

**Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee Meeting
held at Regatta House, Bath Road, Cowes
on Wednesday 17 April at 1000**

Present: Mark Southwell (MS) – Chair (RNLI)
Cllr Anni Adams (AA) – Cowes Town Council
John Corby (JC) – Waterside Property Owners and West Cowes Boatyards
Bob Holt (BH) - Cowes Water Taxis (Water taxis and commercial fishermen)
Dan Jehan (DJ) – Cowes Yacht Haven (Cowes Town Waterfront Trust)
Cllr Karl Love (KL) – Isle of Wight Council
Bob Milner (BM) – Cowes Clubs and Classes
Lou Newlands (LN) – Cowes High Street Businesses
Lee Rayment (LR) – Solent and Wightline Cruises
Cllr Tracey Reardon (TR) – East Cowes Town Council
Julian Shawyer (JS) – Williams Shipping (Commercial Vessel Operators)
Guy Shelbourne (GS) – Medina Clubs
Mary Scott-Jackson (MS-J) – Cowes Week Ltd
Rob Stewart (RS) – AMC (East Cowes Boatyards)
Stuart Tan (ST) - Red Funnel
Ben Willows (BW) – Deputy Chair - UKSA
Gary Hall (GH) – Chief Executive, Cowes Harbour Commission
Clive Blount (CB) – Commissioner, Cowes Harbour Commission
Capt Jon Kidd – Harbour Master, Cowes Harbour Commission

In attendance: Sue Matthews - Minute taker

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Leanna Lakes, Bob Trimble and Mike Townsend.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024, having been previously circulated, were approved.

3 HARBOUR MASTER'S REPORT

JK reported on the following:

- i. There have been fourteen incidents, many of which still include propulsion failures so in order to reduce the number of incidents, CHC, ABP Southampton, KHM Portsmouth, Portsmouth International Port and Langstone Harbour continue to work together to help educate boat owners and raise awareness of the importance of proper engine maintenance.
- ii. After investigation, an oil slick that had been reported at East Cowes turned out to be rotting seaweed.
- iii. The Safety Topic this month in the CHC Newsletter covers General Directions and Collision Regulations.
- iv. Trinity House mooring buoy – it had been hoped to move the buoy but it could not be recovered and the move will now potentially take place in November after the racing season. The buoy is safe in the meantime but will be unused now except for during Cowes Week.
- v. A navigation lights review has taken place which highlighted that more are needed on the edge of pontoons south of the Chain Ferry. These have been ordered and should be in within the next month or two. There will also be some leading lights for the small craft channel later in the year if budget becomes available. There is no current need for lead lights in the main channel, but this might be looked at again in future.
- vi. Two recent Audits have both passed successfully, and 80% of the PMSC Audit has been completed. JK will update further at the next meeting but there are no issues that he is aware

of. Statutory Documents and Risk Assessment have also been approved for pilotage. He is also currently working on notifications regarding bunker transfers.

- vii. JK has now visited most of the sailing clubs as he continues to receive the risk assessments. He has been offering advice on improvements, and thereby helping the clubs to be better protected.
- viii. A Works Licence was issued for sampling for the new Red Funnel link span, but the sampling has now been cancelled but the project is still moving forwards.
- ix. JK is working with the IWC to try and establish a public space protection order for Trinity Landing because of the continuing problems with swimmers. If successful, it will allow the police to have more powers as currently CHC does not have power covering the land.
- x. Piles – an investment is being made with the installation of 12 replacement piles south of the chain ferry and one pontoon, plus redecking to make it safer.

MS asked if there were any questions or comments:

- a. The RNLI station will host an open day on 9 May.
- b. JK confirmed that the Public Space Protection Order is issued by Isle of Wight Council but gives the police more powers as it would cover the landing.
- c. BM asked whether there would be any loss of cruise ships visiting this season because of the issues with the Trinity House Buoy but JK confirmed all cruises will visit as planned.
- d. BW asked whether CHC have considered whether it should be mandatory to have kill cords on at all times in the harbour. JK confirmed that as yet there are no General directions that specifically cover Kill cords, and the difficulty is how is it policed but he will look at in further detail and take it to Board level.
- e. Regarding Trinity House buoy being used as an outer distance mark, JC asked if it will be replaced or will clubs have to drop something in. JK responded that Snowden will be moved to the west and slightly to the north. He has discussed this with BM for an outer distance mark so there is a plan but yet to be determined. Snowden will be moved once Trinity is moved but he will discuss this further with the clubs.
- f. GS commented that following the last CHAC meeting, they had contacted the sampling company contact but they had said it was not needed for bed levelling. JK confirmed that there will be a dredge in October for Cowes Yacht Haven and maybe one or two others but none south of the chain ferry until next Spring. However, advice was given to get moving on applying for licences now as the MMO is very slow.
- g. KL raised his concerns about the swimmers and highlighted that Bells Landing will be opened soon which might attract them too. JK has discussed the issues with other harbours, some of which have designated swimming areas and he is hoping to discuss this with the IWC further at some point in the future.
- h. GS asked for confirmation of the date of the flare amnesty. JK confirmed it will be during the first week of July and will let everyone know when the actual date is known.
- i. GS highlighted how slippery and dangerous the Red Funnel slipway is and asked who is responsible for cleaning it. KL confirmed that the Isle of Wight Council (contact Tricia Stillman) is responsible, but it is only cleaned twice a year.

