

Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority

Minutes of a Meeting of the Dart Harbour and Navigation Authority held by MS Teams on Monday 10 May 2021.

PRESENT: Mike Burden (MB)
Tony Davis (AD)
Julian Distin (JJD)
James Dodd - Chairman (JD)
John Ellwood (JE)
Geoff Holland (GH) – CEO/Harbour Master
Melanie Lessels (ML)
Jeremy Rawlings (JR)
John Milsom (JM)

1. Apologies for Absence

JD received apologies from Tim Dewing (TD).

2. Minutes of the last Meeting.

Amendments to the minutes of the Board meeting held on Monday 8 March 2021 noted.

2.1 JM to be added to the Members Present.

2.2 Clerk to delete Stakeholders section 12 first paragraph.

3.1 Actions from November Meeting

Item 6.10 Tom Stratton's visit to the Board is on hold until face-to-face meeting can be held – **IN PROGRESS**

Item 5 ONS Review – No update received. CEO will report after contact made from the ONS. **COMPLETE**

3.2 Actions from January Meeting.

Item 8 Hoodown purchase – GH advised it was with the solicitors for small changes to the contract. Agreed price was £15K. **IN PROGRESS**

Item 10 In-Committee documents to Google Docs – JD to follow up. **IN PROGRESS**

Item 10.2 Away-Day – SWOT responses to be submitted. **IN PROGRESS**

4. Declarations of Interest

No Board Members declared any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests for the matters included on the agenda.

5. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

6. CEO/HM Report

GH presented his new format report and the following matters were noted:-

6.1 Incidents – more structure rather than just recording them. Sorted into various categories of numbers such as injury, property, environment and business. Level 1 – insignificant through to Level 5 – most severe. Month on month view of the trends. As the weather improves level 3 near misses will increase. Trends will show if a problem in an area, risk assessment review underway. Level 5 incidents will need to be investigated with preventative measure implemented to prevent future incidents.

Other areas include: finance, fishing, yachts, events, cruise vessels/calls, HR, contracts, projects, moorings and meetings attended.

6.2 GH investigating new weather stations – enhance accuracy of wind gusts etc. live from the middle of the river to help improve the feed to our customers.

6.3 Risk assessments – top three incidents recorded. Highlights where the risks are going to be: vessel mooring with swimmers there, tenders, collision, grounding are the highest risk. Operational top five to be included.

6.4 Finance – Healthy status.

7. Policies

GH - Port Marine Safety Code has revised and implemented additional standard policies to provide structure to the SMS to make the business run smoothly. Environmental policy. Wrecks Policy. Mooring Policy – this document will be revised and an electronic document which will be suitable for office staff, and as a pdf on the website for public use.

JJD commented on the non-beneficiary stakeholder and requested assurance the local community are all stakeholders as well as the actual river users. GH agreed and advised he would revise that section to include them.

8. Board Members Guide

JD requested approval to sign off the revised guide following the outgoing Harbour Master's firming up on the scheme of delegation between the Harbour Master as a corporate entity and the Harbour Master himself. GH had also contributed comments which are now updated.

Every paper to have a sponsor so that the role e.g. Finance Committee Chairman, or Harbour Master, is the sponsor and not the individuals by name.

Discussion took place on formal review period.

Decision: Endorsed, with Chairman as the Sponsor.

Decision: Annual Review.

9. Board Recruitment 2022

Each Committee to look at the skills they need for the future, bearing in mind Board Members leaving dates and the anticipated gaps. JD advised his term concludes at the end of the year, though he is happy to stay on as Chair for a third term or there is an opportunity to recruit.

Recommendation: Each Committee undertakes a Skills audit and report back in September.

Decision: Agreed

JJD raised the issue of the HRO requirement of a set of expertise that the Board legally has to comply with, one of which is Environment. JD agreed, advising JR and the Safety Committee. JR suggested the level of expertise should be discussed at the next Safety meeting, coming up with a statement or framework, and ensure that JR does fit that requirement. If not, another representative should be sought.

JJD questioned how many terms/years each Board member had to serve. JD confirmed following debate the previous Clerk (Penny) had produced at meetings last year and this was the agreed baseline. Some Board members had been brought in on one or two year terms, deliberately staggered and he thought there was clarity.

