

## **Minutes of the Dart Harbour Non Bens.**

Meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016-05-20 Castle Hotel, Dartmouth

Present: David Harris Evans, Chair, Edward Jones, Sheelah Seeley, Richard Rendle, Rob Giles, HM, Neil Hockaday, Chair DHA. Sue Pudduck, Min Sec.

Apologies: Tony Whitty. John Robinson

Minutes of the Meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016. Passed.

### **Matters Arising;**

#### **1 Perception that the number of moorings had increased.**

This had been checked against the Moorings Policy and there was little change in numbers, but there had been a change in where the moorings had been laid. Some moorings in Bow Creek and in the Cornworthy area had been removed as the Harbour Authority had been unable to let them, so they had been moved to deep water.

#### **2 Flood Risk with particular reference to Totnes.**

The Environmental Agency was moving ahead with tangible plans. HM will report back anything he hears and we will have an update from Tony Whitty

#### **3. Silting in the Tones area.**

As there is now a diversion which separates Mill Tail from the river, there is no fluvial flow and silting is occurring. Some TBA boats have been relocated, other moorings are at risk but are not of sufficient value to warrant moving.

RR reported having seen plans for flooding near Dartington. A large catchment area is being designed near to the rowing club which would create a river park. It was felt this would be of interest to other Parish Councils not currently attending the Non Bens meeting.

#### **4. Customer relations.**

Totnes Boating Assoc reported that they had not received a response from DH but it was pointed out that the last Board meeting had been held in Totnes.

#### **5. River Volunteers.**

Update from HM: Volunteers ran till early this year but their boat is deemed unsuitable. The Board recognised they were a very valuable service but it was also stated that they represented DH and some volunteers fell below the standards expected. Safety skills had improved but the new co-ordinator agreed that the skills were still not good enough and there was a significant risk, -DH would be liable for any incident involving volunteers.

A new service would be introduced in the near future, there would be interviews and volunteers would work in a more integrated way with the paid workforce.

The HM said that it could have been handled in a more sensitive way but he had been very concerned about the safety aspects.

It was agreed that some volunteers were not good representatives of the DHA and proper training was required.

Meanwhile full time staff have a presence on the river every evening till 9pm and in mobile contact with the HM.

**Water Quality:**

Bovine effluent accounts for 75% of E.coli. Fencing the bank can make a difference. AONB working with farmers on the river.

DH now has an arrangement with S.Devon College to measure all areas of the river for water quality. Measured using mussels on a 30 day cycle. DH will report the findings on the web site on a quarterly basis.

**Abandoned boats**

Due process is taking place to get them removed. Meanwhile a safety noticed will be posted where there is a concern about danger to the public..

RR recommended DH to take tough action so that people can see that the policies were being enforced. He pointed out this was vital to keep the Dart an area of outstanding natural beauty for the benefit of locals and tourism .

It was agreed that this type of input was part of the role of the Non Bens.

**River survey.**

Stakes had been taken out of Bow Creek and replaced with buoys. These can more easily be moved when the river alters course.

The river is surveyed every two years.

Silting has occurred at the moorings opposite Coronation Park and it now dries out.

EJ pointed out that changes in weather patterns with intense rain falls, changed the silting impact for the worse.

The HM reported that a recent survey has been carried out and he will overlay the findings on the previous one and report back.

Action HM

**Non Bens Records.**

Action: D EV will organise researching terms of reference and going through the archive.

**Discussion of the Draft Moorings Policy.**

At the last meeting there was some criticism of poor communications between the Board and the community.

It was pointed out there is now the Web site, Facebook and regular newsletters. The way in which Board members are now selected means that they may not be well known locals but have been selected for the management skills they bring to the DH. and they are frequently working.

It was stated that the purpose of the Non Bens meetings was to bring forward the concerns of their communities regarding the management of the river, to investigate those concerns with DH, to establish the truth and to report to their Parish. For the relationship to work, DH had to listen. Non Bens role is to raise awareness amongst fellow councillors. This is important as it is the Stakeholders who inform the Strategy. It is recognised that in some areas of concern to Stakeholders, ie parking, river access, it is the Non Bens who have more influence. Partnership working will keep communities robust and protect the Dart.

**Harbour Master's Update.**

HM covered the history of the set up of competent Harbour Authorities. As well as the historical tasks of navigation, pilotage, moorings etc., the role now covers building business

and income on the river. Next year the river is welcoming 15 cruise ships as well as super yachts and Tall Ships. It was agreed that the cruise ships bring a spend into the area.

The HM issued the draft Moorings Policy. It was important that Councils read and discussed the document and gave feed back. The second consultation would go the public. It is beneficial to read it in relation to the recently published Strategic Plan.

#### **Neil Hockaday Chairman DH.**

Neil emphasised the importance of feedback on the Moorings policy. He raised the issue of cruise ships and asked for opinions from the Non Bens. DHA policy at the moment is to encourage cruise ships into the port although with some reservations about size. RR pointed out that when the last ship had visited, one retailer reported a spend of £5k. NH, pointed out the investment of time that DHA and in particular, Board Member, Tricia Daniels had put into attracting the number of visits. He stressed the importance of ensuring that the passengers had free time in the town.

There had been excellent feedback from the passengers of the Noble Caledonian.

Neil stressed that he hoped the Non Bens would be more active in the future so that DH could work with them in a partnership forum, to resolve issues.

NH outlined future projects:

- Moorings Policy will be published in June.
- Next work will start on the Environment Management Consultation in conjunction with S.Hams Planning and the MMO.
- Further work on the Health and Safety Policies for the river and Risk assessment. It is a priority to keep river users safe. An example is the new bridge installed at Dittisham.
- There is an on-going requirement for maintenance and replacement pontoons.
- The staff are now working 7am-9pm.

#### **AoB.**

It was agreed that parishes should be encouraged to report safety incidents on the river to help record keeping and allowing problems to be addressed.

All agreed to keep a watching brief on developments at Noss and how they impacted on the river. D.HE offered to arrange a meeting for the Non Bens with Peter Bradshaw.

It was agreed that if a member could not attend a meeting, a substitute could be invited.

It was agreed to arrange a river trip courtesy of DHA.and to extend out the membership of the Non Bens to other bodies with interests in the management of the river. Date to be decided.

#### **Date of next meeting**

This will be arranged for end of September. Members will be notified.

Meeting closed at 8.50pm.

