

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RIVER YEALM HARBOUR AUTHORITY
HELD IN THE HARBOUR OFFICE AT 18.00 ON 21ST SEPTEMBER 2023**

Members and Officers in attendance:

Dominic Crawley – Chairman
Nicky Tewson
Mark Steggles
Peter Hinchliffe
Andrew Matthews

Rodney Carter – Vice- Chairman
Stephen Maltby
Martyn Oates
John Endicott

Jez Spring – Harbour Master
Debbie Rhead – Office Manager

Toby Dowling – Deputy HM

Apologies for Absence

Tom Edie and Dermot Drought

Declarations of Interest

The OM made a ‘Declaration of Interest’ regarding item 89/23 ‘Mooring applications and proposed mooring allocations and partnership arrangements’.

81/23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2023 were proposed by Rodney Carter to be a true record of what was discussed, seconded by Martyn Oates and agreed by all other members who had attended that meeting.

82/23 MATTERS ARISING

Chris George has been advised that he has the support of the Authority in his efforts to achieve designated bathing/swimming category on the Yealm. He has since displayed a flyer in our noticeboard at the Harbour Office.

South Hams District Council have now advised that the repairs of the Quay at the Yealm Steps will begin in November 2023.

The reported damaged handrail at Wembury Steps (reported at the July meeting) has now broken away and disappeared. Devon Highways have been informed and will be chased again.

The revised wording on the Mooring Applications Policy will be presented at the next meeting in October 2023.

83/23 CORRESPONDENCE

A letter has been received from Brunton Knowles Chartered Surveyors, informing the authority that their Plymouth office has been taken over by Sanderson Weatherall. The Chairman has signed to give permission for them to transfer our current contract over to Sanderson Weatherall and for them to continue working on our behalf.

84/23 FINANCIAL REPORT

Income

Income invoiced for July and August was £44,055 (inc. VAT), the bulk of this being Visitor Fees (£29,021), Launch-only KPC (£2,500) and Harbour Dues (£3,694).

Expenses

The overheads figure for July and August was £9,779. The main expenses during this period were the new chains for the new section of pontoon and the deposit for the new engine for the harbour launch.

Balance Sheet

The debtors' amount is just over £2,959. The latest VAT quarterly bill (£7,896) has now been paid.

Cashflow Position

The opening balance July was £237,770. Income received was £44,055 (July £18,201 and August £25,858). The expenditure was £46,738 (July £23,471 and August £23,267) leaving a balance of £235,087 at the end of August.

85/23 HARBOUR MASTER'S REPORT

The numbers of kayak and paddle board discs issued year-to-date is down by 25% compared with 2022, whilst the number of visitor boat nights is up by 62 year-on-year. There were 12 incidents on the river during July and August, all of which were dealt with and have been recorded.

We have had no further formal information from Akzo Nobel on their remediation plans nor advice on the date for the proposed public meeting. Peter Hinchliffe confirmed that the Newton & Noss Parish Council were still waiting for written answers to the Council's questions. Also, it was noted that, to date, no MMO Licence number has been issued for this remediation case.

86/23 STAFF APPRAISALS

This annual process of staff appraisals for the Harbour Master, Officer Manager and Deputy Harbour Master has begun.

87/23 ELECTION OF MEMBERS

The date of Tuesday 6th February 2024 has now been set for the 2024 Election of Mooring Representative Members. The WI Hall has been booked between 6pm and 8pm on that day. The OM will write to the Clerks of each of the Riparian Parishes and invite them to appoint representatives. Martyn Oates reminded the authority the Parish Councils are permitted to appoint anyone within their Parish to represent them. Andrew Matthews also reminded the Committee that there was a recommendation for Parish representatives to serve a maximum number of terms before rotation. The Chairman will write to the parishes reminding them of this recommendation.

87/23 PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON

Wembury – Nothing to report.

