

Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee

Meeting held by Zoom on Friday 3rd September 2021, 15.00 – 17.00

MINUTES

Present

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

Peter Jackson, Medina Mariners (PJ)

Bob Milner, CCCA (BM)

Julian Shawyer, Williams Shipping, (JS)

Leanna Lakes, Red Funnel (LL)

Mark Southwell, RNLI, (MS)

Tracy Reardon, ECTC, (TR)

Gary Hall, CEO, (GH)

Ed Walker, Harbour Master, (EW)

David Riley, Chair CHC, (DR)

David Walters, CTC, (DW)

Gavin Ford, CBC (GF)

Ben Willows, UKSA, (BW)

Karl Love, ECTC, (KL)

Clive Blount, CHC (CB)

Lora Peacey-Wilcox (IWC)

1. Apologies for absence

Lawrence Meade

2. Approve the minutes from the previous meeting.

Approved.

3. Matters arising

None

4. Harbour Safety and General Directions

EW said there had been a lot of events since the previous meeting but in terms of safety nothing stands out. Speeding is still an issue, both commercial and leisure. CHC have done a couple of campaigns, about swimming in the harbour and the wearing of lifejackets and kill-cords, which has also been promoted in the local schools. JC asked about the Powerboat weekend and EW said it had gone really

well. The organisers had provided a lot of safety boats and the spectators kept out of the way.

LL said there had been two Red Funnel near misses in the harbour recently but no problems with the powerboats.

PJ asked about the previously proposed licences for jet-skis and also the question about putting a light on the training pontoon which is very close to the fairway and unlit. EW said that a Trinity House Navaid inspection was to be carried out soon and he would ask that the Training Pontoon be given attention.

MS said that fire on boats had been a feature this year. One fire per year is normal but there have been three or four this year. The RNLi have published advice about how to reduce fires on boats which CHC have re-published. JC asked what was causing these fires, and MS said batteries were two of them which is very unusual. JC made the point that batteries are getting more sophisticated and mentioned a friend with a motorboat who had insurance refused because of the electric tender, which he then had to replace with petrol, not an aspect which anyone had seen coming.

JC then raised the point which BM had also wanted to raise which is there are two yellow marks very close together between the shore and Gurnard cardinal mark, and why can't the relevant organisations get their heads together and use just one. EW said he had the discussion earlier in the year without a conclusive outcome. CHC need to mark the harbour in a different position to where the SCRA want their racing mark. JC accepted that one of the marks has a cross on it but it's only been two years with two marks and asked if everything worked ok before. CB said there had been problems with the extent of the speed limit not being visibly defined well enough. BM said a simple solution was to swap the buoy with the cross around. JC asked if SCRA and CHC could get their heads together and revisit this matter again. EW said he was more than happy to do this.

DW mentioned a couple of occasions with Red Funnel exceeding the speed limit and asked if six knots was sufficient to manoeuvre the ferries in spring tides. He said he had reported it to the VTS who had rung up RF on two occasions and the ferries had slowed down.

PJ recalled looking at this with Stuart Macintosh fifteen years ago and had decided that the rule should be six knots through the water not over the ground, and that some people only examine the AIS speed which might make a couple of knots difference either way. In general six knots is adequate. LL agreed that there is a difference between water speed and ground speed.

JS added that, as the Master of Blade Runner Two, he might easily look as if he's doing more than six knots at times on AIS.

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

GH said there is a new commissioner, Fiona Fitzherbert-Brockholes, who is looking at this aspect and is going through the organisation to come up with an action plan. CHC are also going out to tender for an external consultant.

GF said that last week CBA had hosted the finale to their Sustainability Summer event and that there will be a massive TEDEX event at the ISC on 4th November.

PJ asked CHC to specifically look at how they dispose of old GRP wrecks and look at, in conjunction with Newport Harbour Authority, a strategy for wreck disposal. EW said CHC already do that and spent about £20K last year on doing this. They take them to Kingston, break them up and an approved contractor then takes it away. EW said CHC would also look to help out at the Folly regarding this.

6. New EC slipway

BW reported some good progress, with CHC, IWC and UKSA having got together and appointed Ramboll Consultants to produce a proposal with some facts, figures and detail which can be put to stakeholders and particular the residents of EC.

LL said that RF were on the list to also help.

JC asked if this was actually a public slipway owned and managed by IWC rather than being owned by a 3rd party. BW agreed and reminded everyone that IWC currently own the existing public slipway. GH added that administration of the slipway would be like creating a new pathway so would have to go through the proper planning process which takes a long time but at least there is positive progress.

KL said the ownership would be a discussion that ECTC would like to be part of and asked when the feasibility study was likely to be completed. BW said he was waiting for Ramboll to come back with a date and in fact Ramboll would like a site visit so ought to meet with KL and TR.

