

ANNUAL REPORT TO 31st December 2022

Wells Harbour Commissioners

A Message from the Chairman

Mel Catton



Firstly, and pleasingly through the efforts of my fellow Commissioners, and in particular all the Harbour staff led by our Harbour Master and by their sterling work we have progressed

forward with several projects, with many on the verge of being completed during 2023. Thank you all for your contribution. We all knew we faced another difficult year but whilst still some way to go, our forward thinking to maintain the high standards of our Port remain on track.

Unfortunately we have had to reduce the number of staff by the withdrawal of the SCIRA Wind Farm operation and offer our thanks to those in question for all their support and enthusiasm shown whilst with us. We also have some Commissioner changes this year and I would like to thank all of those for their input into the running of the Port during the last few years it's been very much appreciated and a pleasure to have worked with you.

Of course 2023 is a somewhat special year for THE PORT OF WELLS as we have now reached our 360th year, a celebration in its own right, but also we have been granted "HERITAGE HARBOUR STATUS" a proud achievement for the Port and our Town. Planned celebrations are in hand throughout the year for all to enjoy.

Pleasingly we still have an active fishing fleet operating within our Harbour and we trust the ever increasing running cost faced by all at present will not deter them from continuing to operate within our Port as this not only affects the Fishermen, but the many workers ashore dependant on them.

Part of our Port operation is to welcome visiting vessels throughout the summer season as it not only provides the Harbour with much needed revenue, but brings considerable trade into the Town, and we have again maintained a consistent and growing demand for these Moorings.

Wells Harbour Maritime Trust, was set up to help youngsters gain knowledge of the water, and I am pleased to report that there was an outstanding uptake of the activities provided and organised during 2022.

Also once again it is a pleasure to congratulate all who attended the Wells Triathlon which was again supported by numerous contenders from around the country, and with the money raised going towards the Maritime Trust, allows us to provide more activities during 2023. Thanks to all the volunteer Marshals for this.

For many years now our Port hosts many local charities, and again this year many have continued to hold their events within the Harbour, but one stood out last year and that was the Wells Christmas Tide Festival, the arrival of Santa to the Quayside escorted by a flotilla illuminated boats followed by a firework display and watched by a packed Quayside was outstanding. Thanks to all involved.

On behalf of all the Commissioners we wish to thank each and every one of our Staff for their continued support in what has been a changing and difficult time for the Port, much of which is to the benefit of our stakeholders. Thank you all.

May I wish you all a safe and enjoyable 2023 in whatever capacity you may visit the Harbour.

Mel Catton, Chairman

Welcome from Views of Harbour Master - Robert Smith MBE



Despite being at the helm for over two decades and working for the Port of Wells for over three decades, I still never take for granted what an enormous privilege it is to work in such a special place and have the opportunity to serve the Wells and North Norfolk Coast communities. I

often wonder if it is a vocation or has it just become a way of life, because there are no real set hours to a typical day. My working life revolves around the tides, seven days a week and in reality, I am on call 24/7.

Of course, with this comes responsibility, scrutiny, and many challenges and hard as I try, it is not possible to please all of the people all of the time. The Port and Harbour Estate has such a mix of different users, whether this is ashore or afloat, with many different views and needs that need to be considered and heard, where all perspectives are seen as equally valid. I try to ensure that everyone can achieve what they want from the Port, whether that is making a living or just enjoying the harbour and local area.

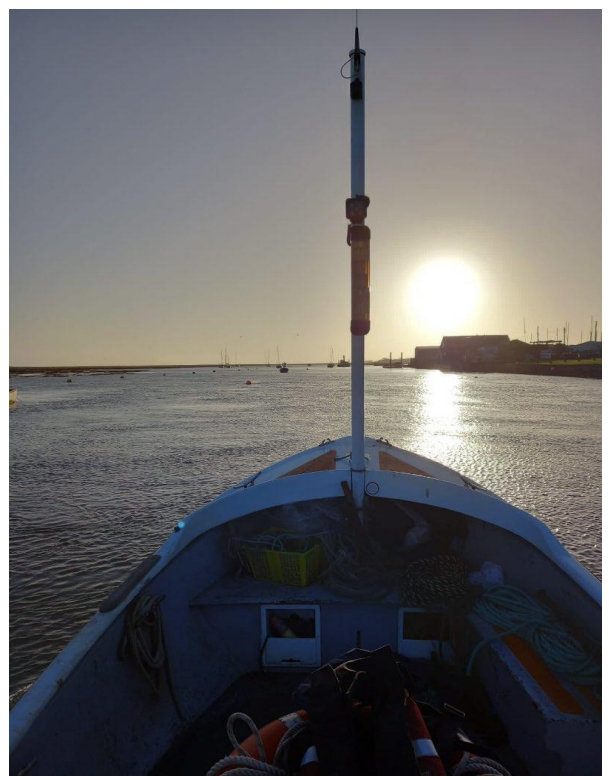
This is never more evident than in the summer, when the harbour and town is packed with people enjoying themselves in so many ways, as well as others trying to earn a living. This is often when the law of unintended consequences comes into play, at which point it is a case of understanding the dynamics of what has happened and calming the waters.

