

## Minutes of the meeting of Commissioners held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 at 2.00pm

### Note: Virtual Meeting due to COVID-19

**Present:** Tim Harford (Chairman) (TH), Alison Towler (AT), Jane Challener (JC), Bob Mitchell (BM), Chris Lisher (CL), Bill Peach (BP), Andrew Richards (AR), John Morrow (JM), Mike Bowles (MB)

**Officers present:** Ryan Willegers (RW) (Harbour Master & Chief Executive), Frances Moores (FM) (Treasurer)

**In Attendance:** Rupert Wagstaff (RWag) (LHAG)

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies received.

#### 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 There were no declarations of interests.

#### 3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020)

3.1 The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER (NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE)

4.1 Agenda Item 5.3 (Reappointment of Commissioner) - In line with the resolution of the September meeting AT has been appointed for a second term.

4.2 Agenda Item 9.1 (Marketing & Communications) – The action point for the Business Development Group to consider where to focus LHC's communications effort for 2021 will be progressed at the next meeting of the Business Development Group. **Action: BDG**

#### 5. COMMISSIONERS

5.1 Bill Peach Retirement – RW reported that BP will retire as a Commissioner on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and this would be BP's last meeting. TH and RW thanked BP for his voluntary work on behalf of the Commission and harbour users over the last 6 year. TH and RW hope to present BP with a customary gift when lockdown restrictions permit.

5.2 Recruitment – RW reported that today was the closing date for applications for the post of Commissioner that will become vacant when BP retires.

The recruitment process sought applications from people with a current background in the wider commercial marine or leisure industry. RW reported that 11 applications had been received. Of these, seven are actively employed in the marine industry. The remaining four applicants are retired, or recently retired, one with marine industry experience. Applications will now be considered for shortlist and interview. **Action: TH/AT/RW**

#### 6. LYMINGTON HARBOUR ADVISORY GROUP

6.1 Meeting – RWag indicated that LHAG met on the 22<sup>nd</sup> September (online), having cancelled their March meeting due to Covid-19. Unfortunately, only 5 members were able to participate, in part due to a RNLI

call out. The meeting focused on RW's report updating LHAG on the principle areas of business of the Commissioners since LHAG's last meeting. Once approved the LHAG meeting minute will be published on the LHC website. **Action: LHAG to approve minute**

## 7. OFFICERS REPORT

- 7.1 Operations Manager – RW referred to the Operations manager's report and commented on visitor numbers which were up 38% in September, aided by some good weather and management of the available berths. October saw a 34.9% fall in visitor numbers due to a change in weather and closure of the Dan Bran and Harbour Master pontoons in the second part of the month to facilitate dredging. YTD visitor numbers were down by 44.3%, largely due to the effect of the lockdown from the 23<sup>rd</sup> March to the 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

Long term visitor (LTV) numbers were up by 13.3% in September as a result of the decision to utilise fore and aft buoys and two thirds of the walk ashore berths at Town Quay for LTV's between March and September. October was 59% up as a result of many of the LTV's asking to extend their mooring licences for part of October until they were needed to facilitate dredging relocations.

BP asked if the delay to the commissioning of the Berthon barge following refit would adversely affect the dredging programmed and the reinstatement of the moorings. RW advised it was now likely that there would be a delay. Subject to weather, the original timeline for completion of the Dan Bran/Harbour Master pontoon area was the end of December. This was now likely to be by circa 13<sup>th</sup> January.

- 7.2 Treasurers Report – The Treasurer talked the Commissioners through the casual income report and invited questions.

RW noted that visitor revenues continued to outperform volumes due to the increase in pricing for the new Town Quay walk ashore berths, and the affect of moving to per m pricing, both of which had a positive effect on yield. As noted in the Treasurers report, LTV revenues outperformed volume growth due to the improved yield arising from the walk ashore berths and the 15% increase in prices over last year as it was concluded they were under-priced.

TH noted the increasing importance of yield as a monitor of berth management given the reduction in visitor berth numbers as a result of the Town Quay scheme. Following discussion, it was agreed to merge the visitor/LTV volume reporting into the Treasurer's revenue report so that visibility of the movement in yield can be improved. **Action: FM**

CL indicated that while yield was important, a bigger factor was where LHC were priced in the market for the level of facilities provided. LHC needed to ensure it was competitive in the 'value for money' assessment, otherwise it would lose business.

