

RIVER DART COMMERCIAL USERS GROUP

Minutes of Meeting held at Dartmouth Yacht Club on 19th April 2010

Present: P Sheardown (Chair), B Hollis, N Brown, P Chorley, J Haney, D White, J Holman, M Holman, N Mortimer (Estuaries Officer - South Devon AONB Unit), B Taylor, M Smallwood (Minutes)

Apologies A Hoile, I Noble, W Ford, H Meacock

Minutes of the previous Meeting were proposed by M Holman, seconded by B Hollis, approved by all and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

None.

Chairman's Report

Further rephrasing for the User Group member personal criteria for the DH Selection Panel A small amendment had been made which the RDCUG Chair would circulate to all.

To consider an increase of remuneration for RDCUG's Secretary Melinda Smallwood left the room during this discussion. It was agreed that the Secretary's remuneration be increased by £10 per meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Ian Noble had prepared a Report for April 2010 and this was circulated to those present. Balance in the account to date was £644.00. 7 membership subscriptions had been paid, producing an income of £150.00 to date. A further 3 subscription payments were received from members present which the Secretary would pass to Ian Noble.

It was agreed that more people needed to be encouraged to join the RDCUG. A letter to go out from the Chairman to possible members.

Dart Harbour's Mooring Policy

The Chair reported that the Policy appeared to be fairly uncontentious and Dart Harbour had come up with a business plan that seemed to be working. D White reported that there were still four more open meetings to be held at Dittisham, Totnes, Stoke Gabriel and Kingswear before the Policy was finalised.

D White reported that the Harbour Authority was working well with the fishermen at the moment. J Holman asked about a fisherman joining the RDCUG. It was agreed a letter would go to the new Chairman, Brian Pauley, from the RDCUG Chairman. D White to provide P Sheardown with Mr Pauley's phone no. and address.

J Holman reported that there had been a build up of silt by Darthaven's hoist.

ACTION

PS

MS

PS

PS
DW

Environmental Issues

P Sheardown introduced Nigel Mortimer, South Devon AONB Unit Estuaries Officer, to the members present. Nigel then gave some details of his background. He had moved to Salcombe in 1996 as the Estuary Officer for Salcombe and Kingsbridge. By 2008 he had adopted Ray Humphries' estuary areas also. He was primarily looking at strategic ways to sustain estuaries, working here to the Dart estuary environmental management plan. Many things could be quite similar between the estuaries he looked after. His main need from the RDCUG was to understand what the Dart needs with regard to sustainable management and conservation. He hoped people could be encouraged to 'adopt' a stretch of the estuary so as to, for example, get to know it well and monitor changes (not warden!). The South Devon AONB Unit had secured matched funding from the South Devon Coastal Local Action Group, giving a total £64,000 funding for their Estuaries Sustainable Use and Enjoyment projects. .

He was keen to work with the community to develop some slipway signage which would encourage sustainable boating and give local boaters and visitors information on speed and wash reduction, oil and fuel, grey and black waters, refuse collection sites, wildlife sightings, etc. It would be very helpful if the RDCUG members could suggest the most suitable places for this signage.

Also helpful would be information on where and what some more general interpretive panels might be placed and what hidden aspects of the Dart Estuary, they might interpret. The plan is to raise awareness about some 'hidden' aspects of popular local views – possibly hidden within the depths of the estuary waters, hidden by size or hidden by time.

Another sub-project is to reinvigorate the use of the coast as a wonderful teaching resource by schools – 'making the most of your coast.' Aimed mostly at teachers, it will supply teachers with a suit of resources that are designed to help make class visits to the coast easier to plan and organise. A Resource Chest in local schools will contain crib sheets for health and safety risk assessment for beaches, annotated maps of popular beaches; and a website will signpost the best web-based resources for particular projects and age groups. The RDCUG's guidance on local beaches and school-friendly commercial operators would be helpful. Also safe sites for school visits and information on any local characters who might come and speak to pupils in the schools.

A condition of the funding is to engage with the commercial operators on the estuaries and an idea is to be able to supply for loan some equipment that operators might use with their customers - such as binoculars, UW pole-video-link-camera (a pole-cam), plankton nets, hydrophones, bat detectors, etc. – as a trial to see if the equipment is worth investing in? Some informal training may be organised to get the best out of the equipment?

Help and ideas on producing a Dart Estuary Leaflet would be appreciated, also what wildlife might be most usefully included on a wildlife ID sheet. For a book on the AONB's underwater wildlife, he would be grateful to receive clear underwater and topside photos from local divers.

He had a lot of underwater photos which were available for if they could be

useful to commercial operators for interpretation or local advertising of the area. He asked if written crib sheets would be helpful and whether the organisation of a special sustainable boating event would go down well. He asked for members to contact him if they would like to hold an anniversary event under the AONB banner.

M Holman suggested Kingswear Historians would also be a useful contact for the Unit who were interested in recording special aspects of local history from fishermen, boat builders, etc that could be in danger of being lost, if not recorded. She would be happy to accept wildlife literature for the Marina which could be made available to visiting children during the holidays.

J Holman reported that alien sea squirts had been found on Dart Haven pontoons that had been given to Dart Harbour. The squirts have since disappeared. Nigel will follow this up with the Marine Biological Association and see if this is likely?

Nigel finished by saying that all ideas would be gratefully received. His contact details are as follows:

Nigel Mortimer

Estuaries Officer - South Devon AONB Unit

Follaton House, Plymouth Rd, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5NE

Nigel.mortimer@southhams.gov.uk

☎ 01803 861465

📱 07971 544010 (not 24/7)

🌐 www.southdevonaonb.org.uk

The Chair thanked Nigel for his most interesting talk.

AOB

In reply to a question from J Holman, D White confirmed that jetskies are allowed in the harbour as long as they do not go faster than 6 knots and pay harbour dues.

D White informed the meeting that Neil Hockaday is the new Chairman of the Dart Harbour Board.

Date of next Meeting: Monday 7th June at 1900 at DYC.

Chairman Date