Myself and the Harbour Commissioners are always looking to improve the Port and facilities for its users, but hopefully without spoiling the character or beauty of the harbour, as we are all very aware that is why the Port is unique. It is unspoilt and dare I say a little bit like stepping back in time and we are all working hard to keep it this way but at the same time provide good modern facilities.

The Port of Wells has very much become a 21st century destination, lying at the Northern tip of the North Norfolk Coast it is a great stopping off point for sailors exploring the East Coast being probably the most accessible and well-lit harbour with modern facilities between the Humber and Lowestoft and also a great base to permanently moor your boat and explore the harbour creeks, the Wash and East Coast. Or just moor up and enjoy relaxing in the charm of this beautiful historic harbour whilst soaking up the atmosphere by venturing into our beautiful town. Finally, the harbour team in the harbour office, or afloat, are always on hand to assist you and answer queries and ensure that your safety, enjoyment, and experience of the Port of Wells is a positive one. If you are visiting or regular harbour user, we hope you have an enjoyable time. If you are a commercial user then we hope you have a safe and prosperous 2023.

“Fair winds and following seas”

Robert Smith MBE, Harbour Master



The Executive



Robert Smith MBE
Harbour Master



Simon Cooper
Harbour Administrator

Board Changes 2022

None

Board Members attendances 2022

There were scheduled board meetings held in the financial year.

Name	Jan 2022	Mar 2022	May 2022	Sept 2022	Nov 2022
Mel Catton	p	p	p	p	p
Josh Danziger	p	x	p	x	p
Bob Ellis	x	x	p	p	p
Andy McCullum	p	p	x	x	x
Nicky Groom	p	x	x	p	p
Denys Hickey	p	p	x	p	p
Ashley Mullenger	p	p	x	p	x
Brian Riches	p	p	x	p	p
Chris Thomson	p	x	p	p	x
Kevin Theobald	p	x	x	p	x
Sally Wynne	p	p	p	p	x
Robert Smith	p	p	p	p	p
Simon Cooper	p	p	p	p	p

2022 Board - Wells Harbour Commissioners



Mel Catton a Wells businessman and resident for 50 years and Chairman of the Carnival committee for 25 years. Mel is passionate about keeping Wells as an idyllic seaside resort recognising the need for change to allow the town to move forward.



Denys Hickey has over 40 yrs experience as a maritime lawyer with experience of dredging and port safety. Denys has been a senior partner in a London law firm and more recently a barrister and maritime arbitrator. Appointed Jan 2018.



Robert Ellis moved to Wells in 1976 as a Police Constable and Sergeant serving the community for 30 years, heavily involved in the 1978 floods and the aftermath. A member of Wells Sailing Club and recreational harbour user and boat owner since 1978.



Brian Riches held a project management position in the energy market prior to setting up a sea angling business in 1997 which he has now passed over to his son. Brian has a passion for fishing and enjoys being on the water. He was appointed in Jan 2017.



Nicholas Groom is from a long standing Wells family. Semi retired from an operations management position with a national Telecoms company. Now runs Wells Harbour Tours. Has experience of telecoms operations and construction. Appointed Jan 2018.



Kevin Theobald has been working in the lighting design profession for over 40 years, serving as a board member and latterly president of its representative international association. A Wells resident and leisure sailor with a keen interest in the future of the town and port. Appointed Jan 2019.



Ashley Mullenger is not a resident however, as Wells' only commercial fisherwoman working aboard one of the harbour fishing fleet, the vast majority of her time is spent in the harbour or out at sea. Appointed Jan 2020.



Chris Thomson Spent over thirty years working as a solicitor, involved in contracts, HR, governance and ethics. Lives in Wells. An MCA Boatmaster, Chris sails and works in the harbour. Appointed Jan 2017.



