

# Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority held at The Totnes Boating Association, Totnes on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017, commencing at 1800 hrs.

**PRESENT:** Ian Gibson (IG) – Chairman  
Zoe Briant-Evans (ZBE)  
Captain Mark Cooper (MC) - Harbour Master/CEO  
Tim Dewing (TD)  
James Dodd (JD)  
Sarah Dunn (SD)  
John Ellwood (JE).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Penny Johns (PJ) Senior Administrator

IG extended thanks to the Totnes Boating Association for hosting this meeting.

### **025/17 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from RA, RE, MH, TT, OH and DW.

### **026/17 Election of Vice Chairman**

The Chairman asked for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Dart Harbour & Navigation Authority. A discussion took place and no-one present wished to take the role and the consensus was that a new Board Member would not be appropriate and that someone with more experience should take the role. It was felt that a group email may be the best way to identify a potential Vice Chairman. JD and TD were both happy to chair a meeting if the Chairman was absent, but did not feel that they could take on a more involved role.

**It was proposed by IG and seconded by TD that the election of Vice-Chairman for 2017 be deferred to the March meeting.**

**ACTION:** IG to contact Board Members and invite nominations for Vice-Chairman.  
*Complete.*

### **027/17 Minutes of the Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017.**

It was proposed by JD and seconded by JE with all in favour “that the minutes represented a true record of the meeting”.

### **028/17 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017.**

NB: Italics show the minute number and subject from the January Board meeting.

*009/17 - Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (7.1 Health & Safety and Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC)*

An education session for new Board Members was scheduled for 22 Feb between 1000 and 1200 hrs. ZBE and TT were attending and IG advised that he will try to attend.

*016/17 Elect Chairman for the Dart Harbour Pension Scheme Finance 6/17*

Action complete.

*15/17 Volunteers*

SD explained that the Board had tried to resolve the volunteers issue for a year. IG also explained that when the volunteers were suspended, it was with a view to investigating the volunteers. This work started with training needs and during the investigation, the emphasis changed from a training issue to whether the Authority was prepared to carry the risk of the management of 30 employees. The St Christophe incident also highlighted that anyone badged as DHNA needs to be trained.

MC advised that he had read the email from the volunteers and that his judgment of the Board's decision is unchanged. If you count the volunteers as employees, even if unpaid, they would need qualifications as stated by DHNA. In view of the age demographic of the volunteers, that it is difficult to dictate what they do, the fact that they work when no other staff are around, means that the Authority would not be able to control them and for this reason they would need a commercial endorsement.

SD explained that during the previous year it had become clear that the volunteers wanted to be badged as DHNA and that they do not want to stand alone, the volunteers could not see the Authority's position and a stalemate was reached.

IG was confident that the Authority can make a case to the Department for Transport (DfT), in response to any complaint, as the process has been appropriate in response to a concern raised by the designated person (DP). MC advised that his judgment of the issue was exactly the same.

**ACTION:** MC to respond to the volunteer to advise, once again, that the Authority will provide support and a boat and berth for no cost, but the volunteers have to be a standalone organisation with their own insurance and at their own risk. *Complete.*

*017/17.1 Dolphin Haven (Torbay Boat Construction)*

Action complete.

*017/17.4 Bayards Cove Sector Light*

MC updated the Board that the owner had been contact, an inspection had been made and a new light would be installed in the near future.

*017/17.5 Port Marine Safety Code*

IG requested that a report be prepared for the March meeting to show status and progress on risk assessments.

**ACTION :** MC

*018/17.2 Marketing*

MH was not present so this action was carried forward to the March meeting. MC advised that the timing for this would be more appropriate once allocations and invoices had been completed, as it would be more straightforward to identify areas where marketing may be needed. The waiting list would also be reviewed after the 2017 allocations had been made to make an assessment.

**ACTION:** MC/MH

TD advised that the visitors' sector may also benefit from some analysis and marketing.

**ACTION:** MC/MH

*018/17.3 Strategic Plan*

IG recommended that three meetings during 2017 should be identified to concentrate on specific topics (including the Strategic Plan) rather than a full board meeting. IG suggested that the public section would be dealt with following which, the Board would go "In Committee" in a workshop style to discuss topics supplied by MC. No Board decisions would be made during the workshops and the aim would be to give direction to MC to progress further. JE welcomed this approach as in the past the Board had got too involved in detail and had not considered the strategic overview. **All were in favour and this was approved.**

**ACTION:** MC to choose 3 meetings and develop a range of topics for discussion. See *Action Grid*.

*18/17.4 Finance Manager/(a) Post meeting minute.*

MC advised that delegated limits for financial control and write offs need to be set up. A discussion took place and **it was agreed** to prepare a report for the March board meeting.

**ACTION:** TD/MC/KD/Accountant to consider appropriate financial controls and report to the March meeting. *Complete.*

*20/17.1 Freedom of Information (FOI)*

MC advised that the FOI request regarding the volunteers had been fulfilled to the best of our ability. The open Board minutes and sanitized "In Committee" minutes had been supplied. MC reported that the applicant was still unsatisfied. It was noted that the Authority is not bound by FOI but has responded in spirit.