4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

GH reported on the following:

- i. Kingston – tenders have been received for the development works. He is going through the final stages of the tender process so it is likely that work will be completed this summer ready for boat storage use this coming winter.
- ii. He is aware of the shortage of berths in the river and is therefore taking a fresh look at what options may exist to increase capacity, but he stressed this was a medium/long term project.
- iii. It is hoped that Capt. Martin Phipps (CHC Designated Person) will attend the next meeting to give a PMSC briefing and presentation, as stakeholders have responsibilities and will be judged against it should an incident occur.

- iv. The AGM for CHC, normally held in May, has been poorly attended with only six people last year, and eight the year before, and very few questions. It is time consuming and costly to arrange the AGM so this year CHC will be producing a video which will be posted on the CHC website (including an opportunity to post questions) and promoted through social media. It is felt that producing a video will generate more engagement as is the case with the CHC Newsletter which is very popular with an open rate of nearly 70% compared to an industry average of around 29%. The video should be released in early May.

5 MARINE INDUSTRY

JC updated on Medina Yard, which is very busy. Victoria Preston is leading on this but his interest is on behalf of CHAC who opposed the Harrison plans as 70% would be lost to the marine industry and he reported that the new owner has said he is not going to build the Harrison development. He is not sure what he will do with it. There are lots of ideas and plans but it is going in the right direction. RS said the order books are full and its busy and suggested that the OCMA may want to expand but there are lots of commercial sensitivities for both East and West Cowes. Some of the difficulties relate to heavily contaminated land and the gas site is heavily polluted also. MS asked whether the news of the Norris Castle plans being refused would affect the slipway plans. TR said this is not yet known as it will probably go to appeal.

6 COMMERCIAL VESSELS

JS confirmed that all was looking good and that there is no practical problem with the narrow fairway. LR confirmed they are still backing up the chain ferry.

7 LEISURE ACTIVITIES

In response to JC's question as to why the gate is padlocked from Town Quay to the Cowes Yacht Haven boat yard, DJ explained that the gate was on a pin code but is being left open or pin codes are widely known so too many people are coming through the gate creating an issue when moving heavy plant. There is now an additional lock on the gate, so when the yard is in operation Monday to Friday 8am – 4pm, the gate is locked; outside of that the secondary lock is taken off to allow competitors coming from the Red Jet and racers to go in and out. DJ said he was also looking to put a closure on to the gate. The High Street gate has been moved back and the police station is now on the corner. It has made the entrance more appealing for those who want to go in, but also, they did not want people to go into the yard and then have access to the riggers area. JC commented that the locking of the gate is extremely inconvenient as many people in the marine trade and sailing are wanting to use it when it is double padlocked. MS confirmed that figurers for the Round the Island Race are about the same as last year in term of entries. MS also confirmed that the RNLI is one of the Official Charities for Cowes Week combining with their 200th anniversary and will have a presence on the Parade.

8 MARINAS, MOORINGS AND BERTHS

Updates on berths were given by GH in the previous agenda item. DJ said the season is looking promising although slow in getting going this year but next year will be really busy and even more so the year after. LN said that eventually the Easter trade took off, but the High Street trading is weather dependent and they are in need of a good summer. BH also confirmed that it is quieter at the moment.

9 PUBLIC USE / ACCESS

This was discussed in a previous agenda item.

10 DATES OF NEXT TWO MEETINGS

September 4 2024 at 1000 – Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club

January 8 2025 at 1000 – Corinthian Cowes Yacht Club

- i. TR will look into the possibility of holding a future meeting at East Cowes Town Hall.

- ii. KL confirmed that a new floating bridge is being commissioned at a cost of around £5m. It will be a few years in the making but it is hoped to be built locally and he will expect there to be a proper procurement process. RS said he hoped they would look at proper ferries, electric ferries etc. and suggested that IWC talk to him for information as there are many off-the-shelf ferries.
- iii. Draft minutes – they will be distributed early with seven days to make changes after which they will be put on to the CHC website.
- iv. CB reminded CHAC members that, as a CHC Commissioner, he is the CHAC representative for the CHC Board so if anyone has anything that they would like him to take to the Board, they can contact him.

MS gave thanks to Mary Scott-Jackson for hosting the meeting at Regatta House.

The Meeting closed at 1051.