Josh Danziger lives in Burnham Overy Staithe since 2012. Retiring from a career in finance he now has more time to enjoy sailing his 37' sailing smack built in 1892, which is kept in Wells. Appointed March 2020.



Andy McCullum Coming from a fishing family, Andy has been fishing since leaving school. He started fishing going off Weybourne Beach with the Frary brothers, then working on boats fishing out of Wells with the "Blucher" and "Comrade" before having "Two Brothers" built and then "Nel Diana", catching crabs, lobsters and whelks. Appointed January 2021.



Sally Wynne is a Speech and Language Therapist, born and brought up in Wells. After bringing up their 4 children in Norwich, she and her husband have returned to Wells. She sails 12m² Sharpies as a member of Wells Sailing Club. Appointed in January 2021.

Summary of results

For the year ended 31 December 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
Income Statement		
Turnover	636,895	1,379,536
Cost of Sales	(414,431)	(644,888)
Gross excess of income over expenditure	222,464	734,648
Overhead expenses	(576,330)	(738,201)
Other operating income	403,089	284,876
Interest receivable and similar charges	522	147
Excess of income over expenditure before taxation	49,745	281,470
Taxation of ordinary activities	-	(69,262)
Excess of income over expenditure for the year	49,745	212,208

Balance Sheet

Fixed Assets	1,454,854	1,389,579
Current Assets	1,674,142	1,846,367
Creditors - amounts within one year	(76,809)	(206,756)
Net Current assets	1,597,333	1,639,611
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	3,052,187	3,029,190
Provisions	(68,422)	(60,117)
Net Assets	2,983,765	2,969,073

Reserves		
Accumulated fund	2,103,345	2,038,296
Grant Reserve	281,722	290,543
Grant Reserve - Slipway Hoist	69,452	83,342
Capital Reserve - Shellfish facility	289,948	297,197
Capital Reserve	235,091	252,488
Capital Reserve - The Lifeboat Horse Sculpture	4,207	7,207
Capital Reserve - Lobster Reserve	-	-
Total Reserves	2,983,765	2,969,073

Note assets above include:

Investment by Scira into Outer Harbour and channel and Inner Harbour

Spend to 31 December 2022

Cost brought forward	1,942,130	1,942,130
Capital equipment purchased/ disposed in year	-	-
	1,942,130	1,942,130

Less Depreciation brought forward	(1,689,642)	(1,642,022)
Less amounts depreciated in year	(17,397)	(47,620)
Less depreciation on disposal	-	-
Total Included in Assets	235,091	252,488

WHC are a non-profit making organisation whose excess of income over expenditure is ploughed back into the Harbour for the good of the stakeholders

Ports Good Governance Guidance

Wells Harbour Commissioners (WHC) is a Trust Port, an independent statutory body run for the benefit of stakeholders and the local community.

WHC aims to run the harbour in accordance with standards and practices set out in the Department for Transport's document Ports Good Governance Guidance (March 2018).

Ports Good Governance Guidance states that “a trust port is a valuable asset presently safeguarded by the existing board, whose duty it is to hand it on in the same or better condition to succeeding generations.”

Ports Good Governance guidance also sets out a trust ports commercial accountability. It stresses the importance of monitoring performance and consultation with stakeholders, and sets out a management framework and standards compatible with good governance.

Finally, it publishes a framework setting out the guiding principles for appointment to the Board of Commissioners and the standards to which the Board should adhere.

The Department for Transport actively monitors compliance with these standards but interested

parties should play their part in bringing to the Department's attention any examples of unaccountable behaviour. Section 3.46 of Ports Good Governance Guidance sets out how stakeholders can complain about governance issues or other matters arising from a ports activities.

In the first instance, please raise the matter with the Harbourmaster and/or the WHC Board. We will endeavour to provide a written response within four weeks setting out whether we consider the complaint justified and details of any remedial action we intend to take. Where the complainant does not believe the response is reasonable in addressing the grounds of his or her concern, the matter can be reported to the Department for Transport.

However, please note that the Department for Transport has no role in reviewing the commercial decisions or activities of a trust port or in intervening in essentially localised disputes. Its interest is in ensuring that a trust board is governed well and does not take decisions in an arbitrary or unaccountable manner.



PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE- Compliance

The Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) applies to all harbour authorities in the UK that have statutory powers and duties. The PMSC has been developed to improve safety in UK Ports and to enable harbour authorities to manage their marine operations to nationally agreed standards. It provides the standard against which policies, procedures and the performance of harbour authorities can be measured. It describes the role of board members, officers and key personnel in relation to safety of navigation and summarises the main statutory duties and powers of harbour authorities.

