

Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority

Minutes of a Meeting of the Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority held at The Clifton Room, The Guildhall, Dartmouth on Monday 11th November 2019, commencing at 1830 hrs.

PRESENT: Mike Burden (MB)
Captain Mark Cooper (MC) - Harbour Master/CEO
Tim Dewing (TD)
Julian Distin (JJD)
John Ellwood (JE)
Tristan Harwood (TH)
Mark Hubbard (MH) – Chairman
Melanie Lessels (ML)
Tony Tudor (TT)

IN ATTENDANCE: Penny Johns (PJ) Senior Administrator
Kate Distin (KD) Finance Manager

104/19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from JD, ZBE, RE, SD.

105/19 Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th September 2019.

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

106/19 Action Grid - Status of Actions set on 9th July 2019.

Past Actions

Issue/Min No	Description	Who	Status	Notes/Follow on actions
067/19.6	Budget Adjustment Request	MC, TD, MH	On going	MH/TD/MC to arrange to review the capital/ revenue budgets. On the agenda.
067/19.2	Potential Environmental Projects	JD	On going	JD to contact the DEF and Estuary Officer and report back to the Board with further details. HM spending on energy saving for Hoodown and office and considering electric vessel. Other considerations to follow.

067/19.3	Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)	JD	On going	JD to attend the MCZ group and liaise with the Board
069/19	May workshop meeting Update	MH	Complete	Circulate the priority list to Board Members.
081/19.2	Marico Safety Review	MC	To do	Develop areas of action on Harbour Directions and report to the Board – action grid produced – developing procedures.
083/19.2	Risk Register	RE/MC	To do	RE/MC to identify the areas. Risk register sent to Chairman. MC – got register with 4 to 5 risks sent by BM. Appropriate to tag BM. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mike review of systems. 2. Financial Risk, TD 3. Safety ZBE/RE MC advised that individual Board Members are being tasked to different risk areas. MB to do risk in relation to financial systems. It was noted that an annual review of the risk register needs to take place.
085/19.3	Board Training Event	RE/JJD	In progress	RE/JJD to think about a Board training event. Had preliminary discussion, 2 element of value, team building/specific topics. Strong idea/theme – BM to advise by end of week – places/themes Board Members confirmed that 1 night only is appropriate for an away day and JJD advised that he would continue to develop this in the New Year and would progress by email.

Actions Agreed on 9th September 2019

098/19	Finance System Review	MB	In progress	To develop plan to move from cash accounting to accrual accounting
099/19	Moorings' Policy	JJD/PJ	Complete	Compare the old and new versions of the moorings' policy and to circulate a document to staff for comment.
101/19.1	Board Recruitment	MH/PJ	To do	Review the selection panel and invite SHDC to nominate a representative with a view to approving the inclusion of TD, TT, JD and SD for a further three year term.

107/19 Urgent Business brought forward at the discretion of the Chairman

There was none.

108/19 Declarations of Interest

Board Members were invited to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests including the nature and extent of such interests.

MC advised that he had signed a contract to be a self employed pilot on the Dart.

TT advised that he had been asked be on the steering group for the Dartmouth Neighbourhood Plan and advised that he could also represent the Authority's interests from that position, however this may also be seen as a potential conflict of interest.

109/19 Questions from the Public.

There were no members of the public present.

110/19 Stakeholder Groups

110/19.1 Dart Harbour Communities Group (DHCG) - 12th November

MH advised that the Authority should have an input to the local plans. MC advised that the Community Group meeting is taking place on 12th November and he would mention this.

110/19.2 River Dart Commercial Users Group (CUG) - January 27th 2020

110/19.3 Association of Dart River User Clubs (ADRUC) - 21st November

110/19.4 Dart Estuary Forum - 19th November.

111/19 Operational Report (including PMSC and Safety)

MC reported on the Operational Report, and the following matters referred to:-

111/19.1 Trinity Sailing

MC advised that Trinity Sailing was winding up. Three of their vessels are berthed on the Town Jetty for the winter and invoice for this is paid. They have interest from potential purchasers on two of the vessels. It was noted that they are not advertising any excursions for 2020. JE advised that SV Pilgrim was participating in the Mayflower 400 activities.