A discussion took place and **it was agreed** that MC should respond to thank the volunteer for confirming in his email that they have the information required.

**ACTION:** MC to respond to the FOI enquirer. *Complete.*

### 20/17.3 Waiting List Request

MC advised that this would be rolled into the fees/charges and waiting list review.

### **029/17 Urgent Business brought forward at the discretion of the Chairman**

There was no urgent business.

### **030/17 Declarations of Interest.**

Board Members are invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests including the nature and extent of such interests.

MC explained that he had taken advise and it was noted that all declarations of interest should be reviewed and checked annually. Action on this was in hand.

### **031/17 Questions from the Public.**

There was a 15 minute period for questions from members of the public.

There were two members of the public present.

Marion Adams (MA), Commodore of the Totnes Boating Association (TBA) welcomed the Board to the club and asked about two issues.

#### **Hole in the wall.**

MA advised that the gap is definitely increasing and there were concerns of the scenario of an oxbow lake developing behind the wall. It was noted that Authority is responsible for monitoring the extent of the Hole in the Wall as an action in the South Devon AONB Estuaries Plan. It was also noted that the area behind the wall belonged to the Sharpham Estate. IG advised that DHNA needs to work with partners and there are actions for DHNA and for Sharpham in the Estuaries Plan. MC explained that he was about to commission this year's river survey and once the results are received we will be able to compare with previous surveys.

**It was agreed** to send a copy of the current and future surveys to the TBA.

**ACTION:** MC to send a copy of the survey to the TBA. *Complete.*

#### **Mill Tail**

MA advised that the Mill Tail was silting up, year on year and asked what plans there were for dredging in this area. IG reported that the Board have not discussed dredging or the usage of the area and he advised that the cost of dredging would need to be given full consideration.

TBA advised that it is still possible to get in and out, but it is getting shallower and the bigger tides drop sediment. TBA also advised that the river trip boats sometimes touch in this area when turning, which also demonstrates the area is getting shallower. IG advised that the Authority should review the survey and develop a dredging strategy. MC advised

that a survey plan had been set up to assist to a build up a pattern of the movements and these surveys could be used to decide the Authority's priorities. However, it should be noted that the Mill Tail may not be given the highest priority.

MC advised that the surveys had been done out of sequence with a five year outlook. JD recommended that surveys should be ongoing. MC advised that there could potentially be some assistance from Premier Marinas, as their development may have some effect on the flow of the river. MC reported that he was comfortable to talk to the surveyor and that JD would also be invited to attend. MC explained that finding dredge disposal sites presented a challenge and advised that he had a contact who may be able to help in this area.

**ACTION:** MC to prepare a report regarding the annual survey plan for next meeting. *On March Agenda.*

## **032/17 Stakeholder Groups**

### **032/17 (a) River Dart Non Beneficiary Group**

A meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and MC and IG attended. Although he had been unable to attend JD had made himself known to the group.

It was noted that the main topics discussed were:-

- A wish for no more moorings on river,
- Concerns regarding the management of the river,
- Concerns regarding excess silting and a failure to dredge.
- Neighbourhood planning – a desire to contribute to plans (SHDC leading this) and advised that the Dartmouth neighbourhood planning process had started.
- Membership of the Non Bens group was discussed and the current group were not keen to widen any further than to town and parish councils.
- The next meeting was due on 19<sup>th</sup> May.

A discussion took place and the following comments made:

MC advised that it was a useful meeting and he had learned some of the background behind the negative feelings expressed at the Annual Meeting.

JE and TD advised that the group should be opened to other groups, eg National Trust, Duchy of Cornwall and Environment Agency.

IG advised that he would like the Non Bens group to provide a home for the environmental lobby as this area does not sit with ADRUC or CUG and to review their name. He felt that the Non bens could widen and lead the environmental aspects.

**ACTION:** JD to pass on the DHNA views to this group. *See Action Grid.*

### **032/17 (b) River Dart Commercial Users Group (CUG).**

A meeting was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 1900 hrs at the Dartmouth Yacht Club and was attended by ZBE, MC and IG.

ZBE reported that her first interaction with the group had been very positive and the meeting rounded up by thanking the staff at Dart Harbour. The following areas were discussed:-

- The group reviewed how the business year had gone. 2016 had a slow start but picked up later on. Regatta numbers were down with the impact on the reduced air show resulting in less people visiting Dartmouth.
- DHNA and MC were welcomed to the meeting and the group were pleased with the staff turnover.
- It was noted that the larger businesses (Darthaven Marina, Noss Marina and Blackness Marine) had a positive 2016.
- There were positive comments about the London Boat show with boat business strong at the top, with large and small vessels selling best.
- MC referred to the strategic plan and the outcomes of St Christophe 1. IG reported that DHNA have invited the MCA to carry out a port safety check. It was noted that DHNA are open for that as robust procedures are in place.
- Moorings' Policy (MP) – Julian Distin, gave an overview of the MP and encouraged all to read and he highlighted some key areas.
- There were some concerns regarding the Noss Marina development.
- MC advised that the Noss vehicle bridge will be removed at some point.
- The next meeting is set for 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

### **032/17 (c) Association of Dart River User Clubs (ADRUC)**

No meeting had taken place and the date of the next meeting had not yet been circulated.