In order to comply with the PMSC, the duty holder on behalf of the harbour authority must:

1. Review and be aware of their existing powers based on local and national legislation
2. Comply with the duties and powers under existing legislation as appropriate
3. Ensure all risks are formally assessed and as low as reasonably practicable in accordance with good practice
4. Operate an effective marine safety management system (SMS)
5. Use competent people (i.e. trained, qualified and experienced) in positions of responsibility for safety of navigation
6. Monitor, review and audit the marine SMS on a regular basis - an independent designated person has a key role in providing assurance for the duty holder
7. Publish a safety plan showing how the standard in the PMSC will be met and a report assessing the performance against the plan
8. Comply with directions from the General Lighthouse Authorities and supply information and returns as required

Wells Harbour Commissioners SMS includes a calendar of safety topics with defined areas of responsibility. A Commissioner is allocated responsibility for ensuring all aspects of health & safety under the SMS are checked and signed off and this is reported at the full meetings of Commissioners.

Wells Harbour Commissioners had an independent review of the PMSC and SMS in November 2021.

The Chairman on behalf of Wells Harbour Commissioners being the PMSC duty holder for the Port of Wells considered all the requirements of the PMSC, including reviewing the risk assessment and SMS and has certified that the Port of Wells meets the standards required by the PMSC.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

Since 2010, Wells Harbour Commissioners as part of their open and accountable policy and practices publish all plans and reports of meetings on their website. The website is regularly updated. Website address :www.portofwells.co.uk

In addition Wells Harbour Commissioners has a facebook page : Port of Wells and the Harbour Master can be followed on Twitter.

The Port publishes an annual brochure as well as the annual public meeting, which now also includes a Harbour User Advisory Committee meeting.

Members of the public can report incidents and make suggestions by e-mail to harbouroffice@wellsharbour.co.uk, by phone or direct to the Harbour Office. All suggestions and complaints are entered in the incidents/suggestions book and are reviewed by the Harbour Master.

Harbour Office,
Old Lifeboat House
West Quay
Wells-next-the-sea
NR23 1AT
Telephone: 01328 711646
Email: harbouroffice@wellsharbour.co.uk

The work of the Commissioners 2022

Introduction

The work of the Wells Harbour Commissioners (WHC) is regulated by Central Government. Full details of the appointments and management structure can be found in the publication 'good governance guidance for statutory harbour authorities operating ports in England and Wales' - Published 5 March 2018 Department for Transport (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/good-governance-guidance-for-ports>). WHC aims to conform to the governance as set out by the Government. Reports of the bi-monthly meetings of the Commissioners in 2022 can be found on the Harbour Website -- www.portofwells.co.uk

Annual Meetings

The Commissioners hold an annual public meeting to report on their work. In 2022 this was held at the Wells Sailing Club. Details about the financial performance and works undertaken by the commissioners are discussed along with questions taken from the public. The minutes for the meeting can also be found on the website. The Annual Report & Accounts is also published on the Harbour Website -- www.portofwells.co.uk. The date of the 2023 meeting is yet to be decided but will be advertised in the first quarter of the year.

Harbour Commissioners

It should be noted that all Commissioners are volunteers and receive no payment for their work. The revenue from the services offered by the port is used entirely to finance the port's management and development.

Commissioner Portfolios

To enable more proactive involvement in Port Operations, Commissioners have been assigned individual specialised portfolios:

- Mel Catton - Chairman and HR
- Robert Ellis - Health and Safety
- Nicholas Groom - Harbour Services
- Denys Hickey - Legal
- Josh Danziger - Coastal Change
- Ashley Mullenger - Community & Hatchery
- Sally Wynne - Heritage
- Andy McCallum - Channel & Buoys

