

**MINUTES OF FULL MEETING OF WELLS HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS (WHC)  
HELD @ WELLS SAILING CLUB**

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 AT 6:30PM**

**PRESENT:** Mel Catton (MC) – Chair, Nick Groom (NG), Chris Thomson (CT), Kevin Theobald (KT), Sally Wynne (SW), Josh Danziger (JD), Ashley Mullenger (AM), Andy McCallum (AMc), Brian Riches (BR)

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

**1. CHAIRMAN WELCOME**

MC thanked all for attending and had nothing specific to raise at this time other than thanking Sally for making the sailing club available at short notice so that we can spread out a little more than we would be able in the harbour office.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Bob Ellis (BE), Denys Hickey (DH)

**3. YTD FINANCIALS**

SAC reported that the accounts for the year remain in good shape and thus performance. SAC informed that there was nothing exceptional to report on further however it can be seen from the numbers the drop in revenue now SCIRA have left. There being no further comment SAC suggested we pick up the other financial matters as part of the executive update agenda item.

**4. APPROVE MINUTES**

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

**5. HARBOUR EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

**Tariffs**

SAC asked the WHC to refer to the papers circulated ahead of the meeting outlining the proposed recommended changes to the tariffs for the 2022 season and the executive summary which also proposed some amendments, the main one being how we charge use of the pontoons. SAC provided the background that the pontoons are heavily in demand, there is a lengthy waiting list and that since we changed the tariff for visitors boats last year moving to a tariff that reflected the length of the vessel rather than a flat rate it should be something the WHC considers to introduce. As such SAC had presented 5/6 scenarios and the financial consequences of each. After a lengthy debate the conclusion was that the WHC would approve moving pontoons berthing fees to £75 per metre charge with a minimum charge of £440. This was considered the fairest method which allowed the WHC to be recompensed based on the length of the vessel and being a fairer system whereby those who have bigger boats will pay a proportionally larger amount. Secondly, whilst there was some debate and support for Commercial users of the harbour to pay more overall it was agreed that for 2022 this would not be introduced but we would explain to Commercial operators that this is

something that will be reviewed again. SAC advised that he would be able to communicate this in the letter sent to all mooring holders in the new year and would tie in nicely with the other objective of moving commercial users onto different terms and conditions to a private user as is the case today. The other recommendation to tariff changes reflecting the rise in inflation and simplifying the tariff structure were supported accordingly. The ideas of charging over winter for pontoon use either short or long term were thought to be too difficult to implement and left it to the discretion of RS as/when needed.

RS/SAC then went on to run through the written update that formed part of the agenda item adding;

1. SCIRA – Following their formal notice to terminate the contract being received SAC advised the WHC that they had now put forward their proposal for early settlement rather than allowing the notice period to run its course. SAC advised the WHC that the proposal being offered reflected essentially what SCIRA would be liable for pro-rated for the 9 months
2. Dredger – a sub-committee made up of CT, KT and DH looked to be held mid-December and the primary topic discussed was the dredger operations. DH was unable to attend but the actions from that meeting was for RS/SAC to put out to tender alternative ways we could dredge and look towards the January WHC meeting to compare the options inc. the financials. The plan will be to present to the sub-committee ahead of the WHC assuming the dredge companies revert in time.
3. Car Park – SAC advised WHC that formal notice to break the contract with Creative was issued which meant that by the end of January 2022 their management of the car park would cease. Following that notice being given Creative have been trying to look at opportunities to keep the contract and attached in the papers was their proposal which effectively looked to revise the T&Cs. SAC advised he was waiting on pre-advice from NNDC planning which is due before the 10/12/21. With lead in times therefore it is likely the changeover will be mid Q1 2022.
4. Albatros – A further e-mail from the owner had been received hoping to return in December, however the date they were looking at was Christmas Tide and so we had already reverted saying that was not suitable and that tides in January looked preferable. A further reminder was made regarding the WHC having to give written permission for the vessels return as well as the agreement. No reply has been seen since. The Commissioners re-iterated to the executive that it was very important we ensured these matters were agreed prior to the vessels return so as there was no misunderstanding or potential issues that raise their heads at a later date.
5. Christmas Tide – MC confirmed Christmas Tide was all ready for the 4<sup>th</sup> December. RS confirmed that the forecast was not looking very good and along with a high tide there will need to be close communication between the Tide committee and the WHC. The lobster pot tree was built and received as it did last year, very positive comments.
6. Heritage Harbour/ 360 years anniversary – SAC referred to the paper sent before the meeting that was produced by consulting firm Tricolor. SAC advised WHC that he had engaged with Tricolor as they are very experienced in managing projects such as this and knew what would be required in order to obtain grant funding on scales at least the WHC had not looked for before. From SACs own experience, it is a significant task and that is reflective on the size of the presentation Tricolor has presented. JD sought to understand how the idea would fund itself and levels of ongoing support the WHC would need to provide. SAC responded that given the size of the project the view would be that it would be self-sustaining and ideally requiring less reliance on the WHC although that whole point of inviting someone like Tricolor along was to help build the vision. They would then help develop it into a sensible proposition which when obtaining funding you would be required to do in any case. SAC suggested that given the presentation was large and only presented