JE advised that he had made contact with the Chairman of ADRUC, who had advised that he would like to meet with MC and that a new Chairman was being sought replace him.

### **033/17 Environmental Matters – Update**

An AONB steering group meeting was held on 17<sup>th</sup> January and was attended by IG and MC. It was noted that the group were pleased that DHNA were back in the group. JD reported that the project should be more task led and DHNA needs to task the AONB Estuary Officer. An action for DHNA from the steering group meeting is to set priorities for the Estuary Officer in order to get the support we require.

MC advised that he thought it was a good meeting, however Salcombe and Yealm harbours were not present. MC advised that the plan was good, but had concerns that a lot of the actions you would expect in an environment plan were allocated to DHNA and while DHNA can do its piece, it does seem that only DHNA are tasked with most actions and not the wider community.

IG advised that a vehicle to the wider community was needed.

## 033/17.1 Water Quality

A discussion took place about water quality in relation to whose role this was. It was noted that MH had previously brought the Board's attention to figures compiled by the Environment Agency, which had identified a black spot at Stoke Gabriel. It was felt that water quality should be a project for the Estuaries Officer.

JD suggested that if the Authority wished to commission a study, then a budget should be identified for this.

SD suggested that monitoring of the water quality results should be undertaken and so that when a significant issue is identified, for instance pollution coming from the land, then DHNA can flag this up with appropriate agencies.

SD also reported that following a wild swimming event, a number of swimmers were ill, the event had followed a period of rain and if evidence was available this could be used by such groups.

IG advised that the Environment Agency have actions to address water quality in the river and had visited all boat yards and served them with compliance notices for them to install closed loop scrubbing facilities.

JD advised that he would like to be involved in assisting. JD advised that he would be meeting with wild swimmers shortly and would be attending a bio diversity workshop. In the long term DHNA should know who is responsible for what and be proactive in order to understand how to proceed.

**ACTION:** MC to review the history and identify where the responsibility for water quality lies in order to meet the Board's desire to understand water quality. *See Action Grid.*

## 034/17 Item 10 – Operational Report (including PMSC and Safety)

MC reported on the Operational Report as follows:-

- a) KP Pontoon pile survey. MC advised that a report would follow after seeking professional advice.
- b) The DHNA team are on schedule for maintenance in readiness for the summer season,
- c) The DHNA team are on schedule with administration in preparation for issuing annual allocations and invoices.
- d) In relation to safety. Risk Assessments are being reviewed by staff although it was noted that they are being checked as specific tasks arise. MC was confident that the Authority is in a good position. MC recommended that the development of method statements should follow the risk assessment review.
- e) Finance. MC advised that the monthly financial status demonstrated that there were no financial concerns for January. The graph would plot the progress of the finances through the year.
- f) Beached hulks at Dittisham. It was noted that there were a variety of abandoned vessels at Dittisham. MC would be making an inspection on 14<sup>th</sup> February. MC also advised that the topic of abandoned boats was raised at the South West Regional Ports Association meeting and that other ports had similar problems. A discussion took place in relation to the costs of removing the vessels and the

disposal of the vessels. **It was agreed** that MC keep the Board informed on progress.

### **035/17 Correspondence**

Board Members to advise on any correspondence received.

A letter had been received in relation to a number of issues concerning the management of the Dittisham pontoon. It was noted that IG had responded that the Authority will look at it and actively manage the facility. It was noted that similar management would be needed for the low water landing and Stoke Gabriel pontoon.

### **036/17 Any Other Business**

There was none.

### **037/17 Move “In Committee”**

It was proposed by JD and seconded by ZBE with all in favour, *“that the meeting move “Into Committee”*.

### **038/17 Decisions Made “In Committee”**

It was proposed by TD and seconded by JE with all in favour “to ratify decisions made In Committee”.

### **039/17 Date of next Meeting**

The next Board Meeting would take place on Friday 10th March 2017 at 4pm to be held at The Studio, Flavel Centre, Dartmouth.

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**ACTION:** MC to respond to the volunteer to advise, once again, that the Authority will provide support and a boat and berth for no cost, but the volunteers have to be a standalone organisation with their own insurance and at their own risk. *Complete.*

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**ACTION:** TD/MC/KD/Accountant to consider appropriate financial controls and report to the March meeting. *Complete.*

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There was none.

### **037/17 Move “In Committee”**

It was proposed by JD and seconded by ZBE with all in favour, *“that the meeting move “Into Committee”*.

### **038/17 Decisions Made “In Committee”**

It was proposed by TD and seconded by JE with all in favour “to ratify decisions made In Committee”.

### **039/17 Date of next Meeting**

The next Board Meeting would take place on Friday 10th March 2017 at 4pm to be held at The Studio, Flavel Centre, Dartmouth.