

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries Group Meeting.

Dart Harbour Non Bens (DH NB) Minutes Tuesday 6th February 2018

7pm in the Sarah Roope Rooms' Kingswear

Chair: Mike Pearey, (MP) Ashprington PC

Present : S. Seeley (SS) Ashprington PC, B.Taylor, Cornworthy PC., Rob Lyon, Dartmouth TC., T. Whitty (TW), Totnes TC;

J.Henshaw (JH), L. Maurer (LM), R. Searle (RS), Kingswear PC;

R. Price, Environment Agency (EA) (Speaker); N. Mortimer (NM) S.Devon AoNB; P.Charlesworth (PCh), Dartmouth & Kingswear Conservation Soc (D.,

T. Bumby (TB), Head Warden National Trust (NT) Kingswear to Coleton.

P. Williams (PW), Conservationist.

M. Cooper, Dart Harbourmaster (HM); J.Dodd (JD), Board link, Dart Harbour (DH); N. Clarence (Assistant HM)

Apologies. Graham Anderson (GA) Dittisham PC, J.Robinson Dittisham PC

Gary Callard (NT)

M. Cooper (HM) paid tribute to Captain David White whose sudden death was recently announced. Many of the NB group recognised the part David played in the management of the river both as Harbour Master and recently, as a Board member. All who appreciate the River Dart will sorely miss a man with his skills and experience. The NBs would like to pass on their condolences to the family.

1. Minutes from meeting:

Minutes from meeting held on Monday 13th Nov 2017 were agreed.

Matters Arising.

Actions had been completed or were going to be addressed in the main body of the meeting.

2. Guest Speaker; Rob Price, Environment Agency (EA), S. Devon Catchment Co-ordinator (Erme, Avon Dartmoor, Salcombe, Kingsbridge,)

Rob has kindly provided slides that should be read in conjunction with these minutes. (Attached to this email). He has also included 2 links to websites that may be of interest and that give more technical information on the Dart River Water organisations: one is

<http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/OperationalCatchment/3123>

The second gives details on the South Devon Catchment Partnership, aimed more at the general public, which can be found here: <http://south-devon.org>

Summary: The EA's aim is to continue to improve environmental 'services' and create better 'habitats' for people and wildlife. It is becoming much more visible nationwide, and proactive in driving change, including broader education across all sectors of society and industry about the challenges faced. They have a mandate and funding to work with partners, to be achieved through a framework of core directives. A well-known example is the Blue Flag initiative, which aims to deliver the EU Bathing Water Directive requirements.

While regulations can be costly to enforce and less effective, partnership working allows for innovation and maintenance of environmental services. Examples given were; research with the University of Plymouth into steel river piling as an alternative to the less environmentally friendly concrete; co-funding with farms to stop run-off into water courses. Local projects include habitat work, and a major wetland investment in the Tamar.

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries Group Meeting.

The EA manages the Dart using an approach that is consistent across all rivers in the UK and Europe: this will continue after Brexit. Essentially the river is split into “Up River” and “Estuary”, with different monitoring points so that the origins of contaminants entering the river can be identified and common problems recognised. Basic water quality is measured with a traffic light system: red, orange and green. At present the Dart Estuary only achieves a moderate - orange - rating. There are 17 industrial and agricultural sources identified as polluting the River Dart, and Up River industries such as the milk plants, ceramics and other *heavy industries* all have a negative effect on local water quality. Phosphates are a major problem: the current scheme to reclaim phosphates from the river runs out in 2023. The river also has higher than acceptable nitrate levels because of farming and slurry storage, so EA projects around this centre on working with farmers. Recreation and moorings also disturb the riverbed.

The EA is running a campaign around common marine practices such as pumping-out and anti-fouling. Currently, there is only one pumping-out station on the river. The copper dioxide used in anti-fouling is fatal to organisms in the river. Treating the water to improve quality would cost millions, so the strategy is to educate to change behaviours.

Using the Water Resources Act, the EA will take action against any pollution: please visit the main Govt website for details of what incidents to report: see <https://www.gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident>. The incident hotline number is **0800 807060**: please advertise this on parish websites. Alternatively DH is happy to take a report and they will share the information.

Action: Parish reps please ensure the Govt Environmental Incident Hotline number 0800 807060, and website link, is shared with their PC and communities

Agenda Items:

3. Strategic Aims and Objectives of Dart Harbour (DH). Harbour Master

(Slides have been circulated but available if requested)

The three main objectives of the Harbour are.

