

***Minutes of the meeting of the Commissioners held on Monday 16th March 2020 at 2.00pm
in the Lymington Town Sailing Club, Bath Road, Lymington.***

Present: Richard Jenner (Chairman) (RJ), Alison Towler (AT), Jane Challener (JC), Tim Harford (TH), Bob Mitchell (BM), Chris Lisher (CL), Bill Peach (BP), Andrew Richards (AR), Paul Martin (PM)

Officers present: Ryan Willegers (RW) (Harbour Master & Chief Executive), Sarah Maynard (SM) (Administrator)

In Attendance: Rupert Wagstaff (RWag) (LHAG)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 None

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 RJ declared that he was now on the General Committee for the Royal Lymington Yacht Club.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

3.1 The minutes of the meeting of the 20th January 2020 were approved.

4. MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Annual Open Meeting (Agenda 9.2) – RW reported that the additional publicity of the annual open meeting had taken place albeit it was his recommendation that this meeting be postponed in the light of the latest Government advice on the COVID-19 epidemic. This was agreed.

5. COMMISSIONERS

5.1 Appointment of Chairman – RJ confirmed his intention to stand down as Chairman when his term of office expires on the 31st May 2020 as he was planning to be away for his last meeting as a Commissioner in September. At the previous meeting TH provided notification of his intention to stand for the position of Chairman subject to the support of the Commissioners. It was proposed to appoint TH as Chairman with effect from the 1st June 2020 for a term of three years.

Proposed: AR Seconded: CL Vote: All In favour

5.2 Appointment of Vice Chairman – RJ indicated that TH current term of office as Vice Chairman will expire on the 31st May 2020. At the previous meeting AT provided notification of her intention to stand for the position of Vice Chairman subject to the support of the Commissioners. It was proposed to appoint AT as Vice Chairman with effect from the 1st June 2020 for a term of three years.

Proposed: TH Seconded: PM Vote: All In favour

5.3 Re-appointment of Jane Challener – RJ indicated that JC first full term of office as a Harbour Commissioner comes to an end on the 31st May 2020. In line with the LHC constitution and Ports Good Governance Guidance, JC is eligible for reappointment for a second three year term and has indicated that she would like to serve a further term subject to the support of the Commissioners. It was proposed to appoint JC for a second three year term with effect from the 1st June 2020 for a term of three years.

Proposed: BM Seconded: AT Vote: All In favour

5.4 Commissioners Advertisement – RW confirmed an advertisement for two Commissioners has been placed in the Lymington Times editions of the 14th and 21st March respectively. The vacancy has also been highlighted on the LHC website and on posters placed at the RLYMYC and LTSC. Details will also appear in the next newsletter. The two advertised posts will replace RJ (from 1st November) and PM (from 1st June).

6. LYMINGTON HARBOUR ADVISORY GROUP (LHAG)

6.1 LHAG Meeting – RWag indicated that he had nothing to bring up that was not already the subject of other agenda items.

7. OFFICERS REPORTS

7.1 Harbour Masters Report - Questions were invited on the items within the report that were not listed for consideration as an agenda item. No questions arose.

7.2 Operations Manager Report – RW commented on the anticipated (in the budget) adverse effect of the Town Quay closure for redevelopment on winter visitor and long term visitor (LTV) mooring income. Questions were invited on the Operations Manager report. No questions arose.

7.3 Treasurer Report – RW commented on the visitor and LTV mooring income. Although winter visitor income was adversely impacted due to the restricted berth availability due to the redevelopment of the Town Quay area, overall YTD visitor income was ahead of budget and 1.1% above 2018/19. Winter LTV income was also down for the same reason albeit YTD income was in line with budget and 4.6% ahead of 2019/20. Questions were invited on the Treasurer report.

BM reported that the Treasurer had provided an update on the invoiced income for the 2020/21 resident mooring fees and all bar £4.4k had been received. The outstanding fees primarily related to a small number of boats moored on above bridge moorings. RW reported that the Treasurer will follow standard procedures for recovery of the outstanding fees or the owners will be invited to move their boats on the expiry of their existing mooring licences on the 31st March 2020. AT asked if there was a risk of these boats being abandoned by their owners. RW indicated that this has not previously been an issue.