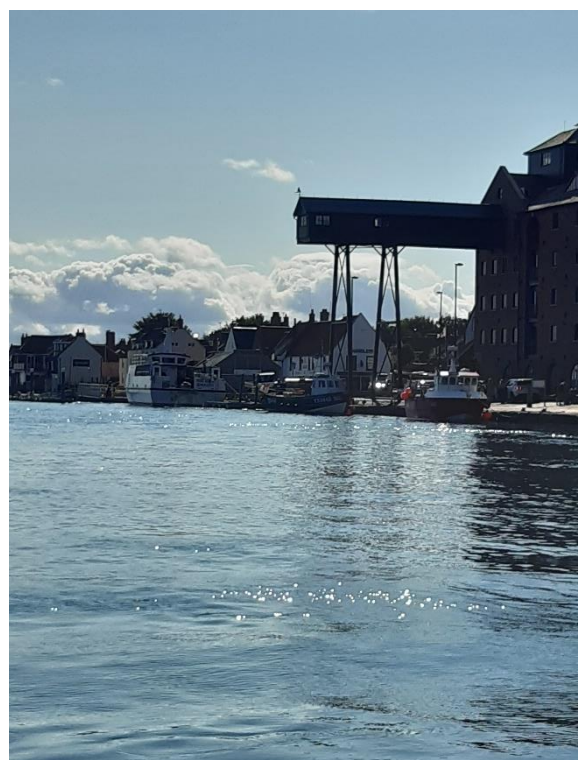
Capital Expenditure/Projects

2022 completed

- Little tern artificial nesting pontoon repositioned
- Cycle racks for car park
- Installed car park barrier system to replace the 'ANPR' pay & display system.
- Commenced resurfacing of quayside car park.
- Installed 10 finger pontoons on the East side of the Outer Harbour

Planned for 2023 and / or future consideration

- Flood wall and landscaping of land west of Harbour Office
- Create memorial seating with anchor
- Install sympathetic lighting on quay to reduce light pollution
- Introduce recycling bins for harbour use.
- Maritime Trail interpretation boards
- Create a new jetty adjacent to the public slipway
- Jetty/ pontoons at the Skredge, sailing club and/or Shipwrights
- Archive historic documents for public viewing
- Establish studio pods to hire out on East End land
- Continue resurface of quayside car park
- Look at railings for Tug Boat Yard



Environment

The Harbour has been working with the 'Little Blue Hut' who now offer to rent out crabbing equipment and bait which is key to reducing plastics in the harbour. We are delighted that the 'Little Blue Hut' has had a first successful season. Drop nets in particular cause not only damage to wildlife through entanglement they are also a major nuisance for boat owners both leisure and commercial as they get caught around props. Please respect our beautiful harbour, we would prefer that you avoid buying single use plastics and drop nets.

A "Billy the Gilly" booklet is now also available from the hut and was designed by a local artist to explain and provide information to the public on handling, care and general information on the shore crabs. The leaflet is also available at the harbour office and Natural East on the quayside.

Navigation and Channel

The Port was inspected by Trinity House and passed its annual inspection and audit.

Dredging

The Outer Harbour basin and access channel was comprehensively dredged to re-instate the previous depth of the harbour at low water. The town pontoons was also dredged so the depth of water is retained for visiting vessels that have different keel types and need to therefore stay afloat.

Port Safety

Health and safety inspections have been regularly undertaken and all H&S issues have been addressed. The Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) Safety Management System (SMS) was independently audited in November 2021 to ensure the Harbour remained compliant and all finding/ recommendations were acted upon albeit no material issues were found.

Public Relations

WHMT did see the return of the North Norfolk Triathlon to raise funds for the charity. The event took place earlier in the year due to tide conditions but still was as popular as ever and fully subscribed by April. The day went very smoothly, the weather was kind and feedback from the British Triathlon representative was excellent.

WHC worked with the Wells Christmas tide committee once more to organise and build a Crab & Lobster pot Christmas tree which turned into a great success and continues to be a very popular addition to the towns festivities.

In addition, WHC communicates via:

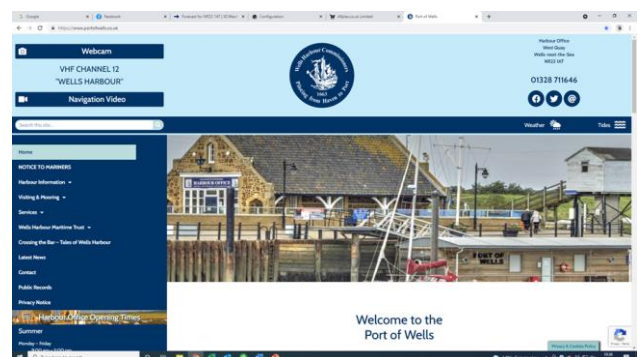
- Published Harbour Minutes
- Published Annual report & Accounts
- Website news page
- Harbour brochure and flyers
- Facebook and Twitter
- Stakeholder meetings i.e. AGM
- Events

Outer Harbour

The windfarm company Equinor gave notice to Wells Harbour Commissioners that they would not be using the harbour from September 2021 and have changed their working practices to combine its operations with the Dudgeon windfarm. As a result, the Outer Harbour became available to moor larger private vessels with the installation of 10 finger pontoons and extra space on the 'inside' for smaller boats. The pontoon waiting list as a result have shortened but nevertheless remain very popular and long!

