

DART HARBOUR COMMERCIAL USERS GROUP

Minutes of Meeting held at Dartmouth Yacht Club on 10 December 2012

ACTION

Present: J Holman (Chair), B Hollis, M Holman, J Douglas (Chairman, ADRUC), P Sheardown, S Kilpatrick, G Savage, P Smith, I Noble, M Pope, J Scott (Vice-Chair, DHNA), N Clarence (Deputy Harbourmaster), N Brown, M Smallwood (Minutes)

Presentation by Paul West, Chairman, NCI Froward Point

1. Apologies C Nicholls, S Smith, C Lambert, J Robinson, A Harbord, S Corner, L Fleming, T Hoile, P Chorley

2. Minutes of the previous meeting These were proposed by Barry Hollis, seconded by Perry Smith, approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising

Discussion on presentation from David Marino of The Duchy. It was pointed out that the Duchy receives a large financial contribution from the River Dart.

4. Chairman's Report

John Holman reported on the following:

- a) He had attended the recent Dart Harbour AGM and although he personally felt the Board was doing a very good job on the River there had been some issues and grievances aired that would need resolving. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that John Holman should write to the Dart Harbour Board expressing the points raised by members of the DHCUG (see below).

Dear Dart Harbour Board members

Ref; DHCUG Meeting 10-12-12

I would like to thank both Jan and Nick for coming to the recent DHCUG Meeting and putting their heads 'above the parapet'. I feel that we had a very constructive meeting and aired a lot of views and it helped having Jock Douglas there too, who is the Chairman of the ADRUC.

I am aware that you had your monthly board meeting on the same day and that you discussed many of the points raised but I would like to put on record the important views of the DHCUG members.

The recurring theme throughout was communication.

The suggestions of the DHCUG;

- 1. Unique personal email addresses to each Board member should be available to river users.*

2. *The complaints procedure should be advertised more obviously.*
3. *There should be a channel of communication open to the Board Chairman through a postal address that would allow river users to write to Board members (without their letters being opened in the harbour office).*
4. *There should be a member of the Board taken from the river community. The CUG realize that your hands are somewhat tied by the Trust Port Act. However, we do feel that you should look at the parameters needed for the application to become a Board member and possibly open them up a bit to allow a regular river user to apply.*
5. *The out of hours telephone number should be better advertised and Winter/week-end cover reviewed.*
6. *The manner of approach to communicating controversial decisions should be reviewed to sweeten the sometimes 'bitter pills' that need to be taken, ie. changing and moving moorings, temporary moorings etc. It is important to remember who is working for whom. It was stressed at the DH AGM that it is the river user's river not the Dart Harbour's although it is not always perceived that way.*
7. *A general information sheet should be sent out with the annual accounts informing river users of the many communication channels that are open to them, the dates and times of the Dart Harbour meetings that are open to the public, the names of the Stakeholder groups and their functions, the out of hours telephone contact number and the complaints procedures. Also, appropriate methods of contacting Board members, information about waiting lists both leisure and commercial and financial statements.*
8. *There is a feeling of dissatisfaction rumbling around the river and the Board should seek out its source and try to rectify the situation before small groups with grievances are formed, eg. the current Dart River Users Group formed around a problem which started in July.*
9. *There is a need to review the reintroduction of a regular newsletter to inform the river users about what is happening on the river.*
10. *When the monthly Harbour Board minutes are ratified and posted it could prove valuable to draw all registered river users' attention, and hence further interest, to the fact via a circularized email. Adding a standing information panel to the minutes regarding communications/complaints etc, including the 24 hour watch number plus other suitable or pertinent items, would enhance DH's perceived stance on information flow and duty of care, and do much to enable para 7. above.*
11. *Although there remain a diminishing minority of offline folk, this is no longer a good reason for not employing online information to the increasing majority.*

I would like to stress that the majority of river users are happy with the way that the harbour is run and we are only trying to help by airing the above views. It is impossible to keep all the customers happy all of the time with such a cross-section of society involved.

There is a perception that there is a problem with some parts of the management of the river which need addressing and open communication is the best way to achieve this.

*Yours sincerely
John Holman
Chairman DHCUG*

- b) The question was raised as to whether the word “Clubs” was appropriate in ADRUC’s title or whether it should be omitted.
- c) It was felt all Stakeholder groups need to promote themselves better.
- d) A new Group had been formed: “Dart River Users Groups”.

5. Treasurer’s Report

Barry Hollis reported that income was healthy at the present time.

6. Harbourmaster’s Report

Nick Clarence spoke on behalf of Rob Giles.

- New chart update had been completed by the Hydrographic Office in conjunction with Dart Harbour
- The pilot boarding station had been moved further south
- 3 more temporary lateral marks have been fixed near Dittisham
- Mainstream buoy has now been charted
- Post Waste Management Plan forms had been circulated for completion
- Port Security Exercise would take place shortly
- A small number only of boat licences had been issued in 2012
- Higher Ferry Slipway improvements. Dart Harbour had pledged £50K but SHDC had put this on the back burner for the moment due to lack of funds
- Lower Ferry Slipways. Refurbishment work would start during the second week of January 2013
- The Lower Ferry is displaying restricted lighting
- Water taps for vessel cleaning have been revamped
- The lower water landing pontoon is being refurbished in house
- Complaint/feedback forms are now available from the Dart Harbour office and the website for use by all river users as required

7. AOB

Phil Sheardown, past Chairman of the DHCUG, was presented with a thank-you gift by the Chairman on behalf of the members.

Date of next Meeting: Monday 4th March 2013.

Chairman Date