111/19.2 Mooring Optimisation

MC advised that winter berths are at capacity and the poor weather did have an impact on winter berth holders getting on their winter berths on time. The weather also meant that little optimisation has taken place in this period.

111/19.3 Poor Weather Routines

MC advised that Dart Harbour responded to an incident where the Lower Ferry broke one of the mooring buoys on their own mooring. Dart Harbour carry out the maintenance for South Hams District Council (SHDC). MC advised that it was an unusual break on one of the lemon buoys, which would not have been picked up on an annual service. MC is preparing a report and communication with the manufacturer will take place. Dart Harbour have made a repair to the buoy.

111/19.4 Compliance with PMSC and Safety Issues.

- a) **Live Aboards.** MC advised that two people, who live aboard their vessels, had recently been recovered from the river after falling in. He advised that both were elderly and intoxicated. One was rescued by the RNLI lifeboat and was wearing a life jacket and the second was rescued by the Lower Ferry as they went past, the alarm being raised after someone heard him shouting. This second person was not wearing a life jacket and MC advised that he was lucky to survive.

A discussion took place and MC advised that around four elderly customers live aboard their boats and that it is important to manage the people with the support of

Social Services in some cases. MC also advised that concerns over Great Gull existed and MC recommended that this vessel should come out of the water.

It was agreed to contact all live aboards to impress upon them the very great risk and high percentage of live aboards who have been affected.

ACTION: MC to communicate with live aboards about the dangers and the benefit of wearing life jackets.

- b) **Stakeholder Engagement.** MC advised that a stakeholder's engagement event had taken place with Marico to discuss safety topics and to gather expertise. This had highlighted a need for some additional risk assessments on pontoon loading, getting people on and off boats and dog and baggage handling. Once formalised these would be communicated via an operational update.

112/19 Safety Update

MC advised that he had received a summary from the designated person which stated his initial comments before completing his full report. He stated that:-

1. *The commitment to safety management witnessed on the ground so far has been outstanding, with a clear desire to improve further.*
2. *The teams are very aware of their responsibilities and are happily demonstrating their solutions to various issues presented. Very much a 'can do' culture seen.*
3. *We are developing an open and honest relationship between the team and DP, which is essential for the role to be effective.*
4. *8 subject areas identified as requiring improvement by MCA and Marico are being looked at closely with clear improvements already being evident.*
5. *Some of the concerns raised in historic audits no longer appear to be valid.*
6. *Development of routine and emergency procedures is progressing well as a priority piece of work.*

Much of the work required does not happen overnight, indeed the development of staff structure and procedures alone is a substantial piece of work for the team. Both of these workstreams appear to be progressing well and will provide a great deal of resilience to the port.

At this stage there is nothing that causes me any alarm, indeed I have been very impressed by what I have seen so far.

It was agreed that MC should circulate the DP's summary to the Board.

MC also advised that the MCA are planning a visit to carry out another health check.

ACTION: MC to circulate the DP inspection summary to the Board.

113/19 Marketing, Communications and PR

The Board noted the marketing, communications and PR report.

113/19.1 Website

The website attracted 5248 visitors for September and October, a 9.7% increase on the previous year and a 45% decline from the previous seasonal period (July/August). These statistics indicate an active website.

Since January 2019, the site has received 29,177 visitors and the demographics of the site reflects an older and predominantly UK customer base. MH advised that the age profile probably reflects future statistics and provides an opportunity to understand the customer profile in order to plan ahead for the next 10 years. This would indicate the importance of accessibility for these older users. TT advised that this compares with statistics for boat ownership. It was noted that the RNLI had also talked about their challenges to sailing clubs, which also confirmed the similar age profile of activity.

113/19.2 Social channels

It was noted that all the social channels are very positive.

MH advised that it feels as though we are starting to get an understanding of messages and customer activity, which is a good place to build from.

114/19 Annual Accounts 2018

MH advised that the final accounts prepared by Northcott Trumfield had been received and were ready for signature. MH asked if the Board were happy for him to sign these off.

A discussion took place and some Board Members would like to see a copy of the accounts before signing off, as these would be in the public domain. **It was agreed** that KD would circulate to the Board by email and that Board Members should respond within one week with any comments. If any comments are received they will be circulated again.