DW said that some years ago he had gone to the Public Records office and got the plans of Cowes and East Cowes in relation to the slipways. The slipways are there for local fishermen, local working population, and for boat owners to take their tenders ashore, so to say they are owned by the IWC might be true but to close them is against what they are supposed to be there for.

PJ says any slipway on EC Esplanade is going to require a breach of the defences and all the existing spots are already owned by the IWC so nobody should be alarmed by issues of ownership.

KL said the gate on the current Dover Road slipway is now too narrow for many boats and the post needs moving slightly.

7. Kingston update

GH said there is a lot going on there but two key things to update people with. Firstly with regard to existing operations he's had an external audit of the operations conducted and an action plan has been put in place. Policies, practices

and working procedures are going to be updated and he has a good team on board to help with that.

Secondly, an option appraisal for development has been completed which flagged up a need to get more detailed costs.

KL asked GH to have a chat again about the impact on local infrastructure and to be kept in the loop.

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 boats go south of the floating bridge and make space for dayboats without engines.

GH responded that 2020 had been an unusual year and many people made late decisions about taking moorings in 2021, but that moving forward things would be more like they used to be in 2019 and before when the system had generally worked pretty well.

9. Billing system for occasional visiting ribs on Town Quay pontoon

JC said he was curious to know what the system for charging visiting RIBs in Cowes was after having a very good experience in Warsash who are extremely friendly and have a very efficient invoicing and payment system.

GH said that the system in Cowes was very easy and seemed to work very well.

10. Timekeeping on Red Funnel clocktower

LL said she was happy to report that Smiths of Derby are attending on the 20th September to fix it.

11. Uffa Fox Regatta 2022

JC said he wouldn't normally make an agenda item of a sailing event but he felt this was the exception because of the historical significance of Uffa Fox to Cowes and the Royal Family and the Flying Fifteen being his most famous design. JC also pointed out that this would be an event for enthusiasts rather than wealthy people, and hoped that CHC might be able to support it in some way.

GH said he had already met with Rodney Barton, one of the organisers of this event. They are at the early stages but will meet again when there are more details to discuss CHC support.

DW said it needed a central body to pull this regatta together because it could be quite exceptional. He also thought that if the right application was made, CTC might also consider supporting it, maybe even applying to do something on the Parade with the Classic Boat Museum.

KL said that EC would also be interested in participating.

BM said that class associations of Uffa Fox designs had been contacted too with a view of displaying examples of his designs, possibly on the Parade.

DW said this could be far more than just a boating event and needed somebody who understands the working of local councils and traffic orders.

KL reminded people about the possibility of using the fantastic esplanade in EC, and asked if somebody from ECTC could be included in the steering group. BM said he would arrange that.

GF said there were already lots of things going on with CTC and CBA.

12. Impending 'party boat'

JC said he wasn't sure whether to make this an agenda item or not because he thought it sounded a great idea for Cowes but acknowledged that there might be aspects he hadn't thought of and that some local people might have concerns.

PJ said the key points were: it was going to be a luxury restaurant aboard a 34m refurbished yacht which does actually go to sea in the Solent. No planning application has been submitted but there has been a licensing application to sell alcohol and have live and recorded music from 11 am till midnight, 7 days a week. Will be berthed at Venture Quays. PJ thought that, looking at the plans, this vessel would accommodate up to 300 people which could create car parking problems and potential safety and environmental considerations when they disembark late at night. He then said he hoped that the approval process went beyond just the licensing process for food and drink.

KL wasn't sure they would even need a planning application but had referred it to EW because he too was concerned about lots of drunk people disembarking late at night at the same time, also the question of noise and parking. He felt that this was a matter for CHC to look closely at regarding safety.

CB warned against being too negative at this stage. It would be a coded vessel run to MCA standards, and no different to Solent & Wightline Cruises running their booze cruises or to drunk people getting off Red Funnel, and potentially a lot of business for Cowes.

KL said he wasn't opposed to it and ECTC had agreed not to object to the license.

TR said the application was for 170 passengers.

DR said he had seen the prospectus for fund raising which had done the rounds and stressed that it was intended to be an up market restaurant like The Hut rather than a party boat. JC replied that he should have called the agenda item 'impending restaurant boat'.

13. Next CHAC Chairman May 2022

JC said that at the May meeting next year he would be stepping down as chairman after two terms, 6 years, and that anyone interested in taking this on should contact BW, the deputy chairman. There is a process laid down in the constitution of the CHAC.

DW added that whoever it is must have the approval of CHC.

14 AOB

KL mentioned a new flood defences document from the environment agency which is available to the public.

Next meeting in January.

John Corby
Chairman.