

MINUTES OF FULL MEETING OF WELLS HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS (WHC)

HARBOUR OFFICE

28th March 2023 AT 6:30PM

PRESENT: Mel Catton (MC) – Chair, Nick Groom (NG), Sally Wynne (SW), Ashley Mullenger (AM), Karen Jones (KJ), Liam Pink (LP)

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS: Robert Smith (RS) Harbour Master, Simon Cooper (SAC) Harbour Administrator

1. CHAIRMAN WELCOME

MC thanked all for attending. Mel advised the WHC that with Liam in attendance, we are able to request Liam to complete and sign the Wells Harbour Commissioners Oath and Declaration which was duly done and witnessed by the Commissioners.

2. APOLOGIES

Josh Danziger (JD), Bob Ellis (BE), Denys Hickey (DH), Andy McCallum (AMc)

3. FINANCIALS

SAC welcomed Mark Hewitson (MH) from Larking Gowen LLP who was attending to walk those present through the 2022 annual accounts.

MH informed the Committee that an in depth review was completed by SAC and so for brevity would walk through the items of interest/ note and to invite questions as we go. MH asked the WHC to review the first page listing the Commissioners and advised that we can add the new Commissioners sworn in 2023 and as such SAC would provide the details for their inclusion after the meeting. The key points noted were;

- Overall, the main changes was the loss of the SCIRA contract and the consequential knock on to revenue streams which were seen in the past and partly offset by the termination penalty agreed with SCIRA.
- MH then went on to describe the reserves, which largely were similar to previous years albeit there is no provision for corporation tax as none would be due and actually WHC are due a refund which can be seen on page 10 of the accounts.
- MH also advised the Commissioners that there was an increase in taxation provisions which is directly linked to the calculation that has to be made under accounting rules that we allow for the cost of realisation of the assets in the balance sheet as well as taxation on profits made as can be seen on page 7.

Given there were no further questions/ comments MC requested from the WHC to approve the Annual Accounts 2022. All those present confirmed. SAC will then arrange for BE and MC to sign the accounts as presented. SAC thanked MH for his time and explaining the accounts. CG then dropped off the call

4. APPROVE MINUTES

The Commissioners confirmed that they were happy for MC to sign the minutes from the last meeting.

5. HARBOUR EXECUTIVE UPDATE

RS asked the WHC to refer to the paper tabled 'Harbour Executive Report' and turning to the first item;

1.
 - a. Tide Gauge Project – The windows have been installed so the focus is now on decoration/sound installation. NG queried if we ought to check formally how many people can be in there at any one time. RS agreed that we could organise a structural engineer to do that and that a Fire risk assessment would also need to be performed. KJ added that we are also in talks with the production company that did the sounds of the staithe which they have agreed we can use initially whilst we work on a revised, specific version for the hut.
 - b. Comms workstream – Heritage Harbour Town signs have been ordered so hopefully ready to install in the coming weeks.
 - c. Sunrise/sunset seat – The quote from a builder to look to rebuild/strengthen the concrete pad/east quay public slipway which would be used as the base for the seat and also to shore up the slipway which is being undermined by tide/current/ wear has come out very high so RS advised that we will not be pursuing that route and perhaps look to do something ourselves.
 - d. Heritage Trial –We have paid the deposit for the app, so it is now with us to build the content which will come from the exhibition/ launch party which is under construction/ debate.
 - e. Launch party – will be held in the Maltings on the 25th May and the Commissioners will be asked to think about invitations. The exhibition will follow in July which will be mor in depth and be on for 2 weeks (w/c11th July) in the same location.
2. Outer Harbour pontoons – RS informed the WHC that the remaining 4 finger pontoons are now installed – take up has been good and we have held a couple back just whilst we get used to the space and understand how much commercial berthing we will see as there has been some interest in this regard also.
3. Favor Parker Land – no progress has started yet.
4. Albatros – Bob Richardson emailed to advise that there will be a delay as the compressor to start the engine failed and a replaced needed to be sourced and fitted. Now looking like April before it returns. Agreement/ payment also remains outstanding.
5. Seaweed Farm – AM advised that there was notice about 2 seaweed farms – one at Blakeney and then another near the windfarms. RS confirmed that Willie Athill was looking to have a seaweed farm off Blakeney but another company called Sustainable Seaweed were the larger operator looking to farm near the windfarms and they had also submitted an application to the MMO.
6. Car Park Concession – after a review of the expression of interest, the preferred operator is a bubble team hut. There were a number of other applicants who wanted to sell drinks, fruit kebabs and the Brancaster Mussel pod however the bubble tea submission was well laid out and that it was something completely different for the town. Formal agreements are progressing but they have procured aa converted horse box and are looking to start in April. There was also an approach from Iain Wilson who runs byfords in Holt about an initiative he supports looking to mentor young people going into business. The proposal was for the summer holiday to have a fresh lemonade stall for a couple of months which is run entirely by young people. Both RS and MC through it was a good idea and that we should be able to accommodate that also but did ask them to ensure that the ethos is publicised.
7. Town Quay 'berm' – RS advised the WHC that the berm had been flattened out as the 'bank' created had done its job and didn't need to be left as though it might need to be originally.

RS asked SW to advise the sailing club accordingly given their previous reservations made to RS.

8. Weekend cover – RS advised the WHC that with summer approaching there looks like a growing need to have more support when it gets busy, especially weekends where the car park barrier system needs keeping an eye, the tide gauge project might need someone to host public use and on top of that having someone being about to ensure no rubbish is left about and could also help out at the hatchery, having a small summer workforce to help out is something WHC to consider. All were supportive so SAC and RS will explore various options to see what is possible.
9. Whilst the hatchery will be up and running shortly RS thought the plans to take the hatchery to the next level or do more with the space is now due in order to look to getting the hatchery pay for itself. Ideally the Fisherman's association will support this more but if not then other avenues to look at ways funding the hatchery can be done doing other things like oyster/ scallops or bringing in a third party to assist, should all be considered.

6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

No Commissioners had updates or further comments.

RS proposed with Liam now sworn in, it would make sense to allocate the Channel & Buoys portfolio to him and for Karen to take on Events & Estates given all the work underway KJ is doing already.

MC advised the WHC he attended a meeting with Holkham regarding the Flood analysis taken there and further along the coast. Whilst nothing surprising arose, given the situation, it is clear Holkham are needing to look at some areas in order to protect various assets – such as Pinewoods. Nothing conclusive came about and like Wells, the quandary about what can actually be done to avoid flooding is very difficult to achieve.

7. AOB

SAC requested the WHC now looked at the papers circulated prior to the meeting regarding the compliant raised. SAC reminded the WHC that the old lease agreement had expired in the 1990's . Secondly the option to use the fisherman's quay berth car park the WHC could allocate opposite the Frank T berth is the closest space available. The WHC agreed that is was not able to provide the space requested 'inside' the car park barriers and that the space allocated / reserved opposite the Frank T berth seemed a fair compromise. MC advised the WHC that he will advise accordingly.

MC asked RS to look at raising some flag poles on the quayside for the celebrations that are going to be held this year. RS agreed and suggested a walk around the harbour to discuss locations would be worthwhile.

MC reported that AM attended the Christmas Tide meeting as WHC liaison which was agreed at the last meeting as given the size of the event now, it requires more communication between the harbour and the organising committee.

8. Staff Matters

The annual staff review was discussed prior to the meeting.

Meeting was then closed @ 20.55

Approved.....

Mel Catton

Date...1/6/23.....