ACTION: KD to circulate accounts to the Board.

115/19 Budget Planning

MC presented the 2020 Budget recommendation, which had been agreed by the working group, followed by a briefing to some Board Members and requested that the budget be set for 2020.

During 2018 a cash reserve of £640k was defined and the Authority will be close to that at end December 2019. It is likely that the Authority will be slightly under the budgeted expenditure. In 2019 it is likely that we will end up in a position where our total income will around £110k less than expected and a budget forecast of £1.65m. MC highlighted that there was an anomaly in relation to visitor income where income was up on berthing income but down on harbour dues. This was difficult to explain but felt that there were less visitors at Premier Marina and that some visitors are paying annual harbour dues, which would show as a reduction in the visitor harbour dues income. MC anticipates that this will

be different when Premier Marina is up and running. It was noted that this means there will be income than anticipated.

It was noted that expenditure will be in the region of £142k underspent.

MC advised that he proposed to balance the budget to income/expenditure and to be more realistic when planning budgets and to include some contingency to avoid budgeting to spend more than we take and then fail to spend it. This may mean that MC would need to come back to the Board for unbudgeted expenditure.

MC advised that the Authority should be achieving a £640k cash reserve in 2020.

MC advised that the CPI inflation forecast for 2020 was between 1.7% and 3.2% giving an average of 2.2% and advised that prices should be increased by CPI rather than RPI.

115.19.1 Recommendation

MC recommended that the following increases to charges are set for 2020.

- a) 2% Increase (£16.2K inc) for:
 - i. charges (but not visitors dues and buoyage 85p is a round figure) (30K increase in income)
 - ii. Increase daily visitor rates from £0.85/m to £0.90/m (£9k increase and first increase since 2016).
 - iii. wages (£13.8K increase in overheads)
- b) 5% reduction for berth holders who release berths for more than 3 weeks in peak season when requested. £2K
- c) Capital Spending 2020

	2019 Actual	2020 Budget
Pilot Vessel	55K	30K
New Taxi	17K	50K (carried forward to 2020)
Pontoons	150K	200k
Outboard Engines	9k	0
Total	£219k	£280k

- d) Forecast Income £1.66M Proposed Budget Expenditure £1.66M (inc capital expenditure of £280K. Cash Reserve sustained from 2019
- e) Aim to achieve Cash reserve of £640-660K (660K less amounts owing~640k)

115.19.2 Discussion

It was noted that a suggested option for free taxis for the over 70s was universally voted against.

- a) Capital expenditure 2020 another £30k for the pilot vessel, £50k for a new taxi, £200k for pontoons, making a total of £280k. This will be balanced with income expected.

- b) ML felt that Dart Harbour visitors' charges are quite cheap and did not agree about an increase in prices in order to create a round figure and asked if we are sure they are at the right level.

KD advised that she had carried out a survey and Dart Harbour are in the middle of the range, but comparisons were not straightforward as facilities are different at different harbours.

JJD advised that there are two elements to visitor charges (buoyage/harbour dues) and a cheap taxi service and that there is a large difference between annual and daily harbour dues rates. JJD felt that the buoyage charges were reasonable.

MC advised that other harbours tend to lump berthing and harbour dues fees together.

ML asked why buoyage and harbour dues could not be combined.

KD advised that harbour dues income is ring fenced for certain expenditure and advised that it is necessary to charge harbour dues separately.

JJD asked whether there was a feeling that we are busy for visitors and was of the opinion that Salcombe was busier than us. MC responded that Salcombe has a very pronounced peak for around 4 weeks, but that Dart Harbour was busier over a longer period.

MC also explained that we were getting slightly less visitors, but that these visitors were staying for longer periods. He also explained that some people are in for long periods and paying visitor rates, and Dart Harbour would need to be careful about this, as using a visitors berth for the whole summer would work out cheaper than an annual mooring. In the Moorings' Policy the Authority can charge double visitor fees for period over two weeks in the peak season.

TT advised that some of the RDYC trots mooring are empty and advised that these would be perfect for visitors leaving a boat for a week. JE advised that the RDYC Mooring Officer will come and speak to MC. MC advised that they were very bouncy trot moorings and were not suitable for long periods.

