



**COWES HARBOUR  
COMMISSION**

**Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee Meeting  
held at the Royal London Yacht Club, Cowes  
on Wednesday 19 April 2023 at 1000**

**Present:** Mark Southwell (MS) – Chair (RNLI)  
Ben Willows (BW) – Deputy Chair (UKSA)  
Cllr Anni Adams (AA) – Cowes Town Council  
Cllr Tracey Reardon (TR) – East Cowes Town Council  
Cllr Karl Love (CL) - Isle of Wight Council  
Dave Casson (DC) – Medina Combined Clubs  
John Corby (JC) – Waterside Property Owners and West Cowes Boatyards  
Lee Rayment (LR) - Solent & Wightline Cruises.  
Bob Holt (BH) - Cowes Water Taxis (Water taxis and commercial fishermen)  
Dan Jehan (DJ) – Cowes Yacht Haven (Cowes Town Waterfront Trust)  
Giles Peckham (GP) – Cowes Clubs and Classes  
Lou Newlands (NL) – Cowes High Street Businesses  
Julian Shawyer (JS) - Williams Shipping (Commercial Vessel Operators)  
Stuart Tan (ST) - Red Funnel  
Capt. Shane Wood (SW) – Harbour Master, Cowes Harbour Commission  
Clive Blount (CB) – Cowes Harbour Commissioner  
Gary Hall (GH) – Chief Executive, Cowes Harbour Commission

**Guests:** Ross Edmunds, IW Council Area and Town Centre Programme Regeneration Manager  
Capt. Martin Phipps, Designated Person

**In attendance:**

Sue Matthews - Minute taker

The Chair welcomed Capt. Shane Wood to the meeting and introductions were made around the table. MS gave thanks to GP and the Royal London Yacht Club for hosting the meeting. MS also welcomed Ross Edmunds and Capt. Martin Phipps to the meeting.

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Rob Stewart, Laura Peacey-Wilcox, Michael Paler and Michael Townsend.

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January were approved.

**3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

GH highlighted the following:

- A new and updated website for CHC is due to be launched soon aiming to promote Cowes as a destination to visit. This will be followed by a new web app designed specifically for people who visit Cowes whether by boat or as tourists. Businesses in the current Cowes Handbook will be listed free of charge on the app, with an option to upgrade if required. CHC's Marketing Manager will be contacting businesses at a later date to discuss their specific requirements.
- The CHC Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 24 May 2023 at 1900 at the Island Sailing Club, Cowes.
- Kingston Wharf development – planning permission has been secured for change of use and developing the site. The first stage is to concrete the lower tier and install new pontoons and some further infrastructure will follow. Difficulties had been encountered in trying to secure a lead engineer but three companies have now agreed to submit proposals; one island company and two mainland companies. An appointment is expected to be made soon with a view to work starting in the autumn and completion by summer 2024.
- Electric chargers for boats are still not connected. The issue at Trinity Landing is getting the cable across the bridge through some reinforced concrete.
- New river signage has been designed and produced and an installation date is being arranged. There are about 60 signs which will improve signage and visibility up the river.
- CHC's new apprenticeship scheme has been launched, in conjunction with UKSA. 26 applications were received.
- Working with UKSA, CHC is also making available £10k funding for bursaries for those wanting to try a taster course for a possible marine career path.
- GH informed the meeting that the pump-out facility is operational, contrary to rumours which say it is not. There was some discussion on the draft and the size of vessels that can get in. GH explained that the hose is long enough and boats do not have to go on the south side. BW confirmed that they have had a 65ft boat on there.

#### **4 HARBOUR MASTER'S REPORT**

##### **i. SW highlighted the following:**

- There have been 54 incidents so far, with 19 over the Easter weekend (last year only two over the weekend), 6 propulsion failures and 6 close call situations. There was one fire - the boat has been recovered and is ready for disposal. There were 12 speeding incidents, one medical incident and one theft – this was tracked and the culprit found.
- Work continues to get the message across on checking life jackets and was recently highlighted in the CHC newsletter.
- Propulsion failures are still ongoing highlighting the need to continue to educate and encourage boat users to maintain boats properly. The RNLI have produced a leaflet to raise awareness and the RYA is also working on this now.
- Personal watercraft – the new regulations came into force from the end of March. SW confirmed there is close cooperation with other Harbour Masters if there are any issues whereby they can pass on information and can contact the Police Marine units. SW also confirmed that it is the task of Beach Management to mark off the 200m zones.
- SW reported that work continues on the dredging baseline document looking at dredging for the future. DC raised the issue of siltation and asked about Town Quay for doing maintenance and safety inspections and whether Cowes Harbour was getting a facility to remove silt. SW confirmed they are looking at this but they do not have anything small enough. There is a need to pump the silts off land but the dredging community do not have the facilities. DC reported it was felt that The Folly is a particular issue. CB agreed but said it has been an issue for many years because no dredging has been carried out so it so is now beyond basic maintenance. The Folly believe it is the responsibility of CHC to do this, but it is not. CB suggested that if people want to dredge, they need talk to SW, come up with a plan and the funds, and then the work can be undertaken. Anyone interested in dredging should ensure

they are on the dredging group, which SW attends, so that issues can be properly addressed and joined up plans put in place to keep costs as low as possible .