RWag asked about how the booking system had worked over the summer. RW reported that given there was no opportunity to build up familiarity and iron out any IT issues prior to the busy season as intended, the system had performed well. There were some staff resourcing issues related to the level of boating activity in July and August and the transfer of the majority of sales processing from outside staff to office staff as part of the booking process. However, this did go some way to reducing the need for close contact on the water thereby helping to mitigate the Covid-19 risk. Now that LHC have some experience with the system, for 2021 it was intended to switch on the online booking module from February. It is hoped that this will have a beneficial effect in reducing administration.

## 8. SAFETY & PMSC

- 8.1 Safety Review – RW reported that, due to Covid-19, the September safety review for the four-month period May to August was submitted electronically for consideration by the Safety Committee on the 18<sup>th</sup> September prior to officer members meeting to discuss on the 24<sup>th</sup> September. The report was amended to reflect feedback and meeting discussion.

JM asked if lost time injuries were reported. RW indicated that in the event of any injury to staff, or a non staff injury reported as a result of a third party incident within harbour limits, these were recorded in safety meeting reports and minutes. For 2020 (to date) there were no lost time injuries. RW indicated that he can incorporate an extra table for lost time injuries to improve visibility. **Action: RW**

JM noted the comments of officers under agenda item 8.3 concerning LTSC dinghy sailors not respecting the rules when on the slipway and believing they had priority over vehicle launches. JM asked if there was a way of following up concerns with the clubs. RW reported that there was. Sometimes this was done through informal meetings with relevant Club officers to agree additional messaging through club communications. In this case, RW had met the LTSC Commodore and Vice Commodore where it was agreed that the Club would remind users of the rules through their newsletter. Where a more formal approach is required, RW will write to the Clubs. Whether formal or informal, matters that relate to the Clubs are also raised at the River Users Safety Meeting where LTSC, RLYM, Lymington Amateur Rowing Club, LHAG and Wightlink meet annually. Discussion and arising actions are minuted and the subject of follow up.

AR noted that in this instance there was also an action point for LHC to improve the messaging on slipway signage.

- 8.2 Management Training – MB will participate in a PMSC Duty Holder webinar organised by the British Ports Association on the 30<sup>th</sup> November. In September, RW and Colin Freeman (Operations Manager) completed a refresher course to renew their Oil Spill Level 4p responder certification. This meets a training requirement under LHC's Oil Spill Response Plan.
- 8.3 Oil Spill Response Exercise – RW reported that a Tier 2 Desk Top exercise incorporating a boom deployment took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 with the LHC/Wightlink professional Tier Two contractor (Adler and Allen) coordinating the exercise and providing scenario updates. This year it was a Wightlink led exercise with a spill scenario involving their operation. Relevant agencies and key operational stakeholders participated. RW indicated that having some participants in the incident room with others attending online, due to Covid, posed some communications challenges. However, overall the exercise successfully tested the response plan.

## 9. AOB

- 9.1 TH asked if LHC needed to implement any special measures as a result of Brexit. RW indicated that this was a fast developing situation with regular updates coming through the British Ports Association. RW indicated that the focus had primarily been on commercial ports which carried freight and passengers and that he had not yet seen specific actions for leisure harbours accepting visiting yachts from abroad. RW envisaged LHC actions would be limited to displaying Customs information and contacts. RWag confirmed he had not yet seen anything but also expected actions for dealing with visiting boats from abroad to be limited to the provision of Customs information.

## 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING & 2021 MEETING DATES

- 10.1 RW proposed potential meeting dates for 2021, taking into account that one of the applicants for the post of Commissioner that will become vacant when BP retires is currently unable to make Monday or Tuesday afternoon meetings due to teaching activities. Without pre-empting the selection process,

given there is no particular reason for holding meetings on a Monday, RW asked if Commissioners were able to consider an alternative meeting day.

Following discussion, the consensus was that Mondays continued to be the best date compatible with Commissioners availability. The following dates were agreed for 2021.

Mondays            18/01, 15/03, 10/05, 12/07, 20/09, 22/11