that a jet ski was a 'personal watercraft' rather than a 'vessel' which could complicate matters.

DR said that as a trust port CHC are bound to run an open and safe harbour.

JC said there didn't appear to be a 24hr number to CHC for emergencies. EW said that people should ring the Coastguard.

JC's final point was that he witnessed the Southampton HM charging out of the harbour at what appeared to be far more than six knots and causing massive wash which didn't set a good example.

RH said Whitegates pontoon was getting worse with small boats padlocked to it, fishermen who regard it as their private mooring and blatant drug smoking despite IWC working hard to reduce drug use on the Island. DR reminded everyone that the pontoon belonged to IWC but suggested a gate which is something CTC could support. RH said there were now people who didn't like to keep their boat in that vicinity. EW said CHC had removed a lot of boats over the last 12 months.

GH said CHC did liaise with IWC and the Police who were very keen on trying to clean it up.

5. CHC's latest plans for sustainability and responsible business.

JC reminded everyone how lots of people had sniggered at this when he raised it at a previous meeting but that the Red Funnel rep had agreed that this is a vital requirement and expected in any modern business. JC said he was delighted to see that a new commissioner had been appointed to wear this hat.

GH explained that the initial task was to examine and audit what CHC are doing currently and then identify areas for improvement. CHC are also looking at electric propulsion and electric charging. JC mentioned he had built an electric boat and it's not as easy as you think it's going to be, also very expensive for the power. JC also pointed out that customers are increasingly wanting to know how their electricity is being generated, how their rubbish is being disposed of and how ethical the manufacturing of what they buy is.

6. New EC slipway

GH explained that ETC were unable to lead the project so ISC have picked up the baton with the help of CHC, RF and Ben Willows (UKSA). They have sent out a tender for an initial phase of work being a design and cost proposal.

JC asked about the timing and GH thought this was a two to three year project.

TR thought that originally RF were going to pay for the whole thing, but JC reminded everyone about the meeting at which their previous rep had stunned the committee by saying that RF wouldn't actually be paying for it because the small print said they didn't have to.

7. Kingston update

JC said this was becoming one of his pet issues because his view is it's still a stone age boatyard. He mentioned that there is a dispute between CHC and one of the tenants and it wasn't CHAC's business to get involved in landlord and tenant disputes but it was CHAC's business to push CHC about making improvements to the site and facilities. He felt that the site deserved a full time manager rather than sharing Jock with Shephards. JC asked GH to reassure everyone that there would be improvements to the way it's run, to which GH said he could. He is currently auditing all the working procedures there and will then make the necessary improvements.

Both JC and DR agreed that it's vital the DIY element of Kingston is maintained.

JC asked about Stuart Macintosh's plans for new buildings and units and GH said he is pursuing more detail.

8. Availability of dayboat moorings

JC declared a massive interest in this item because he hadn't been able to get a mooring for his Daring. He also pointed to several boats with decent engines on harbour moorings and suggested that in the future these boat go south of the floating bridge and make space for daybooks without engines.

GH responded that CHC does have to run commercially but accepted that this is a problem for new owners who might buy a boat in the spring but then find there's nowhere to moor it. DJ agreed that the demand at CYH this year had been huge.

9. Time keeping on Red Funnel clock tower

JC said it would be hard to discuss this without a RF rep but that the time was different on on four faces of the tower and none of them correct.

10. Rumours that the CHC/CYH merger had been reheated.

GH assured everyone that the merger is still on hold from last year and had no idea where the rumours were coming from.

11. Revised categories of stakeholder benefits

JC accepted that he had previously misunderstood GH on this, and GH explained that he was putting together a revised application form and process for people who wish to apply for a stakeholder benefit, to improve the financial audit trail.

13 AOB

LR said that he had seen various emails with the MCA about the categorisation of waters which indicated this was work in progress.

John Corby
Chairman.