

LYMINGTON HARBOUR ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5th FEBRUARY 2019

At 1700 hrs at the St Barbe's Museum, New Street, Lymington.

PRESENT:

Andrew Wilkes (Business Interests) Chairman
Peter Ferguson (NFDC Coast Protection)
Peter Upcher (Recreational Users)
Steve Avery (NFNPA)
Nigel Seth-Smith (Lymington Society)
Cllr Barry Dunning (Lymington & Pennington Town Council)
John Clarke (Lymington, Keyhaven and District Wildfowlers Association)
Bob Chapman (Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ryan Willegers (Chief Executive and Harbour Master)

1. Apologies for absence

Rupert Wagstaff (Marinas), Vice Chairman
Don Mackenzie (Lymington Society)
Derek Graham (Wightlink)
David Illsey (NFNPA)

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2018 were approved by email prior to the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

a. Town Quay Development Plan

Following a competitive tender process, a contract has been awarded to Walcon Marine to extract and dispose of the existing piling and pontoon infrastructure and to install the new pontoons and piles. Works will commence on the 4th November 2019. A separate contract will be awarded to Sureline Limited for the provision of electrical, lighting and water services. LHC are in the process of finalising the specification. LHC will also need to arrange for Scottish & Southern Electricity to provide an electrical supply to the bridge head. This will require agreements with NFDC as landlord.

b. Town Quay Washrooms

NFDC have commissioned an architect to produce outline concepts on where a relocated washroom might work while preserving parking and allowing more flexibility for event space. However, the Deputy Chief Executive felt that before the project could move forward, greater clarity was needed on L&PTC's ambitions as he had received differing views. Clarification was also required that L&PTC would pick up any extra costs (if applicable) associated with their ambition to relocate the washrooms.

Following discussions between NFDC and L&PTC during w/c 21st January, the Deputy Chief Executive indicated his intention to set up a Project Board which will provide directional oversight and a Project Team which will be responsible for timely delivery and he has circulated his proposed make up for both. LHC will be represented on both. It is proposed the Board will meet every two months with the project delivery team meeting once a month. The first meeting is to be held on Friday 8th February.

BD noted that although L&PTC would like to see the facilities re-located, this was likely to be prohibitively expensive. L&PTC had allocated some funds for landscaping the area but not for re-developing the facilities.

RW reiterated that the town quay development would be complete by Spring 2020 and the new facilities would be needed by March 2020.

c. Radar Speed Signage

Subject to still being able to secure a trial sign at no cost (other than shipment), LHC are aiming to conduct the trial by May 2019 when the river is busier.

d. Seawall Adjacent to RLymYC

RW said that works were currently taking place (over three days) to drill test boreholes to help with the design for the remedial works. Mackley are appointed to do these works.

PF (NFDC Coast Protection) gave an update on the current situation as follows:

- 20m deep bore holes were being drilled in the river bed to assess options for the design criteria for replacing or repairing seawall.
- The project will be led by the Environment Agency (EA) and some of the funding could come from a "Flood Defense Grant in Aid" grant.
- The EA will be seeking contributions from NFDC and RLymYC. Works cannot commence until this has been agreed.
- The remedial repair works (to the sea wall) are being considered alongside the Strategic Outline Case (business case) for the long term options assessment of coast protection and flood defence for the Hurst to Lymington frontage. The timescales of this are in the region of 7 to 8 years, which means any repairs have to be considered alongside the long term options.

BD asked if the seats in the area could be re-instated. PF said that a risk assessment had been carried out which would, unfortunately, preclude the re-instatement of the seats until the wall had been repaired. Lidar radar measurements indicated the wall was currently moving a few mm per month.

AW thanked PF for the update on the sea wall and asked if any LHAG members could help NFDC expedite the approval process for the repairs. This was noted by PF who said NFDC would ask for help if any need was identified.

