

**Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Harbour Commission held at
Harbour Office, Cowes on Friday 29 April 2022**

Present: David Riley – Chair (DR)
Vanessa Clifford – Deputy Chair (VC) remotely
Ra Hennessy (RH)
Phil Hagen (PH)
Clive Blount (CB)
James Evans (JE)
Steve Sheridan (SS)
Jason Losty (JL)
Fiona Fitzherbert-Brockholes (FF-B)
Gary Hall – Chief Executive (GH)

In Attendance: Harbour Master – Ed Walker (ED)
Finance Officer Theresa Dunford (TD)

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

No apologies for absence received.

3. MINUTES OF THE MARCH MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 11 March 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

- a) It was noted that the AGM will take place on Thursday 26 May 2022 at the Island Sailing Club and the next Cowes Harbour Commission meeting will take place on Friday 10 June 2022.

5. SAFETY

The CEO/HM report was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board. The safety topic covered incident reporting.

- (a) Report from Martin Phipps – Designated Person

The Audit has now been completed and GH and EW have a draft copy. MP confirmed that there is no non-compliance with the Code. There are a couple of areas for improvement relating to risk assessments and HAZMAM which EW has already begun working on.

All other areas are very good. Responses from duty holders (CB and DR) to questions were also very good MP highlighted that logging activities that are observed or seen around the Harbour, could be improved, for example through Board meetings, which provides a good evidence base.

Marine facilities need to comply with the PMSC, and MP advised that with the high level of facilities around the Harbour the easiest way for CHC to do this was to write a standard letter once a year asking for confirmation that contractors are complying with the Code.

He also suggested that when doing risk assessments, every four or five years a hazard review should take place through a small team of stakeholders, either afloat or as a desk exercise, to go through the Harbour looking at all the hazards and checking if there is new activity and whether it has been identified as a hazard, with a accompanying risk assessment. He advised appointing an independent chair to oversee this. MP confirmed that all Board members will receive a full copy of the Report within the next few days.

DR suggested that sharing activities which involve looking at what is happening around the Harbour and reporting any findings to EW or GH would be a good way to record activities for audit purposes

DR thanked MP for joining the meeting and updating Board members.

6. ENVIROMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

FF-B updated on the following:

- (a) FF-B confirmed that Sue Hawley, Estuaries Officer, has several different projects underway and applications are being made to different funding bodies and groups across the Solent. One of the main topics are Coastal Champions, along the south coast, who are trying to raise awareness for the work on sea grass and salt marshes. This was recently featured on the BBC Countryfile programme. The project has been successful, and they are hoping to do more of this. Funding is available.
- (b) The Medina salt marsh restoration is linked to the sustainable dredging and licencing. There is a large amount of work to do applying for licences for small pieces of work, which takes up a substantial amount of Sue's time. Work is currently underway to try and streamline this work through the MMO.
- (c) FF-B updated the Board on oyster restoration work. There is a big push in wanting to try and help the British native oysters come back. It is a huge project as these basically do not exist anymore, with only three sites – one in Wales and two in Scotland – where you can get British oysters. The aim is to get back to having everything from tiny oysters to large oysters. There is already a huge educational set-up behind it aimed at KS2 and KS3. This is perfect for UKSA who are keen to get involved and undertake the educational part which involves measuring and monitoring. The oyster systems can sit underneath pontoon slabs and the oysters filter a phenomenal amount of water. FF-B will keep the Board updated.
- (d) Discussion took place on how oysters that thrive naturally in some areas do not need to be protected, but if they were to be introduced to areas this would probably result in the areas becoming protected zones.
- (e) CHC Board members watched a short video highlighting marine restoration work and all the different projects that Sue is currently working on. The Isle of Wight Estuaries project is mentioned in the video and Sue is looking for a letter of support from CHC which was agreed.
- (f) FF-B informed the Board that the LEP Project, Endangered Landscape, is a £5m bid across the Solent. JE reminded the Board that supporting these projects is part of the CHC's core function

and this will need to be emphasised, particularly as the Port governance guide says we have stewardship for future generations.

- (g) In answer to a question from RH relating to stakeholder involvement and getting local children out on the water, GH confirmed that he and Rachel Hibberd were in discussion about how we might undertake school visits on the river although this was a longer-term project.
- (h) EW updated the Board that the ReMEDIES Project, run by Natural England, is nearing its conclusion for putting in sustainable moorings. EW has received an MMO exemption to put in a screw pile mooring. The Shrape mooring is being undertaken by CHC and will be our design, the wave buoy that is used to collect tidal data is going to take a screw pile mooring with a floatable riser, and then another buoy just north of the breakwater will have just one of the risers. CHC have been asked to fit them and write a method for doing it, with a view to being put forward as the contractor for the Solent.
- (i) FF-B reported that she, GH and EW recently visited the International Port at Portsmouth at their invitation and found it very interesting and helpful to hear how they have been updating key areas including looking at various different forms of energy. This work is ongoing.
- (j) The draft Carbon Management Plan has now been delivered so a follow up meeting has been arranged to agree actions and target carbon reduction.

7. FINANCE REPORT – MARCH 2022 and Year End

The Commissioners noted the financial management report for March 2022 and Year End 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. The Commissioners approved the accounts for 31 December 2021 and the representation letter to the Auditors.

8. CEO/HM REPORT

The CEO/HM report was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board. GH commented on some items as follows:

- a) Shepards Marina Cowes Week bookings – There is some indication that some Hamble based boats are deciding not to stay in Cowes as it is too expensive in terms of moorings and accommodation, and many racing boats are now stripped out and not being used as accommodation. Also, methods of declaration do not require boats to return to Cowes, so the focus has changed completely on how boats participate, not necessarily needing to base themselves in Cowes. TD confirmed that currently they are taking full week bookings only, but this is likely to change to nightly nearer to Cowes Week. Shepards does do well in terms of other regattas, and rallies in particular are making a welcome return.
- b) Stakeholder Survey – this will be launched today, to run for one month. CB also requested that it be sent to the CHAC. Rachel will manage the analysis of the survey and results are expected to be published at the end of the summer.
- c) Given the Board's responsibility of Health & Safety, SS asked about the stats on percentage completion of the tasks following the external audit report. GH responded that the percentages didn't reflect that Kingston was being completed before Shepards therefore the percentages did not reflect lack of progress.

9. MATTERS FOR CHAC

CB and GH are meeting with the current and outgoing chair this afternoon. CB confirmed that the main topic that will be delivered at the next meeting is the 5-Year Strategy so requests for comments and

feedback will be brought up then. Other items for the agenda will be the CHC Survey and the AGM meeting date, time and location.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) EW confirmed that a CHC exercise has been organised for 11 May 2022 so Commissioners may wish to attend. This is being done in conjunction with the RNLI.

(b) FF-B asked if anything was happening with East Cowes slipway. It was confirmed that the IWC is no longer supporting the upkeep of the sea wall after 2025, a decision that will impact the ability to raise external funding to support the project.

(c) The AGM will be held at the Island Sailing Club at 7pm on 26 May 2022. DR encouraged all commissioners to attend the meeting and members of the public. GH outlined the format for the evening.

(d) FF-B asked for an email to be sent to the Board which Commissioners could then forward on to people within their circles, informing them of the AGM meeting.

This was the last meeting of the current Chairman, David Riley, who thanked Commissioners and said he had enjoyed his time working with the Cowes Harbour Commissioners.

As there was no further business the Chairman formally closed the meeting at 1130.

Date of next meeting: Friday 10 June 2022