

Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority

Minutes of a Meeting of the Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority held in The Studio at the Flavel Centre, Flavel Place, Dartmouth, on Monday 10th October 2011, commencing at 1400 hrs.

PRESENT:	Mr N Hockaday	Chairman
	Mr J Scott	Vice Chairman
	Mr M Cast	
	Mr O Hill	
	Mr J Murtagh	
	Mr T Pollard	
	Ms S Pudduck	
	Mr R Giles	Harbour Master
IN ATTENDANCE:	Ms P Johns	Senior Administrator
	Nick Clarence	Assistant Harbour Master
	Nigel Mortimer	South Devon AONB Estuary Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs H Meacock.

The Chairman thanked the Board for giving up 2 days to attend the Board training programme at Southampton and Lymington. As well as an opportunity to discuss strategy and the way forward for Dart Harbour, there was invaluable information received and comparisons made between Dart Harbour and Lymington Harbour areas. The visit to the MCA Headquarters in Southampton was also very beneficial to the Authority.

2. Questions from the Public

There were 4 members of the public present.

Mr Neil Millward of the Stoke Gabriel Boating Association thanked the Authority for the consultation and design put forward for the new Stoke Gabriel Pontoon and informed the Board that it is an improvement being 11m longer than the current pontoon.

Mr Millward asked that the Board give consideration to changing their policy with regards to pricing and the waiting list system. The Stoke Gabriel pontoon is very tidal with berths at the shore side end drying out on every tide making the berths inaccessible for large periods of time. Mr Millward asked that the Authority:-

- Consider different charging systems for deep water versus shallow water berths.
- Splits the Stoke Gabriel pontoon waiting list into deep water and shallow water sections.
- Suggested that pricing should be increased to help to reduce the costs and to encourage people to give up their berths. There is currently no incentive for existing berth holders to give up even if they only use their boats only once or twice a year.
- Give consideration for syndicates to hire berths so that people can share a berth.

The Harbour Master responded:-

- Incremental charging goes against Dart Harbour objectives to simplify the charging system. This proposal would make it more difficult to administer.
- The new “3 strikes and you’re out” system where waiting list applicants will have three opportunities to accept a mooring before being returned to the bottom of the list, is likely to help to reduce the numbers on waiting lists in general. It was not known at the time whether there were people refusing moorings offered who were on the list for the Stoke Gabriel pontoon.
- People are free to use their boats as often or as little as they wish and it is not in the remit of Authority to comment on this.
- The DHNA Act states that the Authority should provide benefits for all users. People who live locally also need and want moorings and the Authority does not wish to drive people of less means away. The policy needs to be fair for all.

Mr Millward was encouraged to write to the Authority with his suggestions and they would be considered further.

The Chairman advised that the Authority could fill all the moorings on the river even if the prices were doubled, however, the Authority is not in business to make a profit but to make sufficient surpluses in order to be able to maintain and improve the facilities on the river for stakeholders. An example of this is the Hoodown Improvement Project which will give the Authority an opportunity to maintain its stock of pontoons in-house rather than using external suppliers and provide facilities so that the majority of Dart Harbour vessels can be lifted out for maintenance purposes. The development will also improve health and safety and working facilities for staff.

Mr Roger Stobbart of Stoke Gabriel asked why he had not had a response to letters he had written to the Authority in the past. The Harbour Master apologised and promised to investigate why a response had not been made.

ACTION: Harbour Master.

3. Stakeholder Groups

3.1 River Dart Non Beneficiary Group –(27th October 2011 at BRNC). **It was agreed** that Mr Scott attend on behalf of the Authority.

3.2 Commercial Users Group – Nothing to report.

3.3 Association of Dart River User Clubs (ADRUC) – Still waiting to hear about another meeting.

4. Minutes of Meeting held on 12th September 2011

It was proposed by Mr Pollard and seconded by Mr Hill with all in favour **“that the minutes represented a true record of the meeting”**.

5. Matters Arising from Minutes held on 12th September 2011

Commercial operators navigating through Moorings.

In response to a question from a member of the public at the September meeting where commercial vessels had been seen moving in to the double steps pontoon from the moorings rather than the navigation channel, the Harbour Master advised that he had spoken to the company and advised that skippers should be aware of relevant Byelaws, not move through the moorings and should give due consideration to the wind and tides.

Crabbing from Pontoons.

Mr Scott reported that although the main crabbing season is now over the Harbour Master should police the pontoons more robustly for the 2012 season. The Harbour Master advised that staff would be tasked to keep the pontoons clear of crabbers.

