

# Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee

Meeting held by Zoom on Friday 19th February 2021, 15.00 – 17.00

## MINUTES

### Present

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

Ben Willows, UKSA and Cowes Training Schools, (BW)

John Stage, Red Funnel, (JS)

Dan Jehan, Cowes Yacht Haven, (DJ)

Mark Rayment commercial vessels operators, (MR)

Giles Peckham, Cowes Clubs and Classes Association, (GP)

Laurence Mead, Cowes Week Ltd, (LM)

Bob Holt, commercial fishermen and water taxis, (BH)

Peter Jackson, Medina Combined Clubs, (PJ)

Mark Southwell, Cowes RNLi, (MS)

Clive Blount, CHC Commissioner, (CB)

Rob Stewart, East Cowes shipyards and boatbuilders, (RS)

Lora Peacy Wilcox, Cowes Town Council, (LPW)

David Riley, Chair CHC, (DR)

Mike Townsend, EC Marina, (MT)

Richard Hollis, IWC, (RH)

Stuart McIntosh, Harbour Master, (SM)

Gary Hall, CEO, (GH)

Ed Walker, Harbour Master, (EW)

### **1. Apologies for absence**

None

### **2. To introduce new CEO Gary Hall**

JC asked everyone to say a few words about themselves and the stakeholder groups they represent. Gary then introduced himself.

### **3. Approve the minutes from the previous meeting.**

Approved.

### **4. Matters arising**

None

## **5. Harbour Safety and General Directions**

EW updated everyone about the issues concerning personal watercraft, eg jet skis. CHC will be implementing a permit system, definitely locally but hopefully ultimately also a Solent wide system with the other harbour and port authorities. The marine police are also very interested in being involved.

PJ made the point that the only public slipway on the east side of the river is at the Folly which means the Newport HM also has to be involved with this permit system.

EW also mentioned the Whitegates area is due to have CCTV installed next week. CHC has also done a lot of work in removing problem boats from there.

BH brought up the topic of a defibrillator at the Folly. He said that the Medina Mariners Association were prepared to contribute to the cost as were Newport Harbour but the Folly wasn't. So he felt that CHC should take the lead on this. He also mentioned that he had witnessed several heart attacks in that area. SM said this would be under EW, not GH, and suggested they discuss it later.

LPW thanked SM for getting on with the CCTV at Whitegates.

RH asked SM to clarify who owns what at Whitegates. SM confirmed that IWC own and are responsible for the pontoon and walkway, but CHC then take over as soon as anyone touches the water. He also stressed that CHC and IWC have agreed to work in partnership to resolve the current issues.

MT said that East Cowes Marina has a defibrillator. EW said there is a public website showing the locations of all local defibrillators.

## **6. CHC lockdown measures compared to other boatyards**

JC asked SM to comment on why CHC's lockdown access to Shephards Wharf and Kingston seemed to be far more restricted than non-CHC yards.

SM replied that it's down to all companies and organisations to work out their own risk assessment and interpret the governments Covid guidelines and law and put in the appropriate measures. CHC has tried to take a reasonable approach and follow the spirit of the guidelines. Sailing has been included as exercise. EW added that an approved CHC contractor does have access codes to boatyards.

## **7. Recruitment of new Commissioner**

SM updated everyone about the recent advertisement to recruit a new Commissioner. CHC try to keep a good balance of different skills within the commissioners and this year they are looking to recruit somebody with experience in sustainability. CHAC had discussed this at their previous meeting. SM said that the selection panel is made up of the Chairman, David Riley, a stakeholder representative (LM has been asked), and an independent person. This means two of the three people on the panel are not CHC.

## **8. Current requests for stakeholder dividends**

SM reminded everyone that being a Trust port, ChC have the ability to award grants to requests that will improve the offer to stakeholders that wouldn't normally produce a commercial return.

There are currently applications in from the SCRA in respect of the yellow race marks, and an application on behalf of the committee boat Cowes United. CHC already support Cowes United with a mooring on Trinity pontoon. The final application is for continued support for the harbour taxi operation. Although the commissioners make the final decisions on these applications, CHC will be consulting CHAC.

PJ mentioned the proposed EC slipway, and SM confirmed that yes this was definitely something which would fall into the stakeholder dividend category.

## **9. Classification of stakeholder dividends versus infrastructure upgrades**

JC made the point that he felt CHC categorised as much as possible as stakeholder dividends to improve their public relations when in fact he felt that projects like the outer breakwater and eastern channel should be classified as infrastructure.

SM replied that he understood the sentiment, but according to Trust Port guidelines CHC are required to make a commercial profit on their investments which, for example, the breakwater wouldn't do, so these projects do fit within the stakeholder dividend contribution. Taxis and the handbook are examples of smaller projects.

JC asked about the proposed new units at Kingston. SM replied that this would need to be a normal commercial development, but maybe some Government grant funding would help.

## **10. Cowes Week**

LM said they were fully committed to going ahead this year after a significant loss in 2020. In November Kate Johnson left CWL and LM was made managing director in charge of both shoreside and racing.

There are currently no plans for fireworks this year due to budget and covid. However they have secured the funding, with AQL, for a 5G network bubble over the Solent called Connected Cowes. Around 50 boats will be fitted with high definition 360 degree cameras, sending back pictures to a new spectator app. This will hopefully improve the sponsors visibility but CWL are not allowed to make money from this until 2022.

JC asked about the expected social aspect. LM hoped that socialising would be at the very least similar to last years club socialising with tables of six.

DJ said that CYH had similar expectations.

## **11 Taxis**

BH said he was planning to start the service in April, weekends only to start with then a seven day service in May. The Folly end of the river would depend on the pub opening.

SM said that normally CHC would be going out to tender for the taxi service but due to the special circumstances he would be recommending that the existing contract be renewed for one more season.

BH said in that case he would run a seven day service from the 1st April.

JC said that anyone who had concerns with the contract being extended like this should get in touch after the meeting.

## **12 New EC slipway update**

BW said that he had meeting that morning with GH, SM and Chris Ashman from IWC. There has been a lot of work going on behind the scene. They have also had a meeting with ECTC to get the slipway included in their town plan which they are working on right now and see if ECTC would take the lead on the slipway project. But ECTC think that IWC should lead it because they already own the Dover Road slipway.

What has now been agreed is that CHC will help draft the specification to create a document which can be shared with IWC who have agreed, in principal, to lead the project. IWC would then go out to tender to get somebody to put together a design and delivery report.

PJ said that the greatest amount of work so far had been done by Red Funnel, and asked if RF would be content for CHC and IWC to use that information, which SM thought they were.

JC asked what happens with the old slipway. SM explained that slipways are like public right of ways, so would require a stopping up order to block it up or remove it.

MR made the point that slipways and public access to the water were given to the public many years ago and they can't simply be taken away.

### **13 AOB**

GP mentioned some confusion with some of the yellow racing marks names and positions. SM said he was aware of this at the western end of the Green where there are two marks for various reasons and suggested chatting later off line to come up with a solution. GP requested a meeting with EW and SM said he would pass on the message.

At the end of the meeting JC and several members of the committee spoke positively and fondly about SM's time as HM, wished him all the best for his retirement and presented him with a leaving gift, an aerial photograph of Cowes from a local gallery.

SM responded with some words about how enthusiastic he is with the Trust Port model and how it works so well for the community, and finished by thanking everyone for his gift.



John Corby  
Chairman.

Next meeting provisionally Friday 11th June