

MINUTES OF FULL MEETING OF WELLS HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS (WHC)

HARBOUR OFFICE

30th January 2024 AT 6:30PM

PRESENT: Mel Catton (MC) – Chair, Bob Ellis (BE), Karen Jones (KJ), Sally Wynne (SW), Adrian Dwyer (AD), Nick Groom (NG), Simon Walsingham (SWA), Richard Whitelock (RW)

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS: Robert Smith (RS) Harbour Master, Simon Cooper (SAC) Deputising Harbour Administrator, Tania Goodliffe (TG) Harbour Administrator

1. CHAIRMAN WELCOME

MC thanked all for attending.

2. NEW APPOINTMENTS

MC welcomed SWA and RW to the board of commissioners and conducted the ceremony including reading and signing of the oath and explained that there is someone in mind for the remaining position.

MC welcomed TG to the team as the newly appointed Harbour Administrator.

3. APOLOGIES

Liam Pink (LP)

4. FINANCIALS

SAC referred the WHC to the monthly financial paper recording the management accounts for the half year. The accounts show good progress on increasing car park revenue by £15k and further reduction in costs with further work to do as contracts arise for renewal. Cash balances have dropped below £1m due to cash purchase of land at the boat store.

We are still expecting a reimbursement for the damaged car park barrier.

Visitor vessel numbers were down by a third, but this was expected as like other coastal areas during 2023. WHC have again benefited from survey vessels, and we are finding that smaller organisations are increasingly choosing to operate from Wells. We are forecasted to have another good year and be on track financially with further cost savings due to staff changes, increased collaborative working and an overdue business rate review.

5. APPROVE MINUTES

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

6. HARBOUR EXECUTIVE UPDATE

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

1. Shipwrights Parking.

- a. Rental of land for the sole purpose of parking. WHC asked for TG to initially approach the holiday letting agents. All agreed that £3k was a reasonable amount considering the location and uniqueness.

The right of way to Shipwrights will be considered, and any disturbances kept to a minimum.

b. Albatros.

RS and TG met with Robert Richardson 'Bob' (Proprietor) to gain an update as to what their intentions are for 2024. There was no clear business plan in place, but Bob felt that this year he would like to divide its use between family and a soft launch B&B for a maximum of 8 guests (including families). RS mentioned the lack on public interaction and advised that it would be good for the Albatros and WHC if there were more social media interaction.

RS agreed for the Albatros to use a gangplank for the quoted footfall, but a parking space would be lost and therefore this would have to be recompensed. Bob then continued to mention the possibility of light lunchtime meals on deck next year.

c. WHMT Constitution.

RS thanked AD for the work that he's been doing to review the constitution. AD explained that he will continue to review the objectives and narrative so that the constitution allows further scope. MC was happy for the changes to take place so that the constitution can move forward. AD to contact the charity to implement the necessary changes. Crown Estates – Have been in contact to discuss certain moorings after identifying the wet HW & LW markers using ordnance survey, RS suggested they use admiralty due to its accuracy.

d. Oyster Pilot.

Exo-Environmental are keen to operate the Oyster pilot from Wells, this will make Wells one of five ports to be chosen in the country. Discussions are currently taking place with RS as to where the Oysters can be sited. RS and TG due to meet with Exo in February.

e. Seaweed Farm.

Buoys have been taken and sited north of Blakeney. WHC will continue to support the seaweed farm over the coming months as the site continues to develop.

f. Tide Gauge Project.

The floor will be installed early February, and the wall artwork is currently being designed and will fit above the tongue and grove panelling. The circular gauge will also become a centre piece. Multiple choice of sounds will be offered ie. 'Tides of the staithe', shipping forecast, and information regarding the main focal points. The 'Larn' should be in operation as of Easter.

g. pontoons Main Quay.

A national grant has become available enabling WHC to fit additional pontoons to support the fishing industry. RS will speak to the fishermen to gauge their interest. If there's enough interest, we'll pursue the funding.

h. East Quay Burglary.

The East Quay boat yard was recently broken into where 3 boat engines and 2 electronic devices were taken, more items may become apparent over time.

7. Flo & Joe.

Richard and Sarah gave a digital presentation of their business proposal at Jordans Land, East Quay. It was agreed that Flo & Joe's will be a seasonal venture using a mobile van operating 5 days a week from 8am-8pm Easter through to the end of September. WHC stipulated that music and alcohol are not permitted and that trade will be from foot traffic as there is no parking available nearby. Richard and Sarah will be providing soft beverages and light meals that may include grilled food (BBQ style) in the evenings. There will be picnic table seating to accommodate between 15-20 customers at any one time. WHC agreed to make available the necessary water and electricity supply, and asked TG to contact Anglian water to install a connection for Jordans Land.

Richard and Sarah are responsible for any planning consents and flood contingency plans and waste management.

Advertising space may be available on the lobster hatchery railings. WHC agreed this was a sympathetic business proposal which shouldn't cause alarm to the neighbouring properties.

8. Commissioner Updates.

Plans to rent the plot at Shipwrights and all agreed it's too much of an asset to sell.

9. Staff Matters.

It is SAC's last meeting but he'll be coming back to help TG as needed and will be setting up the hatchery for the season ahead. MC thanked SAC for his dedication and hard work and commended him for all the successful developments over the past five years and that SAC has set the harbour up for a good future. Credit given.

10. AOB

None

Meeting was then closed @ 20.30

Approved.....

Mel Catton

Date.....26.03.24.....

