

**Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Harbour Commission held at
Harbour Office, Cowes on Friday 21 January 2022**

Present: David Riley – Chairman (DR)
Vanessa Clifford – Deputy Chairman (VC)
James Evans (JE)
Steve Sheridan (SS)
Phil Hagen (PH)
Clive Blount (CB)
Jason Losty (JL)
Ra Hennessy (RH)
Fiona Fitzherbert-Brockholes (F-FB)

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

Apologies for absence received from Gary Hall, Chief Executive (GH).

3. MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 26 November 2021 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

There were no matters arising.

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 hypothermia.

6. ENVIROMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Chairman welcomed Sue Hawley, Estuary Officer, to the meeting. Sue gave a presentation on the Estuary Project, the history, background and current work and responded to questions from Commissioners.

Sue confirmed that she has been working closely with the Chief Executive looking at priorities, goals and activities, including resource issues, in order to have flexibility.

In response to a query from SS on whether any reports are issued highlighting her work, Sue advised that there was no specific report and it was suggested that updates and links could be incorporated into the CHC's website and through its communication channels in order to inform the public of the important work being undertaken.

Sue reiterated that if there is one thing to remember, it is the importance of partnerships and climate change. The salt marsh project has been monitored for a long time, it is changing and we are losing it, so something needs to be done. Funding has now been received for this and it will be a really good positive project.

PH referred to the agricultural run-off of chemicals which floods into water and changes it and asked whether this situation existed on the Island. Sue confirmed that it does and that it is a huge problem. There are nutrients in our estuaries, and in the western Yar, where most of the input was coming from estuaries in the Solent. It is a long-term problem and a long-term solution, but the Environment Agency are working on it. Some of the farming community is receptive and work is undertaken through the catchment partnership, Island Rivers, who also work with farmers to educate them in different working practices. Sue advised that this is a national problem, together with sewage outfalls.

Commissioners agreed that a yearly update at a CHC meetings would be beneficial.

- i. F-FB reported that the Carbon Management audit starts on Wednesday which is likely to take a couple of months to complete and will be presented to the board once the work has been completed.
- ii. Work is also being undertaken on working out the feasibility of installing electric charging points.

7. FINANCE REPORT – DECEMBER 2021 and YEAR END

The Commissioners noted the financial management report for December 2021 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.

8. CEO/HM REPORT

- a) The CEO/HM report was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board. EW drew the Board's attention to SOLFIRE which is a contingency plan developed to deal with any Marine Emergency with the three main SHAs in the Solent and their response to levels of incidents. It was due to be rescinded last year as it is deemed no longer fit for purpose and does not tie into land based emergency services framework so over the winter the Hampshire Police have reviewed it and created a Solent Maritime Framework to replace SOLFIRE. It ties in both land and marine based entities. It is almost complete and likely to be signed off within the next month. This will be our new response to any marine incident within the harbours.
- b) EW also confirmed that a proposal in a recent audit for a Memorandum of Understanding between all the major harbours on the island on the sharing of marine pollution resources has been reviewed and almost completed and due to be signed off by the Environment Agency. It is an understanding between Cowes Harbour, Bembridge, Yarmouth, the Isle of Wight Council and the EA that if there is a marine pollution incident, then we will try and provide the initiating authority with anything that we can albeit not limiting that we can then do ourselves if there was incident in our area. The MCA suggested this course of action.

- c) With regard to the incident report, EW was asked if it would have a cumulative year to date and EW confirmed that he will put one in. The information in the report can be drilled down, and EW will bring to the Board's attention any trends that become evident.
- d) The CHC Five Year Strategy is almost complete and should be ready for issue shortly.

9. MATTERS FOR CHAC

- a) CB, GH & DR attended the meeting of CHAC which took place on 14 January 2022.
- b) It was agreed to take the Five-Year Strategy to the next meeting together with the Carbon Management Plan.
- c) CB asked that Commissioners let him know if there is anything that they feel requires stakeholder input and would be useful for him to take to the next CHAC meeting.
- d) After some discussion it was agreed that CHC would take items to meetings that that they wished to share and seek views on from stakeholders, for instance on the way that CHC are fulfilling their governance.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) A recent refusal of a dry-sailing contract was made for sound commercial reasons.
- b) A query was raised about the sculpture on the breakwater which was decided not to go ahead with because of spiralling costs and other difficulties in implementation. This may be revisited in the future.
- c) Two commissioners, Steve Sheridan and Vanessa Clifford, who were reaching the end of their three year period, have been reappointed.
- d) A new Chair of the Cowes Harbour Commission was appointed from 1 May 2022. An announcement will be made in due course.

As there was no further business the Chairman formally closed the meeting at 1300

Date of next meeting: Friday 11 March 2022