

Folkestone Harbour Company Minutes
Meeting 18th September 2019
The Quarterhouse, Tontine Street, Folkestone – 9.15 for 9.30

Attendance

Trevor Minter OBE (TRM) – Sir Roger De Haan private office
Lorraine Hughes (LH) – Harbour Manager – Folkestone Harbour
Tom Miller (TM) - Folkestone Harbour Authority
Andy Whitham (AW) - Folkestone Harbour Authority
Steve Godfrey (SG) - Works and Maintenance Manger - Folkestone Harbour
Diane Dever (DD) - Folkestone Harbour Arm
Barry Pluck (BP) – Shepway Sports Trust
Honei Jackson (HJ) – The Hatch (Local Trader)
Richard Jackson (RJ) – The Sunny Sands Café
Dougie Pilcher (DP) – Folkestone Fisherman
Don Falvey (DF) - FYMBC
Pat Boon (PB) - FYMBC
Paul Gill (PG) – FYMBC
Leah Gaynor (LG) - FYMBC
Bill Flavell (BF) – Channel Rotary
John Beasley (JB) - FYMBC
Neal Boosey (NB) – Charter Boat Owner
Charles Buttle (CB) – Folkestone NCI
Julie Howell (JH) – Kent Police
Fred Mardle (FD) – Folkestone Trawlers/Folkestone Fisherman
Harry Mardle (HM) – Folkestone Fisherman
Kevin Sherman – Charter Boat Owner

1) Apologies for Absence: -

Jeremy Smith (JS) - Folkestone Harbour Authority
Ron Shucksmith (RS) – FYMBC
Trevor Hart (TH) - Folkestone Harbour (Volunteer)
David Harvey (DH) – Folkestone Sea Sports and Folkestone Rescue

2) Minutes of last meeting for approval

Approved as a true record

3) Matters arising not covered elsewhere

a) New Staff Structure

TRM advised that the new harbour operatives were settling into their rolls which encompass, Security, Customer Service and Maintenance. This is working well, and the harbour is now covered 24/7 in house.

b) Access for Emergency Services

KS asked how the emergency services would gain access if needed in an emergency if the gate was not fully manned at night. LH advised that the fire service and various local police vehicles have been given parking passes, however, they would never have an issue gaining access as they would just take a ticket and would be given access by harbour staff to leave the premises when needed. TRM advised that the night shift have tasks set that they need to achieve during the night, so it was unrealistic to have them in the hut at all times

c) Channel 15

NB asked if Channel 15 was manned 24/7 – LH advised that this is an information service only and manned when possible.

4) 2019 Season – Wash UP

DD updated on the success of the Harbour Arm for 2019. The weather proved challenging, but most traders were able to operate. The signal box cafe has been a welcomed addition and can be open all weathers. The Sunday markets were also well received. DD advised that weekdays saw more local visitors and weekends brought visitors from out of town. The cinema areas was utilised for showing sporting events and movies which generated some varied interest.

It was hoped that the HA will stay open until the end of December with Christmas events taking place on the platform areas and in the customs house.

(2020 season updated under Harbour Arm No 7).

5) Tombstoning and GD1

Copies of GD1 were issued with the minutes for the meeting and for conversation.

TRM explained what General Directions No 1 was and why FHC were implementing it. Tombstoning continues to be a concern around the harbour and TRM advised a meeting had taken place between, FHC, Police, Council and the Coastguard to work together to help keep everybody as safe as practically possible.

TRM advised that FHC are implementing General Direction No 1 (GD1) to enable the authorities to assist with policing this. A consultation period of 6 weeks is needed and TRM official asked that the date of this meeting (18th September 2019) be the start of the 6 week consultation period, this can only be a positive step as it is considered that for the safety of everyone concerned. The practice of tombstoning is banned completely from the implementation date of this general direction. There were no objections noted at this time.

NB advised that he felt the situation was worse this year and KS suggested that the problem had moved. LH confirmed that the situation seemed to be worse at the west side of the Pier, however, harbour staff manage the situation in line with our Safety Management System and Risk Register

It was also advised that barriers will be placed along the south quay before next season to stop the “Jumping of the Gap” this should ease the issue at the mouth of the harbour.

6) Sea Sports Update

BP advised that whilst the sea sports centre continues to grow and be successful, the weather has been a challenge this year and due to high easterly winds, 27 group sessions had to be cancelled for health and safety reasons in 2019. Bookings for 2020 have already been made and it is expected many more will be in place before the start of the 2020 season. To cope with the demand more instructors staff will need to be considered.