- DC also referred to wash in the river. Ryde Rowing Club experience problems with the 6k speed limit down the Folly straight and at times their rowing boats exceed this. They are worried whether it is a wash issue or speed, possibly from the chase/safety boats. SW confirmed that it would be the wash that is the biggest problem and will look further into this. The safety boats are the issue but there is also a need to educate the basic rules of the road to the coxswain.

## ii. Capt. Martin Phipps – Update on Safety Audit

MP explained his role as CHC's designated person for safety and the internal audit that he undertakes annually to ensure CHC comply with the Port Marine Safety Code. This can take several months and includes looking at documentation and risk assessments. It is CHC's duty to ensure that the waterside businesses/marine facilities are also complying with the Code and they must inform the Harbour Master that they are complying with the code, and if not, the reasons why. SW has already written to all stakeholders and part of MP's audit is to ask SW who has responded.

MP reported that Cowes Harbour is compliant with the Port Marine Safety Code and does not have any non-compliance. The audit identified five areas of best practice and 20 observations, which are mainly minor ones relating to documentation. MP also confirmed that he reports to the Commissioners.

## **5 MARINE INDUSTRY**

MS reported that his understanding is that Diverse Marine are still talking to investors so there are no plans yet for the old Harrison site. Spencer Rigging has been bought out and Neil Brinsdon from Advanced Rigging is the new managing director. Their intention is to recruit five apprentices. KL referred to the proposed film studio along the Medina River and said it has been suggested it will have some sort of a platform or pontoon although he had no further detail on this.

## **6 COMMERCIAL VESSELS**

ST from Red Funnel has met with SW to discuss close quarters incidents. An incident about six months ago led to involving the MAIB who did go back to the boat user. ST felt this demonstrates to the Masters that it is worth reporting incidents. Red Funnel are happy to meet with race officers and ST confirmed that the offer is still there to encourage people to visit the bridge and see it from the Captain's viewpoint. SW highlighted that not everyone knows about the narrow channel and so people should not assume that they do. MS asked whether there might be some educational value in showing some of the videos on the website. There was some discussion on the use of short blasts when coming off the berth but ST thought that in some instances the use of blasts can make things worse.

## **7 LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

There was nothing to report on leisure activities. KL said he was pleased that something is being done about a new slipway and that Bells Landing needs dredging but this was to be discussed in a later agenda item.

## **8 MARINAS, MOORINGS AND BERTHS**

MS asked for feedback on the numbers of boats in the marinas over Easter. It was confirmed that the figures were low but it was felt this was purely down to the weather.

## **9 PUBLIC USE/ ACCESS**

MS introduced Ross Edmunds who explained his role at the Council and that his remit is to work with town councils to steer the Place Plan or Town Plan and look at regenerating the area. He said the

proposal is for the East Cowes Slipway to be adjacent to the groin (similar to Gurnard Sailing Club) and to have a 5.5m slipway running 20m out. Over the years, five reports have been undertaken, and engineers reports mention the key stakeholders of IWC, CHC and UKSA.

Mr Edmunds is currently on a fact-finding mission of who the stakeholders are and what plans they have. There is a new East Cowes Regeneration Plan which is on the IWC website and Bells Landing is part of that. It is important to note that the East Cowes slipway is not a new slipway as it already exists. The steering group are already looking at putting in some matting so that UKSA can use it, but shingle builds up continuously. At the end of April 2023 UKSA will move their dinghies into East Cowes Sailing Club and will become an associate member. The aim is to then get dinghies sailing from the Shrape. There will be public access as it is an IWC slipway and nothing is being taken off the beach, just clearance and maintenance, and the group is awaiting results of research relating to the sea grass.

Regarding Bells Landing, KL said he would welcome a discussion re dredging as it is a public and legal right of way. Bells Landing is owned by IWC and he reported that it has been cleaned but will need to be reskimmed and is not accessible at the moment because of the mud. Funding is available to enable it to be re-covered and he will chase this up. GH said that CHC is part of the East Cowes Slipway discussion but so far, no-one has spoken to CHC about the plans for Bells Landing.

KL also reported that the toilets will be reopened, and the Green developed, with the hope of encouraging small craft. Facilities have been upgraded generally but the sea wall is not in a good state.

BW asked what the longer-term aspirations are for the middle slipway. There is a slipway group that needs to meet up and key stakeholders need to get together. Raising funds will take time and may need investment from outside. KL said deep water access is being lost and some people who have boats in East Cowes cannot get them in. CB said in the past access could be accessible but it has to be done in liaison with Red Funnel but they said that the IW council had agreed to limited access. There was some discussion on Section 106 funding but GH advised Ross to check on this because GH understands the Section 106 no longer applies. TR advised that there is an update meeting taking place later in the day.

## **10 CHAIR'S UPDATES**

MS stated he has found it to be a very enjoyable 12 months having been in the position of Chairman for the last year. He said that during that time he had noticed there is a different and improved attitude towards the CHC and thanked GH and his team for all their work.

There being no other matters for discussion, the meeting closed at 1121.

## **11 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

1000 September 6<sup>th</sup> at Royal London Yacht Club.  
Ross Edmunds to be invited to future meetings.