to the commissioners a few days ahead of the meeting it would perhaps be worth letting everyone review the presentation, provide feedback and then ask for SW, MC, RS etc to meet as previously intended before the next WHC meeting in January.

7. East End land - The plan to look at the 'pods' idea was still the course to take and therefore RS/SAC would pursue and look at options/ layouts accordingly and more specifically the cost and view on planning requirements.
8. PMSC audit – SAC advised that we had just had Bernie Hetherington with us for a couple of days reviewing our Port Management Safety Code requirements to ensure compliance and provide the Commissioners comfort that all was in order. We still await the report from Bernie however through the audit neither RS or SAC felt significant issues were being raised.
9. Adwina Barge – a paper was circulated ahead of the meeting regarding an initiative to replace the Cabby project previously discussed. RS went on to say that RS/SAC met with the leaders of the initiative to hear what they had to say in order to report back to the WHC. JD declared that as one of those leaders of the initiative he has perhaps some conflict however the overriding principle was to look at a way having a barge such as Adwina here at wells which not only would enhance the harbour as an additional attraction but also given the structure of ownership of Adwina it was perhaps a more viable solution than what was being looked at before. RS then added that as he saw it, the response to the initiative from the WHC was that we would keep an open mind, provide comment/ feedback as deemed appropriate and as matters developed and the project started to firm up on what they thought they wanted from the WHC it would be able to give clearer views of what was possible or otherwise.

## **6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

KT reminded all that we were still on the lookout for a replacement tractor but nothing more to add.

JD advised that work with Royal Haskoning for Overy Staithe was still underway and once complete the final impact report would be presented to WHC for their information.

BR advised that there was some difficulties with the channel and that No.1 buoy was off station which RS confirmed that it has moved 400m NE and also that No.6 had gone adrift and was in the course of being put back.

CT wanted to update the WHC on the water safety working group on which he represents WHC along with representation of the RNLI, Holkham, Police and MCA. Some pamphlets have been used to help advise the public of the dangers and more awareness in general had started to emerge but still work in progress overall.

No other Commissioners had updates or further comments.

## **7. AOB**


RS raised that he wished for 'The Haven' newsletter be resurrected now we had seemingly come out the other side of lockdowns and thus requested the WHC for input into its content.

## **8. Staff Matters**

SAC requested that perhaps the WHC should consider developing a Remuneration Committee as SAC/RS recommending pay rises, new starter salaries etc conflicted themselves and as with other organisations / harbours the formation of, say, some commissioners making decisions in this regard

RS/SAC felt more comfortable with. CT advised that having sat on Remuneration Committees before the CEO used to still be present and have input. SAC suggested that perhaps MC would like to give it some thought and that over the coming weeks the idea could be developed to see if there was a better way than how it is undertaken at present.

Meeting was then closed @ 20.35

Approved .....

Mel Catton

Date 25/1/22.....