A. Safe Operations. DH are investing in safety on and around the water.

B. Community Benefits. Attracting river users brings in money to the local economy. Events bring in 18k. Cruise ships bring in 38k. There are costs to DH so it would be good to know if these activities are what local people want.

C . Safeguarding the river and its environment for future generations. E.g. Beach Cleans, wreck disposal.

Action: Reps please report back to their Parish to ensure that DH objectives are shared with riparian councils. DH welcomes feedback.

DH is a Statutory consultee to planning applications. Any comments made on planning applications need to be substantiated against DH’s Strategic Plan. Currently, Premier Marine and Dolphin have applications pending. They are required to submit the same application to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and to South Hams DC (SHDC) and it was suggested by the HM that there should be only one shared input.

Action HM: To continue to work with MMO and SHDC and suggest a one stop contact point.

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries Group Meeting.

The HM listed some of the main requests from users on the river. These included dinghy racks, scrubbing grids, pump out stations, and a regular river length service ferry. There was also a requirement for a 75ton lift in case of vessels sinking. These requests all have to be measured against environmental impact and cost benefit, and assessed against the DH Strategic Plan.

Local Neighbourhood Plans (NP) should refer to the Dart Harbour Strategic Plan and issues should be shared. For example, J. Henshaw drew attention to parking problems in Kingswear as owners leave their cars parked in the village, free of charge, while on their sailing holidays.

DH are putting in a temporary ferry station at Stoke Gabriel to reduce car journeys. Plans by Noss Marina to construct a ferry station - at their expense - to run from Noss to Dartmouth are subject to on-going discussions with SHDC about a possible license fee.

Action: PCs are welcome to suggest, either via Non-Bens or direct to DH, marine developments they would like to see.

Non Bens Board Rep, James Dodd. (JD) In order for the Board to capture what locals want it is planned to set up a DH Estuary Forum. The forum will have the objective of protecting the Dart and its environment. It will start in April and requires maximum interest and attendees so please respond to invitation when it is circulated.

4. Flood Management and Neighbourhood Planning Totnes. Tony Whitty. (TW)

Previously, TW has spoken about the initial stages of the Totnes Plan. The Plan will inform the governance of development for the next thirty years.

Totnes was involved early on and it is only now that some of the successes and complications in locality planning are becoming obvious. Tony spoke at length about meeting some of the challenges and how the plan developed and changed since its conception and the impact of the River Dart within the planning process.

Several of the NB Parishes are now in the early stages of writing their NPs and were very grateful to Tony for outlining the progress that Totnes is making. A full report on Totnes Neighbourhood Plan is available in Attachment 2

Actions:

TW will provide HM and 'Non Bens' with detail of the preliminary NP concerning the River.

HM to contact Totnes Clerk, re. TTC/NP input into Capital Strategy and referencing any issue to the DHA

5. Non Bens Admin.

a. Mike Pearey was appointed Chair.

Proposed T. Whitty Seconded. J.Dodd.

b. Names for Group.

There was further discussion about a better name for the group, because all riparian Parishes and groups benefit from having a healthy, balanced Dart Estuary. The Chair suggested "Parish Representatives on the Dart Estuary" (PROD for short). Members are asked to submit any other suggestions before, or at, the next meeting.

Action: All.

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries Group Meeting.

6. Report from AoNB. N. Mortimer (NM).

NM reported on a new initiative currently being set up, the “Clever Dart Project” which will encourage communities to be creative with their use of one-use plastics. There will also be an effort to engage with holidaymakers on reducing or recycling waste. The difficulty of categorising plastics so that they can be correctly disposed of, was raised.

Action: MP. The Non Bens should engage with SHDC on clarifying what plastics can, or cannot, be recycled.

A spring Beach Clean will take place around the Dart Estuary w/e 2-4th March. NM pointed out how important it is to record the litter and collect the data. Some Parishes thought this would be difficult to plan at relatively short notice, and longer lead times were asked for in future.

Action: (relayed ahead of these Minutes in view of timing): Reps were asked to encourage their Councils to participate. NM offered to provide equipment and the HM a river pick up if the litter could not be reached by road.

Information: The National Beach Clean takes place annually on the third w/e in September. Obviously, other beach cleans can be organised at any point during the year. The Marine Conservation Society (MCS) are the overall organising body. On their website, organisers can access all the supporting paperwork including how to register a beach clean, how to carry out risk assessments, recording sheets, posters and press releases.