- c) *JJD raised concerns over the staff wages and this discussion took place In Committee.*

MH welcomed this discussed and asked if the Board were comfortable with the fundamentals of the budget. He suggested taking the JE piece to one side and that the Authority should revisit the fundamental structure of the organisation.

It was proposed by TD, seconded by ML with all in favour to approve the budget for 2020

ACTIONS

- a) MC to implement the budget for 2020
- b) MH to review the fundamental structure of the organisation in relation to the In Committee discussion about JE.

116/19 Correspondence

Board Members to advise on any correspondence received.

116/19.1 Royal Dart Youth Sailing Trust.

A letter had been received from the Royal Dart Youth Sailing Trust applying for permission to install a versadock floatation system and the Board were asked to give consideration to this application.

MC advised that the Moorings' Policy 2010/15 is clear that applications will be considered on a case by case basis in relation to the policy to prevent proliferation on the river. The RDYST is a charity and felt that it was appropriate to approve this application as it is for charity purposes.

Following a discussion **it was proposed by JJD, seconded by ML with all in favour** to approve this versadock pontoon application as exceptional on the basis that it is charity that provides youth sailing and on the condition that the RDYST review the versadock in terms of safety.

ACTION: MC to inform the RDYST of the Board's decision.

117/19 Any Other Business

117/19.1 Environmental Issues - Dittisham Beach Clean

MH advised that a beach clean takes place on a regular basis at Dittisham and he explained that he had some video footage of what had been collected on the last occasion. The beach was covered in plastic detritus and suggested that Dart Harbour could start a clean river awareness PR campaign and that the Board should consider this on a regular basis.

A discussion took place as follows:-

TT advised that the Marine Conservation Zone should be part of the campaign and the Dart Estuary Forum could be involved.

MC advised that this will come up at Communy Group meetings who could identify waste collected and describe where it comes from. Educating local catering establishments to encourage a move away from polystyrene to cardboard and to pass information out through the Community Group and Dart Estuary Forum.

JJD queried why the environmental budget was being reduced from £50k down to £5k and MC advised that no projects had been identified. MH advised that if we identify an environmental matter that we need to do, then there is the option to adjust the budget line to cover any identified projects and advised that it makes a nonsense of budget if there is no activity to spend the budget allocated.

MC advised that lighting on pontoons, in the Office and at Hoodown is being changed to LED which will bring a substantial saving. If we wanted to spend money to look good we could have installed expensive solar panels, but this was not a cost effective solution. MC

advised that our strength is offering support for environmental projects undertaken by others, for instance supporting university projects.

MH advised that Dart Harbour's environmental activities are often hidden in other budget lines, for example scrap metal and waste recycling and that the Authority probably does not receive credit for the effort we already put in. MC advised that the waste disposal budget is going up as waste removal is more expensive and also covers the disposal of old abandoned boats.

ML asked if Dart Harbour are proactively looking for environmental projects. MC advised that the Dart Estuary Forum was established for this purpose but that no projects had been forthcoming from this route so far.

TT suggested that an article for By the Dart on what Dart Harbour are doing for the environment would be a useful exercise.

ACTION: MC to restate the environmental management activities that we already undertake.

117/19.1 Board Recruitment

MH advised that he would be making contact with the Board Selection Panel and reviewing the SHDC representative.

118/19 Move "In Committee"

It was proposed by TT and seconded by JE with all in favour, "*that the meeting move into Committee*".

119/19 Decisions Made "In Committee"

The following decisions were taken "In Committee" that are appropriate for inclusion in these minutes.

IC 057/19.1 Recruitment and Selection Policy

It was proposed by ML, seconded by TT with all in favour to adopt the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

ACTION: MC to implement this policy when recruiting for new staff.

IC 059/19 Any Other Business (Annual Meeting)

MH advised that the main elements of the presentation for the Annual Meeting, taking place on 11th December 2019 would be:-

- 2018 historic update on activity
- 2019 activities that took place during 2019
- 2020 activities planned for next year

An invitation will be sent out shortly.

ACTION: MH/PJ to agree on the invitation and circulate to the public.

**119/19 Date of next Meeting - ANNUAL MEETING 11th DECEMBER 2019 AT
7PM AT THE FLAVEL MAIN HALL, DARTMOUTH**