ACTION: Clerk to locate from 2020 meetings and email Board members.

JD confirmed the end of his second terms after 5 years, discuss in Committee and advise ML accordingly of decision.

Decision: Agreed

Decision: Two recommendations approved.

10. Small Boats Pontoon

10.1 MB reported one of the Board's responsibilities is to improve the harbour as an asset for the community. Focus is on visiting yachtsmen, nothing has been done to improve the facilities for the local community. Other harbours (Torquay/ Kingsbridge) have made substantial investments in providing facilities for small day boats. Both harbours are run by the local authority and answer to the local community, not visiting yachtsmen. ROI on day boat pontoons is very high, hence substantial return.

MB requests the Harbour Master investigates whether we could put small walk-ashore berths between the DB pontoon and the North Embankment.

GH commented that the Double Steps consultation should be finished first. Requires more knowledge on how the area will be used. Limited by the existing moorings. Lease land from the Council would have to be changed and licenses to be purchased. However, existing running moorings are not fully utilized at present.

JJD advised this discussion falls within the Mooring Policy. One is the Board's responsibility, the other not. Requested clarification, which was given by JD. MB has injected an idea which requires the Harbour Master's investigation. Once his view is given, a decision will be made whether the double steps is a viable proposition or not.

JD confirmed that although he did work with JJD on the Moorings Policy last year 2020, governance overtook this resulting in the Harbour Master being responsible for this document. This document needs to be reviewed on a regular basis not fixed in place for five years. 2020 was a year about changing the way the DHNA does its business. We now have a new Harbour Master, and it is up to him to decide how to do the Moorings Policy is managed going forward.

JD advised that he personally resurrected the Dart Estuary Forum in conjunction with the AONB, which over the past five years has enhanced and improved the interaction with a host of environmental people. The Environment is at the core of the Board's strategic paper. JD agreed that JJD can share his paper with GH as all information is useful.

GH commented he didn't intend to change the principle behind the mooring policies, but will review the document to better reflect DHNA needs. GH is adamant about protecting the environment, but DHNA moorings are linked in to the Duchy of Cornwall lease. GH more than happy to take on JJD and JD's papers and incorporate anything he sees fit to do so.

Decision: Majority agreed – GH to consider the feasibility of this project once Double Steps consultation is complete.

10.2 JE asked MB to update on the slipway project by the Higher Ferry. MB advised he is Secretary of the Committee, not a Trustee. The Trust are moving towards planning permission. Coming up with a feasible design - clearance at the bottom of the slipway and with the "DB" pontoon was an issue. No funding for the project as yet. Cost estimated approx.. £2m.

JD advised maintenance costs had been discussed however as there is no income, this would be a liability and should not be considered by DHNA.

11.0 Committee Reports

Finance Committee - AD advised the inaugural meeting had been held on 21 April. JD asked if the integration on Remuneration had been resolved with the HR Committee. AD advised the way forward.

HR Committee - ML presented minutes. There were no questions. Move to 'In-Committee' where necessary due to potential sensitive topics.

ACTION: Clerk to move this section to In-Committee.

Safety Committee – GH advised DP review delayed to allow new Harbour Master to embed. End of the year for Andy's formal audit report. JD and JJD requested informal update before then.

ACTION: GH to contact DP.

12.0 Stakeholders

JD requested that in future Stakeholder meetings are reported within the Committee, and not as a separate Board Agenda item.

JJD and GH attended a Dart Estuary Forum where management guidance from English Nature relating to the MCZ wasn't forthcoming. However, possibility of extra guidance may be available. JD attended a virtual brief from the South West MMO who agreed no guidance, really a planning matter.

8. Move Into Committee

ML and JE voted to move the discussion into Committee.

9. Decisions

The following "In Committee" items were approved for publication in the main minutes.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 12 July 2021 at 1830 hours in the Clifton Room, Dartmouth Guildhall subject to COVID restrictions.

HR Committee : Thursday 12 August 2021

Finance Committee : Wednesday 01 September 2021

Safety Committee : TBA