Newton and Noss – Peter Hinchliffe advised the Committee that there is a tap for public use at the top of the steps by The Swan Inn which is used by a wide range of boat and river users. The Parish Council has requested that the Authority makes a donation to help cover the cost of water used, currently around £150 per year. The Chairman proposed that we contribute £75 per year towards the water rates costs. This was seconded by Martyn Oates and agreed by all authority members present.

Brixton – Nothing to report.

Yealmpton – Nothing to report.

88/23 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Annual budget process. The Chairman advised the authority on the membership of the budget sub-committee and the timing of sub-committee meetings. A finalised proposal should be available for authority consideration shortly before the October meeting.

89/23 MOORING APPLICATIONS AND PROPOSED MOORING ALLOCATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP REQUESTS

A number of new applications to join the waitlist for moorings have been accepted with no concerns expressed. There is one appeal for an application who had previously been turned down as the applicant's property was assessed to be outside of the Riparian Parishes. The appeal has stated that only part of the property is outside the area and would we therefore reconsider the application. The authority have accepted this appeal and agreed to allow the applicant to go on the waiting list. This was proposed by Dominic Crawley and seconded Andrew Matthews.

14 moorings have been allocated throughout July and August: 7 'A' moorings, 2 'B' moorings, 1 'C' mooring, 2 'D' moorings and 2 Outhauls.

The HM confirmed that appropriate and due qualification criteria and process had been followed as regards the mooring granted to the OM's husband. Whilst entirely satisfied, the Chairman (for good governance purposes) requested that the vice-chairman should also review criteria and process and report back at the next monthly meeting.

There was one new request for a partnership arrangement agreed.

90/23 AOB

Non-Use letter

Two vessels on the river have previously been identified as 'non-use of vessel'. It was agreed that the HM should write to the owner of each vessel advising them their mooring licences will not be renewed at the end of 2023. There was a query with one other mooring owner's non-use of vessel, but a letter has been received to explain the reasons behind this and it was agreed that this was acceptable and no further action will be taken.

Replacement Engine for the Harbour Launch:

The replacement engine has now been ordered and the deposit of 10% has been paid. It was agreed the old engine would be sold, once the change-over had taken place. Once the delivery date for the new engine is confirmed then a plan for its' installation will be advised.

Solar Panels on the Harbour Office Roof: The proposal will be considered again by the Committee once further information has been provided.

Pontoon Pilings

Stephen Maltby suggested that the Authority may want to consider the possibility of piles to secure the pontoons at Yealm Steps in order to reduce the amount of lateral movement of the pontoons and wear on the chains. He will look to get quotes and gather repair and maintenance data for the authority to consider.

Duty Harbour Master Parking Spaces

Stephen Maltby proposed that an application should be made to Devon County Council for 2 parking spaces for the Harbour Master and Duty Staff. Parking has been an ongoing issue at Yealm Steps and it is deemed important that the on-call Harbour Staff have guaranteed parking available, particularly when responding to incidents or emergencies. The members of the authority representing Newton and Noss Parish Council will talk to Councillor Dan Thomas about this and report back at the next meeting.

Seaweed Farming

A proposal for a Pilot Scheme to trial harvesting of seaweed in the Yealm during the Winter season has been received. Having met with the individual leading this project, the Deputy Harbour Master (DHM) then briefed the authority on the proposal. The authority expressed concerns relating to potential navigation hazards and noted that the Yealm would not be suitable for longer term seaweed harvesting. It was therefore decided to decline this request and the DHM will inform the individual of this decision.

Social Media

Having received a request that the Harbour Authority creates a form of social media platform, the DHM presented to the Authority explaining the 'pros and cons' of doing so. He felt this could be a good communication tool and an effective way of promoting the Harbour in general. The Authority agreed that Facebook would likely be the best option and that the DHM should go ahead and create a trial account ready for consideration by the Authority.

91/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Harbour Authority will be on Thursday 19th October 2023 at 6pm at the Harbour Office.

Chairman