N S-S asked if there were any plans to redevelop the slipway. RW replied that the existing slipway was expected to be serviceable until at least 2026. However, RW noted that there was a shared desire with the clubs to improve the slipway facility possibly to include widening to segregate vehicles from hand launches subject to finances becoming available. The RNLI had also expressed a desire to have improved low water access at the toe of the slipway. RW noted that the RNLI's launching vehicle/boat was now substantially larger and heavier than when the slipway was constructed. LHC would be consulting on potential options for the slipway as part of the process to update the strategic plan. RW noted that the cost of replacing the slipway will be substantial and that LHC anticipated having a discussion with both clubs and the RNLI on potential contributions to funding..

e. Provision of Dinghy Moorings

Following a request from JC, RW reported: 'that the mooring Committee had looked at whether there were practical options to create some non-tender dinghy mooring spaces on the river that were accessible from the shore. The Committee came to the following conclusions/recommendations which were accepted by the Commissioners: –

- The shortage of tender mooring spaces (there was a waiting list) meant that it was not appropriate to give up tender spaces for non-tender dinghy moorings.
- The lack of available space for shore accessible moorings meant that there were limited options available without compromising existing mooring provision.
- As an immediate option, the Committee recommend that LHC create two trial tender dinghy moorings in the existing tender mooring area (intertidal) by the railings at Undershore Road to see if there was take-up. A proposed fee of £60.00 per annum would apply.' JC noted that the lack of car parking in this area made these moorings were unlikely to be attractive for most people.
- 'An option to extend the Fortuna dinghy pontoon further south was feasible albeit there was an argument that this option would be better employed to reduce the waiting list for tender moorings. A business case demonstrated a ten-year payback was possible based on the provision of 10 non-tender dinghy berths and 5 tender berths. However, the Commissioners agreed with the mooring committee recommendation that any decision should be taken in the context of a longer-term strategy and given consideration as part of the next Strategic Plan. This should include a review of the whole Fortuna mooring area to consider whether LHC were maximising the potential for all moorings in this area. It was also agreed to consider whether dry stacking might form part of a wider dinghy storage solution. There was also a requirement to look at this holistically with the Clubs as both had a shortage of dinghy storage options.

In the discussion which followed, the following were considered:

- possibility of losing yacht moorings to facilitate dinghy moorings
- either LHC or a club/organisation could provide dinghies for hire. This could enable a greater use for fewer moorings.
- currently, dinghy moorings on the inside of the Dan Bran pontoon was not possible because the pontoon bridge was very low at low water and there is not enough navigable water next to the slipway.
- RT noted that easily accessible tender moorings for fishermen were very important, particularly as fishermen used their tenders most days. The current fishermen's dinghy moorings are very cramped. RW said that the new Town Quay arrangements would provide more space than the current pontoon for dinghy moorings and that fishermen would receive priority for the ones north of the bridge section because of the proximity to their new moorings. RW also noted that some fishermen choose to stay on the more congested Ship Pontoon because there is currently no charge in this location.

f. Launching fees for canoes and paddle boards

N S-S noted that launching fees were being introduced for small craft (canoes and paddle boards). He did not think it appropriate for users of small craft to be discouraged because of launching costs or harbour dues.

RW replied that the question had recently been considered by LHC. They had noted that all other harbour users paid harbour dues and the safeguarding of small craft was not without cost to LHC. LHC did not want to discourage small craft users but the principle of paying for harbour use should be fair to all.. Low charges had therefore been set for 2019 which are: £3 per day OR £15 per year OR £9 for the winter season. The consensus was that these fees were fair and reasonable.

BC noted that charging river users required some form of contact between LHC and the users. This could be useful should the need ever arise to speak to people about safety, environmental or behav-

ior issues.

JC commented that, in another harbour, paddle-boards could be hired and people were encouraged to 'forage' using paddle boards. He hoped this would never happen in Lymington!

g. Burrard Neale gas lamp

N S-S noted that the Burrard Neale gas lamp near the damaged sea wall was missing. He wondered when it would be repaired and if an alternative location should be considered. Perhaps near St Thomas church where it had once been. PF said that NFDC were working on the lamp – this should be completed soon and the lamp will be re-installed near the sea wall/ yacht club.

