

MINUTES OF FULL MEETING OF WELLS HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS (WHC)

HARBOUR OFFICE

30th May 2023 AT 6:30PM

PRESENT: Mel Catton (MC) – Chair, Bob Ellis (BE), Karen Jones (KJ), Liam Pink (LP), Adrian Dwyer (AD)

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 Andy McCallum resigning due to work commitments we have a Commissioner vacancy which AD was interested in from a previous application, so MC welcomed AD to the meeting and invited him to read and sign the Oath Declaration which was duly done and witnessed by the Commissioners.

2. APOLOGIES

Josh Danziger (JD), Denys Hickey (DH), Andy McCallum (AMc), Sally Wynne (SW), Ashley Mullenger (AM), Nick Groom (NG),

3. FINANCIALS

SAC referred the WHC to the monthly financial paper to highlight that whilst the WHC is still in profit it is only just and next month we should be expecting to be loss making year to date. The year-on-year comparison also highlighted that we were still benefiting from the final/ residual windfarm contract so a true comparison can't be made until later in the year when a month by month analysis will be clearer. SAC also highlighted that energy costs had risen as we were now out of the beneficial fixed rate we have enjoyed previously, and the renewal is much closer to the market price that in turn impacts our overheads. We were also seeing the impact of the weather as visitor numbers are well down compared to last year.

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. 360th anniversary/Heritage Harbour;
 - a. Town Signs – as all would have seen, the town signs as you enter Wells are all in position and we had good coverage in the EDP about it as well as from Duncan Baker MP.
 - b. The lamppost banners were erected but unfortunately the clips were starting to fail so they have been taken down and stronger clips have now been ordered so we can try and install again once the wind has died down.
 - c. KJ presented to the WHC the branded beer bottle which all were impressed with. The plan now is to work on who will sell it and agree distribution with the brewers. KJ thought that both the Crown and Globe would most likely stock a keg each.
 - d. Tide Gauge Project – the production company who did sounds of the staithe visited to thrash out more ideas and RS has a list of potential names of people they can

interview. Floor coverings are being looked into and KJ is mocking up the wall panels.

- e. Heritage Trial –We have paid the deposit for the app, so it is now with us to build the content which is work in progress.
 - f. RS had commissioned a commemorative painting by Godfrey Sayers which he presented to the WHC. The next step would be to cost out doing prints which could be sold to cover the cost of the original. RS/SAC will be exploring options and calculating how much each print should be sold for to cover the cost. The WHC all agreed that it would make sense to limit production to 360 to mark 360 years. The print would also have annotated the commemoration and also provide an explanation of what is in the picture.
 - g. RS has Dr Hicks memoirs which have now been typed up and KJ/RS are looking at turning this into a small book as discussed in previous meetings.
2. Favor Parker Land – as the WHC would have seen the contractors are now nearly finished. There was some thought that the tarmac might be slippery in winter but overall, the WHC was pleased to see the work had been done. RS will write to the Granary Residents to thank them for undertaking the work.
 3. Albatros – Bob Richardson emailed to advise that they were now ready to return albeit now he has decided the weather wasn't good enough so would delay again. RS advised the WHC that he had reminded the owners that the license agreement must be signed and returned prior to the vessel coming into the harbour however as of now, the license had still not been received. SAC further advised the invoice for berthing had been sent also albeit Harbour Dues would still be outstanding upon its arrival as we need to jointly agree the actual length overall of the Albatros following the extensive fit out which might have changed the recorded length we had previously used.
 4. AGM – despite wider advertising for the AGM, public attendance was down. Whilst this may look disappointing, there was a view that perhaps this was a sign that overall our stakeholders have no issues as typically, when there are matters to raise people invariably attend.
 5. RNLI naming ceremony – RS just wanted to advise the WHC that we will close the car park for the day and thus lose a day earnings albeit naturally we would want to be supporting the event/RNLI.
 6. Maggie May removal – RS confirmed that we had successfully removed the wreck following the capsizing and abandonment of the yacht beyond Bob Hall Sands. Overall, whilst time consuming, it was a good outcome as the alternative would have to be formally obtain permission to remove the wreck via receivers of wreck which would have been more costly for the owner and more time consuming for us.
 7. Stall – following the last WHC meeting, the decision was relayed to owner however a further letter was submitted to the AGM requesting the WHC reconsider. At the AGM we agreed we would bring the matter back to the WHC in order to review the Commissioners original decision. After a further debate, the Commissioners endorsed the original decision and also wanted to point out that much of their decision relates to the car park barrier system constraint whereby should they leave the car park, on return to enter, if the car park is full the barrier will not open and then they would be stranded without a space to park in whereby at least providing a space outside the barrier system, this avoids such an eventuality.
 8. Outer Harbour Survey – RS wanted to advise the WHC that the RSPB were looking to undertake a survey of the gulls on the OH berm, so if they did see people there or a drone overhead it is most likely to be them.

