

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries

The meeting to reconstitute the Non Bens, was held in the Library, Royal Castle Hotel on 25th February 2016-02-27

Present: Sheelah Seeley, (Ashprington) Richard Rendle,(Dartmouth); David Harris-Evans, (Dittisham) Tony Whitty (Totnes); Edward Jones, (Kingswear) Sue Pudduck (Sec)
Apologies: John Robinson (Stoke Gabriel)

1. Introductions.
2. Election of Officers.
David Harris-Evans was elected Chair.
Sue Pudduck agreed to be Secretary.

The meeting agreed to discuss issues (agenda item5) prior to moving back to items 3 and 4

5. Each member present identified the main concerns for their town or parish council. They fell broadly into the following areas:

River Management

Nobody wanted to see more moorings on the river, and there was a perception that the overall numbers had increased. It was decided to find out about this from DH and establish if this was actually true.

There was a comment re Bow Creek that moorings had been removed (and possibly replaced elsewhere?).

Environmental

The Totnes representative raised several topics for further discussion and investigation.

1. The potential flood risk to lower levels of the town that has not yet been addressed although funding had been allocated.
2. It was noted that Baltic Wharf had changed their original planning application and had engaged with the community on the recently approved application and construction had started. Lower levels had been raised. Extra pontoons had been requested but had been turned down because of the impact upon navigation of narrowing the deep water channel.
3. The community opinion is that Totnes cannot take any more houses above the identified sites and EA needs to be involved in future development that would affect the flood plain and free flow of flood waters.

There were also issues around other developments and potential environmental impact on the river:

a/ the redevelopment of the Dairy Crest site that adjoins the Dart, though this is going through a Right to Build order, one of the first in the country with considerable community consultation. The EA has been involved and had integrated the riverside aspect of the development into their proposed flood defence plans for the town.

b/ the intention was expressed to keep a watching brief on the White Leys Quarry at Buckfast where ash had been dumped and potentially toxic leaching fluid leaked into the river.

c/ it was believed that further development of the Noss Marina site is presently on hold.

Concern was expressed re the management of the river, excess silting and failure to dredge. It was noted that the Higher Ferry company had dredged at the bottom of the ferry slipway this winter although, previously, permission had been refused to the rowing club to build a slip alongside the ferry slipway because the river bed could not be disturbed there because of environmental issues.

Neighbourhood Planning

One of the areas in which all felt that the Non Bens could play a significant role, was that of Neighbourhood Planning. Tony Whitty (Totnes) outlined one of the proposals that his town were including in their NP. There is a plan for the creation of a river park, which would stretch through the town and the suggestion was that it could extend all the way through to the estuary, affecting Berry Pomeroy, Dartington, and Ashprington and possibly even Kingswear and Dartmouth.

Customer Care and public relations

Of concern was the difficulty that some organisations reported they had in meeting with the HM. Both the Volunteers and the Totnes Boating Assoc had been unable to set up a meeting.

It was felt that DH should concentrate some effort into establishing better customer care and openness in dealing with river users.

There was concern expressed that the South Embankment was used by DH for car parking on a regular basis and that it now looked like a car park.

Meeting returned to the Agenda item 3

3. . Membership of the Non Bens.

The group discussed widening the membership of the Non Bens. and it was decided while we are in a set up phase, to limit attendance to the Town and Parish councils. Later invitations could be extended to organisations such as AoNB, National Trust, Duchy etc. It was also hoped that some of these organisations could provide a speaker to outline their role in relation to the river.

4 Terms of reference

Rather than spend time on this item, it was decided to research the terms of reference that previously existed and bring them to the next meeting for discussion.

Action: SP. TW. DH-E. to try to find previous ToR.

6. AoNB

It was noted that AoNB had circulated a paper for consultation.
It can be seen at:

http://www.southdevonaonb.org.uk/uploads/files/Estuaries/SDEMP_Public_Consultation_draft.docx

7. AoB

There were no items.

Date of Next Meeting . 19th May venue to be confirmed.

A date is to be fixed with the HM for a familiarisation trip on the river.