



**COWES HARBOUR  
COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC REPORT  
COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION  
28 APRIL 2023**

Present: Phil Hagen – Chairman (PH)  
James Evans – Deputy Chairman (JE)  
Vanessa Clifford (VC)  
Fiona Fitzherbert-Brockholes (FF-B)  
Clive Blount (CB)  
Jason Losty (JL)  
Steve Sheridan (SS)  
Richard White (RW)  
Gary Hall (GH) – Chief Executive

In Attendance: Shane Wood (SW) - Harbour Master  
Theresa Dunford (TD) - Finance Officer

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 10 March 2023 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) Trinity Landing Chargers – GH reported that unfortunately the chargers are still not connected to the grid system.
- b) AGM – GH looked into the possibility of holding this in East Cowes but has not been able to find a suitable venue. The meeting will now take place at the Island Sailing Club on 24 May 2023.

**5. HARBOUR MASTER'S SAFETY REPORT**

The HM report and safety analysis was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board. SW highlighted the following from the Incident Report:

- a) Incidents –
  - i. Several over the Easter weekend but more visitors and proportionally not any greater than the previous year.
  - ii. Two close quarter situations with the Red Funnel on the approaches coming in with vessels not giving way. SW has addressed this with Red Funnel who have passed this on to their Captains.

- iii. SW updated on the previous large boat fire when the vessel eventually sank. This has now been recovered.
- b) Lifejacket clinic – not highly attended as on a working day but a high level of jackets that would have been condemned.
- c) Maintenance of boats – SW is looking at putting together an educational day focussing on seeing the workings of a marine engine. GH mentioned that the RYA has some funding for videos, and asked whether it might be possible to get them to video this. It was acknowledged that the RYA do run a one-day marine engine maintenance course.
- d) UKSA have cleaned off the old slipway next to the Shrape and will be using that for their dinghies, which will reduce the amount of towing in the river. The boats will be stored in the old tennis courts. CB reported that work has been undertaken by the Council on Bells Landing which has public access and discussion followed on other works that are expected to be undertaken within the East Cowes regeneration plan.

## 6. CEO REPORT

The CEO report was circulated with the papers for the meeting and was fully considered by the Board. GH highlighted the following:

- a) Internal newsletter – copies were previously circulated to Commissioners, and it appears to be successful. It is a good way of communicating with the team internally rather than just through word of mouth.
- b) Ra Hennesey is finalising the Annual Report and has produced a first draft for review. It will match all of the new branding and so will look different from last year's Report.
- c) Interviews have taken place for the CHC Apprentice and one person has been selected. Very positive and will fit in with the team well.

SS asked what was happening about fuel as a Lallows fuel berth had collapsed. SW advised that work should have already started but the company are having to source slightly bigger piles.

## 7. FINANCE REPORT FOR MARCH 2023

Copies of the Financial Management Report for March 2023 were circulated with the papers for the meeting and fully considered by the Board.

### (a) Year End accounts sign off

Drafts were completed earlier and the final year end accounts are ready to be signed. TD asked all Commissioners if they were happy to sign the 2022 Accounts. All accepted unanimously.

### (b) Letter of Representation

The Letter of Representation from the Auditors has to be signed today. This letter confirms that Commissioners have provided the Auditors with information in order for them to undertake their audit. The Board unanimously accepted the Letter of Representation and for the Chair to sign this on behalf of the Commissioners.

## 8. ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

An updated report was circulated before the meeting and FF-B highlighted the following:

- i. The Solent Seascape project are still awaiting a project manager to move this forward but the group is working well and whilst there is nothing directly happening for Cowes Harbour, Sue Hawley is involved in all the others and has the background knowledge.
- ii. Salt marshes – ongoing in terms of sustainable dredging and there are other sustainable projects happening as well which Sue is aware of.
- iii. Oyster restoration – this is progressing well and the licence was awarded yesterday.
- iv. FF-B also updated that the map in the Green Blue's Guide has not been working but this has now been fixed.

- v. PH reported the RYA are now becoming more engaged and following a recent positive visit they remarked that CHC was forward thinking, and the diversity policies and initiatives were way ahead of some other harbours they had visited.

## 9. CHAC MEETING

CB reported on the recent CHAC meeting held on 19 April. It was a well-attended meeting, with representations from a wider group of businesses and areas, including an officer from the Isle of Wight Council, who was on a fact-finding mission relating to the place plan and regeneration of East Cowes. There was some discussion on this and a request was made for CHC to have the Folly slipway dredged but there is more realisation now that for those who want dredging to take place, they need to have a plan and a way to fund it.

CB reported that Capt. Martin Phipps also attended and briefed the meeting on the results of the CHC Audit, as well as emphasising that waterside businesses and marine facilities must inform the Harbour Master that they are complying with the PMSC, and if not, the reasons why.

In response to a question from FF-B relating to the recent Annual Health & Safety meeting, GH confirmed that this is an external meeting with around 20 stakeholders in attendance. The meeting is held at this time each year to discuss what is happening around the harbour, what work people are doing and we provide updates on incidents. SW said at that meeting that essentially anyone who has access to the water will have to comply with the PMSC in some way, and if people are not sure whether they should comply he asked them to contact him or the Deputy Harbour Master. JL complimented both SW and Jennie on how they handled the meeting and responses to questions.

## 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**A) Armed Forces Covenant** - GH reported that he was approached about supporting the Armed Forces Covenant, set up to support ex-military personnel to try and break down barriers of discrimination. GH has met with the local Commander for the Armed Forces Covenant who has said that apart from military skills they have other life skills that can be brought into the commercial world and the role of the Covenant is to help them to identify those skills. There is no charge for companies to sign up but it is a commitment by CHC as an organisation to say that it will not discriminate anyone who comes from a military background if they want to apply for job. They ask that the CHC logo is put at the bottom of emails and on the website. At Silver level, there is more engagement, more active recruitment, and promotion of what the Armed Forces Covenant stands for. CHC can apply to a regional commander for Silver level, and beyond that is Gold level which is much more commitment and supporting the organisation. GH advised that if CHC is mindful to join, there are opportunities from time to time when the Ministry run various courses and he proposed to the Board that CHC join the organisation. The Board approved the proposal unanimously.

**Date of next meeting: Friday 9 June 2023 at 1000, Harbour Office, Cowes, Isle of Wight**