Post Mtg Note; in order to simplify the complicated registration process, would it be possible for the AoNB or DH to investigate registering the whole Dart Estuary as a single Beach Clean venue? NBs can then organise their local cleans to coincide with national dates and the information can be shared in a timely fashion.

Kingsbridge is introducing a “Pick your 5 a Day” litter picking scheme.

NM. reported back on current planning applications under consideration by S. Hams and where AoNB were being consulted:

Aish steps – AoNB have recommended refusal on grounds of cumulative loss of foreshore and landscape impacts – now up to planning and MMO

Noss – NM the 106 agreement is still being discussed

NM reported that the RYA are continuing with the “Green Blue” Campaign, encouraging sustainable sailing and raising awareness of biodiversity.

In the next year, South Hams AoNB Management Plan is due for review and everyone will be invited to contribute

7. AoB

Mike Pearey reported on the Oxford Real Farming Conference. <http://orfc.org.uk/orfc-2018/> He briefed the meeting that Rt Hon M. Gove, recently appointed Environment Minister, appeared convinced of the need to make dramatic changes to agricultural and land subsidies. Historically, the EU Common Agricultural Policy subsidies have been based primarily on the acreage of land owned, not on how it was managed. Gove has already instigated changes in Stewardship schemes for 2019 to reward landowners who support “environmental services”, such as clean

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries Group Meeting.

water, soil health, and landscape. If the Minister's proposals are fully implemented after Brexit, they should have a very positive effect on river water quality by reducing topsoil run off and chemical residues in many of our watercourses.

HM reported that, to increase river safety, lockers for lifejackets will be provided at the Double Steps in Dartmouth.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Next Meeting provisionally planned for Ashprington Village hall on 15th May at 7pm

Since the meeting, the following information has been received from the Assistant Harbour Master. (NC)

MMO development of Marine Plans (including SW area) engagement workshop – Wednesday 7 March 2018. NC attending. He believes this could be crucial consultation event as it may involve the potential designation of the River Dart as an MCZ.

Action. NC to report back at next NB meeting.

And also from the Assist. Harbourmaster (NC) re Nigel Mortimer's research trial.

Nigel mentioned the assessment of marine growth of metal sheet piling within the river. In October 2017 DH had the Marine Biological Association diving in the harbour and assessing marine growth on our pontoon steel piles. (*See Attachment 3*) copy of initial email explaining the purpose of the diving. If the research project has been completed, the NBs would be interested in being brought up-to date with the results and any outcomes.

Action: AHM to report to group.

Attachment 1: presentation material received from Rob Price Environment Agency (Agenda item 2.)
Enclosed in the e mail

Attachment 2 Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Agenda Item 4. Flood Management and Neighbourhood Planning Totnes. Tony Whitty

Attachment 3. Information on research project carried out by University of Plymouth (UoP) re piling in River Dart received from Nick Clarence, AHM.

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries Group Meeting.

Attachment 2 to DH NB Minutes for 6 Feb 18: Totnes Neighbourhood Plan (Agenda Item 4).

4. Flood Management and Neighbourhood Planning [NP] in Totnes. Tony Whitty [TW]

Previously, TW has spoken about the initial stages of the Totnes Neighbourhood Plan [NP] and the place of the River Dart in it. The NP will form a statutory input into the Joint Local Plan, outlining the community's view on the development of Totnes for the next twenty to thirty years.

Totnes was an early participant in the NP process. The NP is meant to be a Community Based Plan, so the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group [NPSG] was formed Easter 2014 with Community and volunteer membership and an appointed part time Co-ordinator to deliver it. That formed into smaller working parties on issues that the community felt were important; a similar approach to other NP's. It was left to the NPSG to deliver the NP with little involvement from the Town Council [TC], even though they are the "Responsible Body".

During the consultation on Open Space Sports and Recreation aspects of the NP, all the identified users of the river and its banks, and community groups were consulted and invited to respond. Some responded and became involved, particularly when the concept of a River Park through the town evolved. Initially the river was regarded only as an outdoor space for recreation. But it became obvious, particularly throughout the wider consultation process, that it was far more important to the community. As a result, the river became a distinct part of the preliminary draft. Other areas evolved from the consultation that affected the river, such as car parking and open space. The cross cutting themes of economy, environment, transport and community were highlighted, as well as the incorporation of existing development, into any plans for future. Thus the river became a key distinct feature of the preliminary draft of the Totnes NP.

