



**Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Harbour Commission held at
Harbour Office, Cowes on Friday 28 October 2022**

Present: Phil Hagen – Chairman (PH)
James Evans – Deputy Chairman (JE)
Vanessa Clifford (VC)
Jason Losty (JL)
Steve Sheridan (SS)
David Riley (DR)
Clive Blount (CB)
Gary Hall – Chief Executive (GH)

In Attendance: Ed Walker (ED) - Harbour Master

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest and Declarations of Related Party Transactions for Cowes Harbour Commissioners are on the CHC website.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Fiona Fitzherbert-Brockholes (FF-B) and Theresa Dunford (TD) Finance Officer.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 9 September 2022 having been sent out it was resolved that they be signed as a true and complete record of business transacted.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

None.

5. SAFETY

The CEO/HM report was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board. The Board thanked EW for the information on the safety topic of ‘Navigation in Cowes Harbour during periods of Restricted Visibility’.

EW reported that it is now noticeably quieter, as would be expected for this time of year but that propulsion failure still continues to be an issue. He has spoken to the RYA and provisionally the RNLI to see if it is possible to have a propulsion campaign. We will produce the content and distribute, and along with the RYA and RNLI it is hoped it can become a Solent-wide campaign to raise awareness. In general, propulsion failure is down to lack of maintenance. The cost, in manhours, of towing in boats is high and whilst there is a duty and obligation to help, the amount of boats that have been towed in this year alone is significant. EW reported that it has had to respond to those outside of the harbour jurisdiction probably five or six times this year. He has spoken with the Coastguard who understands our point of view and will investigate.

6. ENVIROMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Updates from Sue Hawley were provided within the CEO/Harbour Master report and fully considered by the Board. EW confirmed that he now has orders in for the advanced mooring systems. It is expected that they will be in and working within the next month. The project will be in place for three years.

EW has also been in discussions with a company and looking at a way to recycle GRP boats. The company has some government grant funding to set up a site, and believe they can split the GRP back down to its component parts so they will be starting a trial at the end of November. They will then know how commercially viable a solution it is, and if it becomes commercial it has a business case to roll it on. If not, the project will be frozen until it can be made viable. EW has asked them to keep him informed of progress. This could potentially therefore feed into the Carbon Management Plan.

7. FINANCE REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2022

The Commissioners noted the financial management report for September 2022 had been considered in detail in the 'In Committee' section of the meeting. The Commissioners noted that the accounts as presented in the management report had been in order and agreed.

8. CEO/HM REPORT

The CEO/HM report was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board.

GH updated the Board regarding the advert to replace EW who will be moving on to further develop his career. Adverts have been placed this week with an interview process scheduled for late November/early December which would allow the successor to give up to three months' notice. He would like EW to be able to have a handover period. The Commissioners collectively thanked EW for his outstanding work and will be sorry to see him go.

Regarding the Safety Topic, JE asked how the public are informed of the visibility in the harbour. EW responded that there is a visibility monitor at Shepards available on the website, but the harbour is not closed and it is for mariners to make their own judgement.

9. MATTERS FOR CHAC

The next CHAC meeting is on 11 January at 1000 and items for the CHAC meeting will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) New website – this has gone out to tender to three companies who will be presenting their ideas on the 17 and 18 November 2022. One company is based on the Island and two on the mainland.

b) Commissioner appointments – GH confirmed that these will be advertised on 7 November 2022, which is earlier than normal, but the current recruitment market is quite tough. A more commercial view was taken on where to advertise in order to widen the field and to ensure there is plenty of time to bring someone in before 1 May 2023. Adverts have been placed on Indeed and LinkedIn because there is often some difficulty in recruitment on the Island because the catchment is very small.

c) SS asked if there was anything that CHC ought to consider following a recent accident and fatality in Cowes which was attended by the Harbour Commission launch. The MAIB have not yet decided whether to investigate but the commissioners commended the work of the harbour patrol in this incident including shoreside organisation.

d) JE updated the Board on the MCA consultation relating to disposal of pyrotechnics. They have now removed coastguard support for disposing of them and the industry has agreed to take it on. Individuals will now be responsible for safe disposal and will need to take them to a disposal site, but the Island does not have one. The result of the consultation is that chandlers and people who sell pyrotechnics will have to come up with some disposal means. CHC have undertaken this for the past two years and whilst it was agreed previously that it was unlikely that CHC would take this on again, JE thought this might be something that the Board should reconsider.

As there was no further business the Chairman formally closed the meeting at 1200.

Date of next meeting: Friday 9 December 2022 at 1000