

DART HARBOUR COMMERCIAL USERS GROUP

Minutes of Meeting held at Dartmouth Yacht Club on 20 May 2013

Present: J Holman (Chair), M Holman, P Sheardown, N Brown, H Meacock, D Distin, J Distin, B Taylor, C Lambert, P Smith, L Fleming, A Harbord, S Norvill, S Kilpatrick, A Pooley, B Hollis, N Hockaday (Chairman, DHNA), R Giles (Harbourmaster), K Marshall, J Robinson, M Smallwood (Minutes)

ACTION

1. Apologies A Hoile, I Noble, G Cotton, J Mathies

2. Minutes of the previous meeting These were proposed by B Hollis, seconded by L Fleming, approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising None.

4. Chairman's Report

- Season starting later due to the weather, with marine leisure and servicing starting 4 weeks late, but now working flat out. Some owners awaiting better weather, particularly for cruises to Falmouth and westward. Greenway/Dart Steam Railway business also weather dependent.
- Complaints from Lower Dartmouth businesses who are seeking a rates rebate due to the loss of trade from the ferry slipway closure and delayed opening.
- Nice to see the Fairmile and the Kingswear Castle operating in the river
- Music Festival was a great asset to the town but there had been a problem with some late leavers and police and security had been active
- "Try a Boat" BMF campaign this coming weekend in Dartmouth also Brixham Heritage weekend plus Boat Show
- Sea Work International Show at Southampton from 25-27 June
- He and Melanie had attended the Marine Conference in Bournemouth. The leisure work trade were "bumping along the bottom" with some small green shoots appearing but decent weather needed. One of the lectures was on "Wow Factor". Complaints procedures are in place however we do not have a compliments system – this should also be available for the River Dart as at least 85% of customers are always happy with their experiences.
- Border Agency and Police are keen for locals to be their "eyes and ears" for any unusual landings of people, drugs, etc.
- Inspections likely on oil containers - £1,000 fine for incorrect storage drums
- North Shore Yachts have folded with suppliers losing a lot of money. Sealine Boats has also gone into liquidation
- Noss Marina is selling its marina side share for approx. £10 million. The land side development is going ahead
- He and Melanie visited the RNLi Centre in Poole. A lot of investment and work and development going on there. Tours are available and an RNLi hotel.
- The RYA has signed a new Harbour Code of Conduct agreement. Harbour users will be able to challenge harbour authorities over any new regulations made by a harbour authority which they are unhappy about, through a new body called the Port Users Group (PUG).
- He had copies available of "Ten Ways to avoid a Tax Investigation" from the Magazine 'Business Matters' if any member would like one.

- Passenger Ferry Crew had requested an ashtray for cigarette stubs on the landing pontoons. Rob Giles would look into this

RG

5. Treasurer's Report

Barry Hollis was pleased to report that 23 members had paid their subscription; 9 members still to pay and 8 members had lapsed their membership. £916 in the bank account.

6. Harbour Update

Rob Giles reported:

- On the Pilots National Pension Fund. Neil Hockaday, DHNA Chairman, gave an update to those present. (See Harbourmaster's summary from Dart Harbour Newsletter below). Rob will provide an update on the position to the DHCUG in 2 weeks time, after negotiations with the Trustees of the PNPf have taken place. A fact sheet is available from Dart Harbour on the situation. Dart Harbour was the worst affected harbour, however it is legally bound to meet the obligation. All options will be looked at by Dart Harbour, including reducing some costs, less development and putting up mooring rates
- Safety systems. Following the Padstow tragedy, all river users to please look at their safety systems
- All moorings have been refurbished and 20 pontoons now ready; accordingly, the Hoodown Phase 1 Development is paying for itself
- New LED lights purchased; 3 new buoys have been laid and poles have been replaced by buoys
- Kingswear Castle now cleared to do trips up to Totnes
- Good to see the Fairmile back with new livery on the River
- Still awaiting a proper upgrade of the Higher Slipway facility by SHDC. Repairs are starting from Wednesday and will be completed by 1st June
- Destination South West is providing money towards encouraging more cruise ships in the river and he would be visiting their offices shortly
- Dittisham pontoon planks would be replaced if they buckle again in the hot weather. Members to please let him know if this happens again
- On 1st June the Brixham Fishing Trawler "Pilgrim" would be visiting Dartmouth and will be moored on the town jetty for visitors to look round
- Upriver berths have not been marketed this year; the harbour authority may rationalise some next year
- Awaiting a consultation paper from the Leisure Users Group. Questionnaire from Dart Harbour would then be circulated for feedback
- If any crime spotted, please advise Dart Harbour who will inform the police
- PUG will be formalised with the coordination of the two stakeholder groups