In Totnes there are only two large sites, which have single landowners, which could be developed; KEVICC School and Steamer Quay [SHDC]. The latter is on the left bank of the river as you go down stream. Locality supported NP work by funding consultants to draw up 2 Option Reports on the 2 sites. This was undertaken with the knowledge of NPSG and the landowners' permission, and looked at whether the sites could be developed within a Neighbourhood Development Order [NDO], as was the ATMOS project on the Dairycrest site beside the station, outside of the NP. The NPSG lacked the resources to deliver the Option Reports outcomes so they were put in the appendices as evidence. These subsequently informed the policies on how the protect Steamer Quay from inappropriate development. Both landowners declined to allow the NPSG to make the reports public.

Development of the NP took longer than expected. This was due to delays in SHDC releasing housing numbers and sites, and also the need for SHDC to move from a Local Plan to a Joint Local Plan with West Devon and Plymouth. By July 2017, after 3 years work, the NPSG had completed about 90% of the proposed final NP consultation document. Due to wanting to "test the water" before the draft NP went to the final statutory Section 14 process (e.g. SHDC to review it conforms with planning policy and the new JLP; formal consultation with the community; inspection; referendum etc.) the NPSG decided to do a community pre-consultation to ask if the draft NP met with their approval for the town's development. The consultation began in Sept 2017. NPSG had over 300 proposed amendments and started work on incorporating or clarifying these into a final draft. At this point, local politics got involved, there was misinformation and press briefings given about fantasy developments on Steamer Quay, alluding to the options

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries Group Meeting.

report, which ensured that whole process became derailed due to local politics in the Town. This led to a contentious couple of months with no work on the NP.

At present (Jan 18) there is a new Group, the Neighbourhood Plan Task and Finish Group, composed initially of the Town Council Operations Committee with invited members of the community, currently chaired by a Councillor. In the last few months the membership has changed but still includes those who challenged the work of the current NPSG. But they have yet to get to grips with undertaking the task of producing another NP. At present there is no indication of who the Group point of contact is, so until further notice the current advice is to contact the Town Clerk.

Actions:

TW will provide HM and 'Non Bens' with detail of the preliminary NP concerning the River.

HM to contact Totnes Clerk, re. TTC/NP input into Capital Strategy and referencing any issue to the DHA.

Dart Harbour Non Beneficiaries Group Meeting.

Attachment 3 to DH NB Minutes for 6 Feb 18: Information on research project carried out by University of Plymouth (UoP) re piling in River Dart received from Nick Clarence, AHM.

I am Christine Wood and I work as a Scientific Researcher at the Marine Biological Association in Plymouth www.mba.ac.uk, my particular area of interest is in the fouling communities of animals and algae that grow on artificial structures such as marina and harbour pontoons and pilings. The other organisation involved in this project is Seasearch www.seasearch.org.uk this is a voluntary organisation for recreational divers, it is highly regarded internationally and they are used by a number of governmental and non-governmental organisations e.g. Natural England and the Wildlife Trusts, to carry out specific tasks such as Marine Conservation Zone assessments. The Seasearch divers we would be using in the Dart are all very experienced, have dived in similar conditions before i.e. around marinas, and some are local and have dived the Dart before. They include Charlotte Bolton, the current national coordinator of Seasearch and the ex-national coordinator (somewhat confusingly also called Chris Wood!). This project has come out of the work I have been doing with Nigel Mortimer the SDAONB Estuaries Officer on the South Devon Estuaries Management and Biosecurity Plans and the SW Marine Plan. The aim of the project is to compare the fouling species detected by diving to examine the pilings and river bed, to those found by surveying from the pontoons. All the work is being carried out voluntarily by Seasearch and MBA staff.

We would like to survey by diving the northern ends of the DHNA pontoons off Hoodown, Kingswear. I will send the permit form and risk assessments to you by Monday, but I have included the details here so that you have some idea of our intentions. The diving would take place on Thursday 26th or Friday 27th October, depending on the weather. The dives would take place from approximately 9 -11.30 BST on the Thursday or 10 – 12.30 on the Friday, to coincide with the rising tide to HW. I apologise for the short notice and am aware that it is half-term and likely to be busy. We will have staff on the pontoons and in a boat to guard the divers. We can be flexible as to which pilings we dive on to avoid inconveniencing boat owners.

The pontoon based survey would be carried out by MBA staff on the same day, I have attached the relevant H&S documents for that. We will also be surveying the pontoons of Darthaven marina which I will arrange separatel