



**COWES HARBOUR
COMMISSION**

**PUBLIC REPORT
COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION
24 January 2024**

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)
Mark Bew (MB)
Gary Hall (GH) – Chief Executive

In Attendance: Jon Kidd (JK) - Harbour Master
Roger Parrott (RP) - Finance Officer

PH officially welcomed JK as the new Harbour Master, and also introduced Mark Bew as one of the new Commissioners. The Board formally introduced themselves.

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, 15 December 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) Commercial rent review at Kingston has been completed. GH is awaiting the final part of the report which will advise on proposed rentals for any new units on the lower tier.
- (b) UKSA boat fire report – JK reported that UKSA has sent him a full report including the report to MAIB. He also met with Ben Willows, two senior training officers and Chris Frisby (Director of Training & Operations) and discussed the history of recent communications and agreed on CHC's expectations in terms of reporting going forward.
- (c) Flying Fish – they will begin operations from Kingston in early February with four jet skis. Jet ski specific pontoons are due to be installed in the next couple of weeks.

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. JK highlighted the following:

- a) The safety topic this month offered advice for those going out in inclement weather, mainly focusing on communication and preparation.
- b) Incidents and Enforcements – three reports were logged on HAZMAN in December – two incidents and one intervention which was a RIB speeding and creating wash. A yacht hit the chain whilst the chain ferry was out of service and there was also a capsized UKSA dinghy on the Shrape. There was nobody on board. The mast snapped whilst attempting to right and JK has received a report from UKSA which confirms that the incident had been investigated internally.
- c) Pilotage – two acts of pilotage in December. The numbers are low for this year but this is mainly down to PD Ports and the availability of small vessels that can come into Cowes.
- d) Harbour works – work to remove the dolphin at the end of the Shrape Breakwater is ongoing.
- e) Dredging plans – these are coming together and should begin around early March. Licenses are in place for the RYS and Cowes Yacht Haven and it is also hoped to include Cowes Reach and Cowes Corinthian. The licensing issue at Shepards is also being resolved and it is hoped to begin dredging off Shepards as well. JL congratulated JK on this work, as dredging has been one of the areas that has been of concern.
- f) There are currently two Harbour Works licenses, both with Red Funnel. Fender repair work is being carried out by SeaTech Diving. The CHC team were not able to fulfil the contract on this occasion because of the overnight working. The other license is to cover sampling work around the harbour where construction might take place.
- g) Eastern Channel buoyage annual checks – these have been completed. One buoy did go missing, the risers had parted but all risers have now been replaced. The EC10 buoy was damaged beyond repair and will be replaced with a new buoy.
- h) Statutory documents are reviewed every winter and this work is ongoing. JK has submitted the Port Facility Security Plan with an audit due next week against the plan.
- i) JK talked through the Monthly Incident Analysis. Top interventions are still speeding and wash, and incidents relating to propulsion failure. He will be reviewing the General Directions of 6knts and will come back to the Board with any plans.
- j) SS referred to low pilotage figures and asked JK whether it was possible that this was related to the condition of Medina Wharf. JK responded that it was about the size of the vessels available and not its condition. SS also asked for clarification on the Red Funnel works. This is still in the planning stage, but JK understands that there will be a second link span.
- k) MB asked about pilotage numbers and that if numbers continue to fall it will result in a potential loss of income and also the loss of a skill set as well. JL reminded the Board that it has a statutory duty to maintain an open port. The previous high yearly figures related mainly to the work Island Roads undertook on the PFI roads contract.

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) The refurbishment of Shepards has now been completed.
- (b) New office space has been created at Kingston for the new maintenance engineer and team leader. The maintenance engineer has overall responsibility for all CHC maintenance tasks and has created a programme of maintenance work to be carried out over the course of this year.
- (c) Storm Henk – a huge gust of wind that went through Kingston knocked over boats. An incident investigation has been carried out and the report issued. There are some minor recommendations which are being introduced and some additional measures have also been put in place for boats of a particular size.
- (d) All of the anchor points on the main moorings have been surveyed. They will all be re-laid this year and each location will be surveyed again.
- (e) Avalon system – this was introduced in September and when comparing last year's figures for

Town Quay to this year, there has been a 68% increase in income since August.

- (f) Marketing and social media – good growth and engagement with social media channels.
- (g) Annual Report – it is intended to produce a five-minute video to replace the evening event. It will go on to the website in May together with an opportunity for people to ask questions. CB asked whether this would satisfy the requirements of an AGM. GH believes that it will as it is reporting to the public on what has been happening in the organisation. It will be advertised in advance with an opportunity to submit questions, ahead of the AGM date.

7. FINANCE REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2023

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

8. ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The Environment and Sustainability Report was received by the Board and FF-B highlighted the following:

- (a) The Solent Seascape infographic sets out the key aims and projects to restore key habitats in the Solent, in a simplified form. All of the projects that Sue Hawley has been involved in come under this. It was noted that whilst the graph had useful information, it did not show those areas which do already have seagrass, such as in Osborne Bay.
- (b) After many years, FF-B was able to report that we are finally on the RYA Green Blue Map.

9. CHAC MEETING 24 January 2024

GH and JK attended and shared with stakeholders information relating to a number of safety incidents, the planned PMSC audit, the harbour works, plans for dredging and the flare amnesty which would be in the first week of July to coincide with the Maritime Safety Week, with a charge of £6 per flare this year. There was no negative reaction to this. GH also shared that CHC understands the concern of shortage of moorings in the harbour, and that he is looking into this. He confirmed that CHC are now managing Whitegates and that the number of mooring points there had been doubled. He reminded stakeholders that any incidents involving stakeholders are likely to be judged against PMSC so stakeholders need to understand how they would demonstrate their compliance with the Code. To help get this message across, he will arrange for CHC's Designated Person, Martin Phipps to give a presentation at the next CHAC meeting. Richard White, from the Island Careers Partnership, discussed links between employment and schools and work taking place on the Island to try and bring the two together. Bob Trimble reported that they are expecting about 480 boats to take part in Cowes Week this year and also hoping that six J-Class boats will arrive, possibly this year whilst en-route to the Caribbean. They will be based in Southampton and GH has offered support crews to be able to use CHC facilities.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GH gave a detailed presentation and overview of CHC's key projects for 2024.

Date of next meeting: Friday 8 March 2024 at 1000, Harbour Office, Cowes, Isle of Wight