KS asked if paddle boarders could be reminded to stay away from the mouth of the harbour and possibly ask to sit down when boats are passing to ensure they stay on their boards. BP advised he would report this back to the instructors. NB advised that it is mainly lone paddleboarders that cause most issues, BP suggested that these are not part of the sea sport centre and there is limited control over individual visitors, however, Folkestone Rescue do a good job monitoring anybody that is acting recklessly within the harbour. It was suggested that before next season signage be displayed around the site advising of the rules and regulations within the inner and outer harbour which could encompass visitors. BP and LH will liaise with regards the best way forward with this.

TRM thanked Folkestone Rescue for their assistance with supporting the seas ports centre during the year and supporting the harbour during busy times.

7) Harbour Arm (New Season)

DD updated on plans for the 2020 season on the harbour arm. The aim for this year is for the harbour arm to remain open for as long as possible with traders committing to remain open, weather permitting.

There are some new additions for 2020 which will include a beach bar and restaurant, these will be positioned to the west side of the harbour arm connecting the board walk. The cinema will be operational again during the season showing all major sporting events and a film programme will be put in place. To help support the running costs of this a charging structure will be implemented. There is also a plan in place to animate the station with markets and the possibility of a Christmas market at the end of the year.

8) Fishing on the Harbour Arm

No major issues reported regarding Fishing on the HA. LH will be meet with DSAA before the new season (2020) regarding busy days and the areas that can be used. These areas may change; however, we hope to continue with the shared space concept.

NB advised that crabbing lines are an issue from the viaduct and asked if signs could be placed in these areas advising of the dangers. LH said that she would review this.

9) Build up of sand in the outer harbour

DP asked if a decision had been made regarding the build up of sand in the outer harbour. TM advised that the recent bathymetric survey showed an increase of sand to the west of the east head had reduced depths by up to 0.9 of a metre, however, other areas had increased in depths. We will continue to monitor and look for a solution in the spring once the storms have subsided. LH to continue looking for quotes for the work.

10) Harbour Refurbishments Update

TRM advised no new projects to report, however: -

- a) Fountain
Work to continue to find leaks and repair with the view to have it operational fully as soon as possible.
- b) New Car Park System
New ANPR parking system to be installed before Easter
- c) Maintenance
 - i) Lighthouse - The encapsulation has been removed as work is completed.
 - ii) Slipway – this is still under review and remains closed. Harbour Staff manage necessary access for movement of boats.
 - iii) SG – advised that the “Toast Rack” Outer harbour has be dug out as there was major sand build up.
- d) Lift and step access to viaduct
The Lift remains closed due to necessary snagging work. It is hoped that this will be open fully before the new season.

11) Development Update

TRM confirmed discussions are still underway with various contractors to undertake the development work. No start date confirmed but it is hoped that work would start at the beginning of the 2020. The development would start at the Leas Lift end of the harbour and would include 84 units consisting of flats and houses. The build time for these properties would be approximately 18 months.

12) Health and Safety Matters

- a) NB pointed out that the steel pins in place to protect the plants on the Viaduct were being used as weapons and being thrown at passing boats and into the water. TRM asked SG to review this and remove and replace with a different option if still required. This was only a temporary measure to protect the plants from being walked on whilst they were settling in.
- b) Tombstoning was discussed again but had been dealt with under its own heading.

No other Health and Safety matters raised.

13) A.O.B

- a) TRM welcomed PSE Julie Howell - Local Ports Intelligence Officer from Kent Police Special Branch to the meeting. PSE Julie Howell had asked to attend the meeting to promote Project Pegasus and asked that all Harbour Users remain vigilant when around the harbour and to report any incidents which may be suspicious to the authorities. She advised that 101 should be used for reporting non urgent calls, 999 for Emergencies (including Coastguard). 01303 287320 Longport Border Force. However, this is a joint agency directive and once logged the incidents will be handed to the relevant departments for investigation.
- b) HG asked if the temporary steps were to be removed now the lift steps were open. TRM advised that due to snagging they would remain until all work completed.
- c) PB asked if we had any influence on the launching of Jet skis on the sunny sand. LH advised that this would be down to the council as they own the Sunny Sands.

14) Date of Next Meeting

No further business the meeting closed at 10.50

Date of next meeting 18th March 2020 venue Quarterhouse, Tontine Street 9.15 for 9.30 start.