4. Harbour Developments

a. 2019 Harbour Guide & 2019 Annual Report

The 2019 Annual Report and 2019 Harbour Guides were distributed at the meeting. They are also available from the LHC web site. AW commended LHC on the quality of the Annual Report and the information it contained.

b. Navigation in Restricted Visibility

RW reported as follows:

“Following the incidents in the latter part of 2018 involving Red Funnel ferries when operating in poor visibility in Cowes harbour, it was concluded that it would be sensible to review W Class operations (in collaboration with Wightlink) in restricted visibility as well as the guidance that LHC promulgates.

Although the Marine Accident and Investigation Branch (MAIB) were still investigating the Red Funnel incidents, the Cowes Harbour Master had completed his investigations and had made his report available (in confidence) to brief the key recommendations arising.

Arising from the review, Wightlink had implemented some changes to their operational guidance to Masters. The review also considered the placement and spacing of Aids to Navigation (AtoN) in the river and concluded that it would be beneficial to introduce an additional lit starboard mark in Horn Reach. Consideration was also being given to lighting one/more of the yellow buoys marking the small boat channel in Horn Reach and whether to vary the lighting characteristics of AtoN at points where there is a change in the direction of the channel. Once finalised, LHC will consult Trinity House Lighthouse Service (THLS) on the proposed changes. Subject to THLS consent, LHC will implement in 2019.

A Local Notice to Mariners was issued on the 17th December providing guidance on vessel movements in restricted visibility, including leisure craft. A copy of the Local Notice to Mariners can be viewed using this link. Local Notice to Mariners No. 5 (2018)”

AW reported that, at the last LHC meeting, he had suggested that LHC consider the light characteristics of the navigation marks in the harbour. They are all the same characteristic and, whilst this is perfectly satisfactory for larger vessels and experienced seafarers, it can be confusing for inexperienced yachtsmen on small boats entering a strange harbour. LHC will consider making the light characteristics on key channel marks, the turning points, different. PU said he would consult with the RYA on this subject.

c. W Class Engine Failure

RW reported: "On the 14th December Wight Sky experienced a catastrophic engine failure on the approach to the berth at Lymington. This was the third catastrophic failure in approximately 15 months.

Immediately following the emergency phase of the operation Wightlink suspended all operations by W Class vessels until they had undertaken additional research and consulted with the MCA, MAIB, Lloyds's Classification Society and engine manufacturer's representatives. Following that process and with the support of the above organisations and the approval of the MCA, a range of risk mitigation actions have been incorporated into an Interim Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) which allowed the vessels to recommence service on the 17th December 2018 pending conclusion of the full investigations.

The Interim SOP introduces a range of measures to reduce loads (stresses) on the engines and to enhance the engine monitoring regime. These included changes to the operating configurations of engines and the imposition of a reduced wind speed limit of MWS 20 knots Gusting 25 knots when operating with only three serviceable engines available. When all four engines are serviceable the wind speed limits remain at MWS 40 knots Gusting 47 Knots. Since the 11th January all W Class have had 4 serviceable engines.

LHC will continue to work with Wightlink to ensure any practical implications of the interim SOP are monitored and mitigated where required."

d. 'Fly Through' Navigation video

LHC have produced a fly through navigation video to assist new mariners and visitors to Lymington. The video is available on the LHC web site. AW and PU had seen the video – they both thought it was very useful but noted it did not have a verbal commentary.

e. Lymington Seafood Festival

Following the success of LHC's participation in 2018, the Commissioners will again be a sponsor of the festival in 2019. As part of the sponsorship arrangements, they will have a stand on site both days which will be shared with the RSPB.

5. Review of current Strategic Plan

PU and AW had reviewed the current strategic plan and congratulated LHC on completing, or in the process of completing, the strategic objectives set out in the plan.

6. Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

During 2019, LHC will consult stakeholders on a new plan to guide the direction of the harbour for the next five years and beyond. LHC have asked for feedback from LHAG members on areas/priorities that they would like to see considered as part of the planning for the next 5 years and beyond.

The new plan will not contain details of specific development projects but will set out strategic objectives. One of those objectives will be to produce and consult on a harbour development plan.

Feedback received to date and discussed at the meeting was:

- a. RNLI – problems with launching on a busy day with the amount of trailers left on the slip yellow hatched area. A few times they had to move trailers so they could launch. Apart from that they are happy with the support from the harbour staff and would like to pass on their thanks for the support from LHC. RNLI would like to see improvements to the slipway to facilitate improved access at low water tide conditions.
- b. Marinas – the main focus of LHC now should be harbour protection, they will have developed the river as much as is reasonably appropriate. The Increased revenues from the new Town

Quay along with the ever more commercial activities being undertaken should mean that the harbour protection can be financed and continued at a reasonable pace even with the revised predictions of slower marsh loss, which could easily change at the next survey.

- c. Fishermen – RT said he would like to see dedicated parking spaces for working Fishermen in the Town Quay area but recognised this was not in the gift of LHC. He asked LHC to consider the following:
 - Small crane on the quay for fishermen to lift their catches ashore
 - A better water supply for fishermen
 - A better electric supply for fishermen
 - The fisherman’s quay surface is subsiding and maintenance is required.
- d. LHAG’s role – JC noted many members of the public did not know anything about the LHAG or the role it played in managing the harbour. Several members agreed with this point and it was agreed to discuss it more depth at a later date when more time was available.

RW noted that the beneficial use of dredging’s over the last five years had been a great success. LHC’s current licence allows up to 10,000 tonnes of dredged material per annum to be placed in Boiler Marsh until 2024. RW felt that based on the current good retention rate, the bay will be filled up before then. It would be useful to explore other opportunities/locations where beneficial use could give practical benefits to retention of saltmarsh. For example, if marsh is being eroded and a new creek is being formed, the prompt deployment of ‘beneficial dredging material’ (ie mud!) to ‘plug’ the new creek could stop or delay the erosion. LHC are members of the BUDS (Beneficial Use of Dredging in the Solent) project which has just been awarded funding to do a feasibility study for a larger scheme in the western solent with Lymington being included in the area under consideration. It is hoped that new cost effective schemes can be identified to allow more of Lymington’s mud to be used beneficially as well as mud from other local harbours.

The Lymington Town Sailing Club and the Royal Lymington YC are considering what improvements they would like to see in the new strategic plan concerning the slipway and extra space for dinghies. RW had already had a preliminary meeting with RLymYC.

7. LHAG Chairman

AW said that he would be away for much of late 2019/early 2020 and would be unable to perform the role of Chairman to the group. It was felt that someone who had LHC/LHAG experience should take on this role, either on a temporary or permanent basis. A decision on who should chair the group was postponed.

8. Meeting dates for 2019

A LHAG meeting will be held to discuss LHCs draft 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan. This will be in mid April or May – date to be agreed. A meeting is also scheduled for Tuesday 24th September 2019.

9. Any Other Business

RT noted a number of maintenance issues at the fisherman’s quay which RW said LHC would investigate:

- Leaky water tap (not installed by LHC but would look at)
- Signage to warn the public to stay clear when fishermen are working on the quay or coming alongside
- Quay ladder should be inspected and consideration given to replacing it. A bar set into the quay surface would help when climbing up the ladder at low water.
- Uneven ground on the quay makes it difficult to clean effectively as puddles form in lower

areas.

RW noted that over the last 10 years LHC had re-leveled the block surface on the quay where it had subsided on several occasions.

RW indicated that LHC had obtained an engineering survey for the fishermens quay in 2017 and this had identified the need for some remedial works to the timber facing pieces. It was intended to co-ordinate this with the wider Town Quay project and that might be the time to replace the ladder subject to an initial inspection confirming the existing ladder remained safe. .

JC noted that modern health and safety recommendations might require fish to be safe-guarded from contamination.