Harbour Website

The website is regularly updated with news, navigation updates and reports of the meetings held. The website has proven to be very popular, especially the webcam and now incorporates links to facebook and twitter.



Facebook and Twitter

The Port has a Facebook page which can be accessed via the website. This is a public page and stakeholders do not need to have an account to view the page. Also from the website stakeholders can follow the Harbour Master on Twitter.

BPA

The Commissioners are members of the BPA.

Staff appraisals and training

WHC is committed to the training of its employees to maximise their full potential with role succession at the forefront.

The commissioners feel it has a pivotal part to play in the community and is committed to the education and training of its employees and local young people and considers this vital to the success of the Port's future. This year, work experience was offered to a pupil of Alderman Peel High School also.

Boat Store

East End continues to be a great asset to the Port and to stakeholders and was at full capacity in the Winter season 2022.

Slipway Hoist

The self propelled slipway hoist delivered in June 2018 has proved to be a valuable addition to the Harbour as it frequently used lifting fishing vessels for maintenance and repair and well as some of the larger private vessels.

Car Park

Given the continued social media debate about the parking enforcement regulations on the quayside car park the Commissioners undertook a review to reconsider alternative ways to manage the car park. As a result a ANPR barrier system was introduced towards the end of the year which only allows entrance to the car park if there is a space and payment is made prior to exiting the car park. The system still uses ANPR technology to monitor entrance/exits and to match car registrations to payments which in turn avoids the need for Parking Charge Notices to be issued.

Facilities Barge

The facilities barge was able to open this season. To provide the safest possible environment for users, restrictions continue to be made on the number of people using the facilities at any one time.

Port Charges

The board of Wells Harbour Commissioners, review tariffs yearly to ensure they remain appropriate.

GDPR

The Port instructed an external consultant to assist with compliance to the GDPR regulations. Privacy statements for staff and visitors and a data protection statement for the website have been produced.

Visiting vessels

The port welcomes over 300 visiting vessels each year and receives frequent compliments on the facilities and welcome the port provides them. To aid visitors a video of how to enter the harbour was commissioned and can be found on the website and YouTube. The 2022 season turned out to be one of the busiest for nearly a decade which provides valuable income for both the harbour and retail outlets around the town.

Quay Events

The Port has an Events Policy for all outside organisations and groups wishing to use the quay for events. Compliance and agreement to this policy in writing is required before an event can go ahead. There will be fees for use of the quay to commercial organisations run for profit.

The Commissioners would also like to encourage the use of the harbour to local charitable organisations and are welcome to apply to the harbour office accordingly.

New RNLI Boathouse

The Port was consulted regarding the plans for the new RNLI boathouse required to house the new Shannon lifeboat. The new slipway runs the length of the groyne. Further details can be found in the harbour brochure within the RNLI article.



Wells Harbour Maritime Trust (WHMT)

All serving Commissioners are Trustees. All profits from the North Norfolk Triathlon go to WHMT. For 2022, Katy, the events co-ordinator held several kayaking and paddleboard sessions as well as organising for an entire year of the local high school to attend Whitlingham lakes in Norwich. Added to that beach cleans, visits to the Lobster Hatchery, nature guides with the Holkham team to the beach and East Hills to explore and explain some of the natural habits made for a very busy but successful year. Given the key objective for the trust is to engage and get as many young people onto the water as possible the trustees are pleased to have so much going on and a great foundation for the coming years.

The Trust will also provide grants on an individual basis:-

- For recognised sailing courses at beginner or intermediate or advanced standard at local approved sailing schools.
- On maritime courses to extend their maritime skills such as a Sea Survival course. The Trust will make a contribution (paid directly by the WHMT to the training agency) of an amount of money at the discretion of the trustees
- On swimming courses so that young people can learn to swim or teach with confidence. The Trust will make a contribution (directly to the swim school) per applicant to cover the costs for an appropriate swimming course (number of sessions at discretion of the Trustees).

The Trust does not cover travelling or meal costs.

This is a great opportunity to learn or develop a new skill so why not apply?

Contact the Harbour Office for an application form:-
 The Harbour Office, West Quay, Wells-next-the-Sea, NR23 1AT
 Phone: 01328 711646
 Email: harbouroffice@wellsharbour.co.uk

WHMT would like to thank all supporters of the Trust for their kind donations during the course of the year.