7. AOB

- John Holman reported on police liaison regarding a lost body off the Channel Islands. A boat had left Dartmouth on 10th May for the Channel Islands and had lost someone over the side which the crew did not report until they arrived in Guernsey. The French, Guernsey and Totnes police were liaising with Dartmouth over this incident.
- Andrew Pooley reported that on 10th June the Paddlesteam Society would be running a 2 hour cruise from Totnes to Dartmouth and all DHCUG members

would be invited along with “Visit South Devon” staff.

- Julian Distin referred to the unsuccessful funding application last year for a large pontoon off the Embankment. He requested Dart Harbour provide full consultation for any future developments. Neil Hockaday confirmed this would be the case and a strategy was being prepared.
- John Holman advised that Sarah Wollaston, MP would be attending the next CUG meeting on 23rd September and could the members advise him of any subjects they would like to raise with her.
- Andrew Pooley advised that “Visit South Devon” funding of £15K annually may be terminated by SHDC. Teignbridge is prepared to match the amount if the funding continues. It was agreed that John should contact Sarah Wollaston about this and ask her to lobby for continued funding to promote tourism in the River. Alister Harbord would contact SHDC also.
- Andrew Pooley suggested meeting with the harbour authority/harbourmaster from the river near the Eden Project as they experience similar problems in tourism promotion

JH

There being no other business, John Holman thanked everyone for coming, including Neil Hockaday and Rob Giles from the Harbour Authority. He was pleased the DHCUG had such good liaison with the harbourmaster.

Date of next Meeting: Monday 23rd September at 7.00pm.

Chairman Date

Dart Harbour eNewsletter May 2013 from the Harbourmaster, Rob Giles

Pilots National Pension Fund

It is minuted in our harbour board meetings that a potential liability is lurking regarding the above fund. I will not be able to explain the full issue in this newsletter (which has to cover other items) as it would take too much space. In brief, Dart Harbour faces a legal, if not necessarily fair, share of a liability to repair the above poorly performing pension fund. I would hasten to add at this point that most harbours in the UK are liable, and we will all have to pay something to bale out this fund – I have been advised that there is no legal way of avoiding it. Here come the numbers - the PNPf is in deficit to the tune of £180 million, and likely to rise! Dart Harbour’s share of it is likely to be of the order of £500,000! The immediate question is, what is the impact for all of you who pay hard earned money to use the harbour? Your harbour board, equally shocked, are considering a multitude of options. This is running alongside a lobbying package with the MP, Ministers, and professional associations to get across that at Dart Harbour we have virtually no pilotage / commercial business on which to place a levy to recover the debt. We are also in a negotiation process with the PNPf Trustees to gain some info on how long we may be able to pay the liability over, but I have to tell you that, legally, it is all due now.

Clearly this item will be of great concern to you all – but rest assured I am working very hard to gain the best outcome for all of us. I am striving hard to ensure that immediate price rises are not necessary, and there are possibilities that we may achieve this. It depends on how flexible PNPf are prepared to be. The one thing I will say is that, in this environment, you will not see any Dart Harbour originated development in the river for the next 5 years or so. Frustrating, but the ultimate aim is to meet any legal liability that is imposed upon us, and to continue to manage the river safely and effectively. I will issue a separate bulletin dedicated to this subject alone in due course, but negotiations are in progress at the moment. This subject is taking up most of my time, and I am fighting our corner, as you should expect me to do.