6 Agenda Items

6.1 Noss on Dart

Nothing to report. The Harbour Master advised that there had been rumours that the project would start at Christmas, but nothing has officially been confirmed. It was felt that in view of the current financial climate and the fact that Planning Permission is not finalised, the project was not likely to commence in the near future.

It was noted that when the marina side of the development was completed there would be an additional 150 berths on the Dart.

6.2 Friends of Dart Harbour (FODH)

The minutes of the last FODH meeting were circulated. Nothing further to report.

6.3 Health & Safety

There are no significant Health and Safety issues to report.

The Chairman advised that following the visit to the MCA in Southampton it would be desirable to employ an independent health and safety auditor to inspect the Authority's health and safety system and documentation as a "designated person" in accordance with the Port Marine Safety Code. Investigations would take place to source an appropriate provider of this service.

ACTION: Harbour Master.

6.4 Environmental Matters

Nigel Mortimer, Estuary Officer was present and he circulated copies of the proposed signage being designed for slipways in the South Hams. The signage would be tailored to the individual location. There would be signs at the slipway in Totnes and the new slipway

at Dartmouth. It was suggested that signage also be made available at Stoke Gabriel. Nigel Mortimer confirmed that funding was already in hand.

The Harbour Master asked that Nigel Mortimer come in to discuss potential sites.

Nigel Mortimer also referred to

- Tourism engagement – in order to build up the tourism engagement in the project with the ethos of encouraging tourism providers to enjoy the long-term benefits of investing in their own environment, and raising the quality of the visit by tourists by providing some information of the area's natural story.

The Harbour Master advised that he would be interested in attending any meetings set up to liaise with the Tourism industry.

- A proposed visit to the CoaST project in Truro - to learn and take advice from their experience of encouraging green and sustainable tourism in their area.
- To enthuse the local tourism industry and provide a basic level of environmental advice with signposting to local consultants for more in depth development of individual interpretation materials; local coastal and underwater photographs for local promotions.
- Water-based tourism operators equipment for loan.
- Associated activities have included the attendance of a Dart Non-Beneficiary Users Group meeting, an estuary stall at the Totnes Show and a rockpool ramble event at Castle Cove in August.
- Development control matters – formal consultations and comments made on the One Gun Point, Dartmouth Public Slipway, Old Mill Creek and Whitecleave Quarry (Buckfastleigh – ie not Dart Harbour jurisdiction) developments.
- Water quality – there has been a recent incident of elevated bacteria levels from the oyster fishery in the Dart but no 'Combined Storm-water Overflow' spill events were reported by SWW prior to this.

Discussion took place concerning the water quality from the oyster fishery and Nigel Mortimer advised that the Environmental Health department at SHDC will be investigating further. The Harbour Master asked that Nigel Mortimer keep the Authority informed about this.

The Harbour Master also advised that he would be in contact with South West Water.

ACTION: Nigel Mortimer to keep the Authority informed about changes to the bacteria levels in the oyster fishery.

- Devon Marine Educators Network (DMEN) – with assistance from the Devon Maritime Forum, the DMEN are proposing to apply for an Heritage Lottery Fund grant for encouraging better use of our coasts and estuaries by Devon wide schools.
- The Environment Agency is inviting organisations to "host" the stakeholder engagement plans for catchments required under the Water Framework Directive. Host organisations will lead the development of catchment management plans through stakeholder groups and will receive the support of EA. The AONB intend to put themselves forward for this role.

The Chairman advised that it would be useful to have a pie chart to demonstrate the proportion of time specifically given to supporting the Dart estuary.

MCZs – the Harbour Master advised that after a meeting with the MMO in Plymouth nothing further was mentioned. He advised that the Authority has voiced its concerns before but no further developments have been received.

Nigel Mortimer advised that the MCZs would give consideration to various factors including the impact on marine creatures. The SSSI in the Kingsbridge Estuary could be used as a comparison. It is likely that only the most significant impacts would be likely to be controlled by MCZs.

Mr Cast asked that Nigel Mortimer provide some environmental information to the Dart Harbour website on a regular basis and suggested a monthly fact of the month with an educational basis for community benefit.

6.5 Young Champion Awards

Ms Pudduck reported that the river trips for local schools were now three quarters complete with great success. The enthusiasm and learning that took place has been excellent with the children seeing several seals on each of the trips that took place. The trips have been arranged to raise awareness of the Young Champion Awards for young people and to encourage them to participate.

