

Minutes of the forty fourth meeting of the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG) held on Thursday 28th April 2022 at 0930 at the Bembridge Harbour Office

In attendance: Malcolm Thorpe (MT - BHA - Chairman), Fiona Thorpe (FT - BHA), Martin Groom (MG - Bembridge PC), Alan Deeming (AD - BAC), Michael Toulmin (GMT - BHUG), Mike Samuelson (MS - Bembridge RNL), Rob Mathieson (RM - Rear-Comm Sailing BSC), Tim Smith (TS - Sailing Manager BSC), Gordon Wight (GW - BHA Ops and Safety Manager)

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies received from Jim Robinson (local boatyards) and Sandy Foster post meeting (BHYC). Not in attendance: Charles Hewitt (St Helens PC).

Tim Smith, Sailing Manager for BSC introduced to the group.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd February 2022 and Matters Arising

Additions:

4. **Dredging** - MT confirmed that Attrill's Point is not a lower priority, but only so much can be done at once (see also para 4 below).

10. **RNLI report** - the non-reinstatement of weekly raffles is a national policy by Warner Leisure Hotels. Bembridge Point Car Park - MT confirmed current arrangements to continue (RNLI collecting parking fees as part of their fundraising).

Matters Arising:

Waste Management - meeting with FT/GW BHA, Gemma Wall BSC, and Sandy Foster BHYC yet to take place. **Action FT**

Sea Buckthorn - MG reported that he has widened the pathway to approx 4' (many thanks Martin!). Further maintenance could not be carried out until the Autumn. There may be a benefit to reducing the height. Agreed that FT would ask Mark Larter for a meeting and MG would write to ML from Bembridge Parish Council. **Action FT/MG**

MT advised that the road from the aggregates yard is to have a new topping.

3. Harbour Report from GW

1. Safety & PMSC Compliance

1.1 During the period of February 2022 to date, it can be reported that BHA continues to demonstrate compliance with the PMSC and its associated guidance, in the same manner as was reported on during the annual audit conducted in December 2021.

2. Channel Navigation and Safety

2.1 All "outer harbour" navigational buoys Lat/Long locations were inspected, slightly adjusted, and confirmed to be safe and correct on the 2nd March 2022. (*query response - not enough to affect their co-ordinates - 7A needs to be moved 15m north.*)

All channel marker chains, and fittings have been inspected, and are in good order. General maintenance on buoys No 1 & 2 is ongoing. *AD queried self-cancelling notices when they extended over a period of time. Agreed that such notices should have written confirmation of cancellation.*

TS asked about the physical condition of the tide gauge post, which looks rotten towards the base - is it a potential hazard? Routine, regular safety checks are made of all Harbour infrastructure and GW confirmed that he does not consider there to be any danger of the post falling over.

3. Memorandum of Understanding 2022

3.1 On the 22nd March 2022, **BHA**, along with parties, the **I.O.W Council**, **Cowes Harbour Commission**, and **Yarmouth Harbour Commission**, signed up to an agreed M.O.U,

- 1.1 The key objective of this MoU is to facilitate cooperation between the Authorities and sharing of resources in the event of pollution by oil or other hazardous substances into the sea within or surrounding the navigable waters of each Authority (a “**Marine Pollution Incident**”).
- 1.2 The Isle of Wight, being geographical located as it is, does not allow the same level of logistical access as the mainland. When considering this in response to emergency situations, an inherent risk is created whereby the necessary clean-up and response resources may not be allocated as quickly or appropriately as necessary in relation to a Marine Pollution Incident.
- 1.3 The Authorities have therefore, in consultation with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (the “**MCA**”), agreed that this MoU should be put in place in order to provide the ability to cooperate and share resources between each Authority in the event of a Marine Pollution Incident.

4. 2022 Operational summary

4.1 Our 2022 Spring / Summer season got off to a good start, in particular the Easter weekend, which was extremely full and busy, again supported by many of our repeat visitors.

Rallies and visitors can now enjoy the benefit of a “**Rally Rafting**” area as a result of the recent dredging operation and upgrades to the Duver visitors’ pontoon at the northeast side (*only 3 days in May with no rallies*).