9. Hoist & Storage – RS wished to apologise to those in attendance of the AGM where RS announced before advising the Commissioners that the WHC would no longer support hoisting/ storing vessels that are not local. The WHC had recently experienced on a few occasions more hassle, time and effort chasing up owners than what value we obtained by accepting them.
10. Boat store land – The WHC had received an e-mail from the owners of the southern part of the land requesting an uplift in rent by 300% as well as a yearly upward review/adjustment. RS/SAC had reviewed the storage income and at that level it does not make it worth renting the land. The WHC have in the past though looked to purchase the land and all believed at the right price this would still be a consideration. RS advised that they would revert along those lines but at the end of the day, if we had to give it up, it would be disappointing but we would just have less space to store and operate.
11. Diesel Barge – RS advised that the plan was to bring the barge ashore to paint and then return it to the fisherman bowser and use it there however whilst lifting the barge out, the hoist was unable to take the weight and as such became stuck at the top of the slipway. To get it into the yard inflatable pads had to be borrowed. RS is now considering options and whether we should look to shotblast/ paint or perhaps think of an alternative plan.
12. Tug Boat Yard Wall – at the time of sending the papers ahead of the meeting, the Council had still not worked on the wall, however RS advised that today, he had seen them working on it. RS had repeatedly chased Peter Fisher albeit without speaking to him directly but it is pleasing to see that finally work is underway. There was though a still a sense of frustration amongst the Commissioners as the view was that this sort of delay and unsightly appearance of the unkept grass/ site would not have happened had it been in Cromer/ N Walsham!
13. Jordans Land – at the previous WHC meeting there was agreement to look to put the land or part of the land out to tender. As it happened RS mentioned that to a local business who was very keen on the idea and wanted to have further talks. These prospective tenants produced a presentation which SAC will circulate after the meeting but the overall view was that it was much more ambitious than first envisaged.
14. Maltings talk on Flooding – RS has been invited to attend and talk about the modelling work the WHC obtained regarding the impact of further tidal surges etc. RS reminded the WHC that previously we had looked to engage on a more muted level about what the result of those investigations were and looked to the WHC to decide if they wanted RS to attend or not. Overall the Commissioners believed it would not be good if the WHC was not in attendance if other stakeholders like Holkham were there, so overall they were happy for RS to talk and attend.
15. Wash Barrier consultation – RS attended a meeting at the Maltings which was a consultation about the potential building of a barrage across the wash. The barrage would include a tidal power station, container port and infrastructure to go with it. RS said it was a very bold idea and the timescales they are looking to work towards were very ambitious (complete by 2030). In the main, the attendees were mostly against the idea but RS wasn't able to form an opinion either way as there didn't seem to be enough knowledge or understanding of the impact – in particular to Wells. RS encouraged the Commissioners though to read up on the project as it is certainly going to become an increasing point of debate for the North Norfolk coastal communities.

6. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

LP raised an idea regarding the 'old channel' and whether there was an idea to help mark it as he had experienced on several occasions now, sailing club members not giving way in the channel where under colregs they should be and thus causing LP to take evasive action to avoid an accident. By marking an alternative channel for the sailors would prevent further potential accidents. RS advised that it would be unwise to mark both channels as it might lead to confusion and actually believed that it might be worth the sailing club reminding their members that when they are in the channel they do not necessarily have right of way (colreg rules 4 to 10). BE confirmed he would raise it at the sailing club.

7. AOB

MC requested that the WHC should look at the provision of a cycle rack. SAC advised there was one outside of the harbour office but we can also look around the estate to see if there was another area we could provide.

We had looked at logos for the pay kiosk and SAC will progress.

MC had seen people still struggling to work out where to pay for parking. The large yellow signs were taken down when we swapped to the barrier system. SAC will investigate further.

MC enquired if we had heard any more from the seaweed farm. RS confirmed that their license had been submitted to the MMO and conversation were still ongoing between them.

MC noted to the WHC that he understood Egmore had been leased out but was not aware to whom.

8. Staff Matters

none

Meeting was then closed @ 20.40

Approved.....

Mel Catton

Date.....25/7/23.....