The Harbour Master advised that he had been to see several groups of children to welcome them to Dart Harbour and to answer any questions. The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves and learnt a lot about the river from Phil Scoble and Nigel Mortimer.

The Board felt that a step up in the Young Champions Award scheme has now been achieved, is a worthwhile project and has been money well spent.

Ms Pudduck advised that Phil Scoble is happy to continue to support the project and further meetings will take place to take this forward for 2012.

It was agreed to write to both the river boat companies to thank them for their generous support and it was noted that the staff on board the boats provided an excellent service and encouragement to the children.

Nigel Mortimer suggested that although many of the children did not appear particularly enthralled at the time, it was surprising how much information they actually took in while aboard the trips.

Representatives of the Stoke Gabriel Boating Association were asked to encourage their younger members to participate in the award scheme in 2012.

7. Reports

7.1 CEO Report

The CEO Report was noted and particular reference was made to:-

3.2 Harbour Guide.

Mr Cast asked that a customer feedback form be sent out with the Harbour Guide or Newsletter. **It was agreed** that a survey could be useful but may be an electronic survey with a reference to the survey in the guide or newsletter. The Chairman also advised that

the future vision information may also be ready in time for publication in the spring newsletter.

Mr Murtagh asked that a page in the Harbour Guide be given to explain about parking arrangements in the vicinity of the river.

The Senior Administrator advised that because an additional 4 pages would be available this could be incorporated together with some additional advertising.

7.2 Finance Reports

Bank Accounts

	September 2010 £	September 2011 £
DHNA	110,241.92	176,641.69
Cater	1,241,673.70	849,084.65
Pilot	11,581.35	12,345.07
Waiting List	117,255.51	122,055.00

Mr Pollard reported that, overall, the Authority is £326,000 down as investing money in the Hoodown project and money being drawn down for this.

Progress on the year to date is shown as being 1.5% down for income. This is not considered a problem which equates to less than £20,000 on the £1,300,000 income generated.

There has been some missing income because of the vessel relocations that took place to facilitate the Hoodown project.

The Harbour Master passed on observations that the whole of the South West has had a downturn, especially in motor vessel activity which has had an impact on visitors' income. Efforts are being made to improve facilities including policing pontoons, signage and reorganisation of pontoons for visitors so that the right facilities are available for the right boats.

The Chairman advised that the outstanding payments for the Duchy have now been agreed which has affected the figures for this year.

On a positive note there have been lower professional fees to pay to lawyers as in the past so a saving has been made here.

Maintenance is £14,000 down, but it is envisaged that this will catch up with the commencement of the winter maintenance programme.

Pilotage - it was noted that considerable chasing is required to bring in the money from shipping agents for visiting cruise ships. However, this was not a concern and the money will be paid in due course. **It was agreed** that the Harbour Master follow up with the agents.

ACTION: Harbour Master.

8. Any Other Business

Annual Report

Mr Scott asked that consideration be given to the production of a professional Annual report along the same lines as seen in Lymington during the Board Away Days. The Harbour Master advised that he would like to introduce this. Discussion took place and **it was agreed** to include as an agenda item for the next two months and that the Harbour Master make further enquiries.

ACTION: Harbour Master.

Customer Feedback

Mr Cast advised that he had received several comments from members of the public about the professional and courteous service provided by Dart Harbour staff. The Harbour Master responded that numerous compliments on the staff attitudes and service are regularly received and he would provide information on these to the Board on a regular basis.

ACTION: Harbour Master to provide updates on compliments to the Authority.

Waiting List

Mr Murtagh requested that now the regatta is over that consideration be given to publishing waiting list information on the website in order to make lists more transparent to applicants.

A meeting is to take place shortly to discuss the inclusion on the website.

ACTION: Senior Administrator to arrange meeting.

Minutes on the Website

Mr Pollard reported that a member of the public had noticed that the most recent minutes were not on the website. The Senior Administrator advised that the site is now up to date and the omission was because of a delay in the Young Champion Section amendments holding up the update.

9. Move into Committee

It was proposed by Mr Cast and seconded by Ms Pudduck with all in favour, ***“that the meeting move “Into Committee”***.

10. Decisions made “In Committee”

It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Mr Pollard, with all in favour ***“to ratify decisions made In Committee”***

11. Date of next Meeting – Monday 14th November 2011 at the Flavel Centre, Dartmouth at 2.00pm.