Bookings for our event weekends are very healthy and we look forward to busy season (*fully booked for Rock the Boat and Family Fun Weekend. Discussion on safety - see para 4.2 below**).

The new 2022 Team are: **GW, Jack Miskin, Clare Hogg, Karen Peck, Sian Austin**, joined by **new seasonal staff members: Tom and Charlie White**, and **Matt Hickman** (are back for a 3rd season), **Deb Bates, Alan Mackay, Sarah Gabbani, Henry Allen, Ella Painter, Rebecca West, Joe Martin**.

4.2 Reinstatement of the Operational and Safety Partnership Group (OSPG)

* Following discussion on safe practice in the inner Harbour channel at times of high boat traffic, it was agreed to reinstate the OSP Group. First meeting: 11th May. Participants: GW, Tim Smith (BSC), Duncan Bates (BHYC). Emphasis in particular on advance planning for busy weekends such as Bank Holidays and events eg Bembridge Harbour Family Fun Weekend.

Gordon Wight Report ends

4. On-going dredging / Bembridge groyne

The contractor is working mid-way along the east side of the Entrance Channel, which appears to be having a beneficial effect for the BSC BODA pool. Paul Tossell is due to do a survey for BSC which may continue on an annual basis.

JMC will be testing material at Attrill’s Point for commercial viability - date TBC. MS noted that it would be good if sand build-up around the groyne could be relocated.

A small amount of silt removal is needed at the eastern side of Fisherman’s - hopper barge currently being sourced. The Angling Club (AD) is concerned about silt from the river and its effect on the viability of their moorings. GW has observed mud shift in the BAC area and Mill Pond. BAC may need further Harbour assistance and much appreciate the help given so far.

MT had recently attended a National Farmers Union meeting about Hants and IoW Wildlife Trust’s proposal to introduce beavers to the Eastern Yar (currently in consultation). The famers are not in favour.

MS reported that BHUG's EA contact (Vicky Spencer) has agreed to pass on the enquiry about the sluice gates to the person concerned within the EA. MS would follow up. **Action: MS**

BHA's responsibility is to dredge the navigable channels - the clubs are responsible for their own dredging areas - MS confirmed this is correct. GW noted that the major dredging undertaken over the past 12-months has increased depths and led to improved safety - feedback has been very positive. The total amount of material removed for disposal (to the Nab Tower) is governed by licence. The 3-year rolling programme will be reviewed in 2023.

Bembridge Groyne:

There is no change regarding Bembridge groyne, as per item 5 of the minutes of 3.2.22.

5. Legal Challenges (JR2)

Together, the two JR Challenges raised 17 issues, 16 of which have been found against BHT. Resulting legal costs have been paid and some are yet to be awarded. Re JR2, all papers have been submitted to BHT and the Courts. It is now up to BHT whether they continue or not. BHA has not been notified as yet of any court date.

GMT asked whether the outcome of JR2 has any impact on the Harbour development plan (settled by JR1 and a Court of Appeal judgement as attached to these Minutes). MT confirmed that no, it does not.

6. Harbour Development Plan

MT confirmed that design team meetings were underway dealing with detailed background work to sign off items under approval. John Peck Construction has been appointed as main Contractor. The appointment of a Project Manager is still in progress.

Phasing of the overall project is as potentially outlined below:

Phase 1 - the admin/facilities complex, new sewerage treatment plant and sea wall at the Duver, and associated car parking. Construction to commence September 2022 - completion March 2023.

Phase 2 – Bembridge Marina car park and floating facilities.

Phase 3 – New residential scheme at the Duver.

Phase 4 – ex-silt lagoon site for mitigation purposes.

Phase 5 – New residential scheme at the Marina [note: Phase 3 and 5 may be swapped in timescales].

MT had been due to give a talk to BHYC members at one of the Club's off-season monthly members' evenings, charting a "then and now" of changes in the Harbour over the last 10 years since ownership that would have included development plans although that was not the focus - the Club subsequently cancelled the evening due to actions outside their control.