RJ noted the projected year end net surplus before tax was £564.3k compared with a budget of £524.9k and prior year £632k.

8. SAFETY & PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE (PMSC)

8.1 LHC Safety Meeting – RW commented on the minutes of the four monthly safety review meeting which was held on the 31st January 2020 and discussed the accompanying incident review report for 2019. Questions were invited.

TH asked how LHC incident numbers compared with other harbours. RW indicated that it was difficult to benchmark incident statistics, partly because all harbours are different and because LHC record incidents at a lower level than most to try and identify concerning trends early. By way of example, RW explained that many harbours will record collisions and near misses, whereas LHC also record instances of inappropriate navigation which would not be regarded as a near miss but does allow concerning trends to be nipped in the bud before they escalate.

RJ asked CL about how this compared with his time at Yarmouth. CJ commented that up to when he left 5 years ago, that the types of incidents were similar but the numbers were a lot higher. CL indicated that there was a lot of emphasis placed on encouraging reporting of incidents, particularly from employees so this may have had an effect on numbers. CL also indicated that because of the more constrained nature of the harbour there were more knocks and bumps.

RW indicated that LHC also place a lot of emphasis on reporting of incidents and he was confident that if LHC staff see, become aware of, or are involved with an incident, it is reported. LHC also work hard to encourage third party reporting, but RW indicated that it would be naive to think that all incidents are being reported.

AT noted the incidents related to tampering with vessels and theft and asked about instances of vandalism by youths in and around the harbour and the wider town area and asked if it had all died down now. RW indicated the only incidents in the harbour that he was aware of last year, were the two incidents of theft and three incidents of tampering that were the subject of formal report. Only one of these can be attributed to youth misbehaviour and this was reported to the police.

Notwithstanding the above, RW indicated that officers were very aware of the issues faced around the Town and on occasions, the presence of groups of youths on the public quayside and the potential adverse effects this might have on boat tourism. However, LHC officers will only get involved with these if they believe a crime or public nuisance has been or is being committed in which case it will be reported to the Police. RW indicated that in line with the rest of the country, it was his observation that the enforcement of law and order had suffered over a number of years with the cuts to policing.

BP indicated that in his experience when volunteering for the Coastguard the number of police attending 'events' had improved over 12 months ago.

JC noted the outcome of the trial of a rope safety ladder to boost coverage on areas of pontoons where a fixed safety ladder was not an option. JC asked if a possible alternative could be a rope loop fixed to the end of pontoon fingers for persons to hold on to while they call for help. RW observed that the rope ladder would facilitate both an option to egress the water for persons who are strong or fit enough and something to hold on to call for help for those who cannot get out. The rope ladder was also contained in a protective bag that stopped deterioration through UV light. BP thought a rope hoop might be snagged by boat that misjudge their navigation.

- 8.2 2020 PMSC Audit – RW reported Monty Smedley (Independent Designated Person) will undertake a formal audit of LHC's Safety Management System on the 29th April in order to verify and report to the Board on LHC's compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code.

9. TOWN QUAY PROJECT

- 9.1 NFDC Public Consultation on New Washrooms/Quay Improvements & Scheme Costs – RW reported on the outcome of NFDC's further consultation exercise to establish design preferences for the new building. There were 220 respondents with 81% favouring a flat roof over a pitched roof. 81% were also in favour of investigating the inhabited roof option.

RW also reported that following updated budget estimates for the base building cost from NFDC (excludes the kiosk and inhabited roof which are NFDC/L&PTC initiatives), the Commissioners have agreed to increase their contribution subject to conditions related to the provision of long-term security of tenure and ensuring prudent financial management. At the time of writing, the final scope and budget for the project remained the subject of further work and negotiation with NFDC.

- 9.2 Pontoon & Moorings Project – RW invited questions on his report which provided an update on the status of the project and supporting promotion activities.

CL asked if, given the problems with seagull mess on the pontoons, LHC should erect 'no feeding' signage. It was agreed to progress. **Action: RW**

In the light of the latest Government guidance on the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commissioners supported RW's recommendation that the opening ceremony be cancelled.

10. AOB

- 10.1 There was no other business.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 11.1 The next meeting will be on Monday 18th May at 14.00 hours. AR & TH gave their apologies.