MT offered to give an outline on the new admin and facilities building plan to BHUG members at the Harbour Office (max 10 please). Michael Toulmin to advise. **Action: GMT**

As previously discussed, there will be a dedicated page for general information on the Harbour website, to be added as soon as possible. **Action: BHA**

7. Events programme 2022

MG kindly requested the latest **Queen's Platinum Jubilee** programme from BPC, received post the meeting. FT had hoped for an update from Charles Hewitt on related events in St Helens as event info on the PC website is not updated for 2022. Also inclusion on the site of **Duver Dash** poster and "shout out" for local volunteers - also mentioned in case any BHAG members can help (Sat 28th May to help put out course markers, Sun 29th Course Marshals, Registration etc from 0900).

Bembridge Harbour Family Fun Weekend - Friday 12th to Sunday 14th August

MS confirmed that the RNLI lifeboat will attend on Saturday 13th (operations allowing), having kindly moved their Open Day to the Sunday which is much appreciated. FT/GW are in touch with Alan Doe re lifejacket checks (other dates as well as FFW). Beach activities - FT will get in touch with Dorian Campbell (cc Gemma Wall) – **Action: FT** BHYC are hosting the Great Bembridge Paper Boat Race. AD raised the possibility of expired flare collection (agreed not appropriate at FFW). GW will circulate latest info from the MCA following the meeting. **Action: GW**

A number of on-the-water events such as Scow and Redwing anniversaries also taking place.

Bembridge Gig Fest - 24th and 25th September

Co-organisers Yarmouth Gig Rowing Club will bring 2 coastal rowing boats to Bembridge the weekend prior to the event (17th/18th Sept) to offer "taster sessions" to anyone who wants a go. YGRC also offer taster sessions to non-members at their weekly Wed eve and Sun morning rows out of Yarmouth Harbour. No experience necessary. Info: www.website:yarmouthgigrowingclub.co.uk

FT asked if the clubs and PCs might be willing to help promote these Harbour events, through info on any event lists, inclusion of event posters on FB pages etc. (note from FT - as always all are fundraisers for a nominated Island charity - this year once again, the Sophie Rolf Trust, KissyPuppy)

8. Houseboats

Day Dawn was dismantled last winter - its poor condition meant this had to be done in situ. A replacement vessel is due circa June 2022. Rijnstroom IV left the Harbour on 19th April - a replacement vessel is due in Autumn 2023.

As already well established, all new houseboats are required to have sewage facilities in place before their arrival. 2 older houseboats have so far been fitted with facilities provided and paid for by BHA (minutes of 3.2.22 item 11). Hopefully more houseboat installations can be completed in 2023.

9. Members' Reports

Bembridge RNLI (MS) - To date, 15 people have been assisted. Call outs incl a PanPan off St Catherine's Point the day after Storm Eunice which turned out to be hoax, and the following day a 12m yacht aground on Ryde Sands in F8. An ocean rowing boat caught on Bembridge Ledge was towed in the Harbour where it stayed for several days.

The ALB is having an engine swap as part of a refurb.

Bembridge Angling Club (AD) - AD reconfirmed that new byelaws are about to come into force banning netting in the Harbour.

A significant increase in the popularity of paddleboards and also kayaks has increased potential risk, especially around the far end of Duver pontoon where they are not very visible to boats underway. As well as private users, Tackt-Isle have them and BHYC hire out SUPs.

Bembridge Sailing Club (RM) – the Illusions have added an extra weekend to their racing programme and the Redwing fleet is about to be launched. The Club is “waking up”, with children’s sailing over Easter.

MS noted that the AED boxes need replacing at both clubs. GW recommended Defrib Warehouse for replacement pads and batteries. Replacement boxes with digital codes are £700. Louise Walker is GW point of contact at the Isle of Wight Ambulance Service.

BHUG (GMT) - nothing to add to what has already been discussed.

Bembridge Parish Council (MG) - nothing to add to what has already been discussed.

BHYC, St Helens Parish Council, marine businesses - representatives not in attendance at the meeting.

10. Any other business

Sewage outfall on St Helens and Seaview as bathing beaches - Southern Water runs a website called **Beachbuoy** - which “gives you near real-time information about releases of stormwater or wastewater at your favourite spot” - <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/water-for-life/our-bathing-waters/beachbuoy>

11. Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 1230. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 23rd June 2022.