

Minutes of the forty third meeting of the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG) held on Thursday 3rd February 2022 at 0930 at Bembridge Sailing Club

In attendance: Malcolm Thorpe (MT - BHA - Chairman), Fiona Thorpe (FT - BHA), Martin Groom (MG - Bembridge PC), Alan Deeming (AD - BAC), Michael Toulmin (GMT - BHUG), Tom Robinson (TR - Boatyards), Mike Samuelson (MS - Bem B RNLi), Rob Mathieson (RM - Rear-Comm Sailing BSC) Gemma Wall (GW - General Manager/Club Sec BSC), Sandy Foster - Club Manager/Sec BHC)

1. Apologies and Welcome

Apologies received from Gordon Wight (GMW) and Charles Abel Smith (CAS). MT welcomed new members to the meeting: Sandy Foster (Brading Haven YC) and Charles Hewitt (St Helens PC) with Tom Robinson standing in for Jim Robinson, and extended thanks to BSC for the use of their dining room and refreshments provided.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 6th October 2021

Agreed, with items to be raised covered on the agenda for this meeting.

3. Harbour Report from GMW (read out in his absence)

1. Safety & PMSC Compliance

1.1 On 7th December 2021 the Harbour was inspected and audited by **Mark Robinson** (MRMC) in relation to its compliance with the **Port Marine Safety Code**.

The following was recorded in the auditor's report:

"We would like to extend our thanks to the Duty Holder and the OSM, SBM and BM for their time afforded to us to satisfactorily complete our initial external PMSC annual compliance audit ...

On a final personal note, and without prejudice, we would like to extend our thanks, gratitude, and appreciation to Gordon Wight (OSM) for enabling us to undertake these external audits, providing assistance, being open to our comments and exhibiting a very professional stance on all aspects of what the PMSC is designed to achieve.

Under his leadership and guidance, we have seen BHA grow from strength to strength, with continual improvements being made to manage the safety of the harbour and always with a steady hand of the helm of PMSC compliance."

We are recognised by the MCA as PMSC Compliant Harbour, and now feature on the recently published gov.uk compliance list (www.gov.uk/government/publications/port-marine-safety-code-compliant-ports/port-marine-safety-code-compliant-ports-list)

2. Channel Navigation and Safety

2.1 All navigational buoys Lat /Long locations were inspected and confirmed in January 2022, arrangements to adjust the location of No 2 and 4 buoys are in hand. All channel marker chains, and fittings have been inspected, and are in good order.

2.2 As of 7th December 2021 LNTM15/21 has been in effect following damage being caused to channel marker buoy 6A. A replacement has been purchased and will be put on station during the period 3rd - 5th February 2022 (*if staff levels allow - Covid issues*).

3. 2021 Operational summary

3.1 On 25th January the MCA attended BHA and conducted a detailed inspection of the Harbours **Port Waste Management Plan**. Following a 4-hour process, the inspectors concluded that the Harbour has no compliance non-conformities to be reported and was in excellent order in relation to requirements and recommendations set by MCA and the EA.

3.2 A very busy and successful winter season thus far. General winter maintenance tasks are ongoing and should be completed by the beginning of March in readiness for what is hoped to be a busy spring / summer season. GMW Report ends.

In response to a query, MT confirmed that GMW plans to retire in September 2022.

BHA Port Waste Management Plan - covered in GMW report. GW for BSC and SF for BHYC expressed interest in learning more and exploring the possibilities of a combined plan. FT to arrange a separate meeting to discuss. **Action: FT**

4. Dredging

Inner Harbour dredging was completed in Oct/Nov at the Duver pontoon and an area at BBS.

JMC Aggregates is continuing to concentrate on the eastern side of the Entrance Channel. Work currently underway was raised by GMT - discussed between MT and the contractor, with further meetings planned. A large volume of material has been taken out. Grading and washing done off site (at Robin Hill).

The material in the Channel is varied, so poor quality material is being redistributed to where higher quality material has been dug out. A hole so created, near the groyne, is being refilled (2.2.22 and 3.2.22). Fill-in work will be carried out, whenever possible, on an outgoing tide.

Entrance Channel dredging is governed by the Dredging Protocol agreed between the Harbour and IoW Council (ref: item 3 of minutes of 6.10.21). It was generally considered that the current dredging programme may result in a reduction of sand deposits in BSC's BODA pool and elsewhere.

Arrangements between BHA and the contractor are confidential due to commercial sensitivity.

AD outlined changes created by the Duver dredging and recorded gratitude to GMW, who had arranged an alternative mooring for his boat. There is another Angling Club mooring near the inside of the pontoon, close to the edge of the dredging drop-off. The occupying boat has been sold (Esk Lady) – a replacement awaited. GMW aware of all.

5. Bembridge Point Groyne

Whilst continuing to be supportive of refurbishment as a community initiative, BHA's position in relation to the groyne is unchanged (ref item 5 of minutes of 6.10.22).

MT had a meeting with Paul Tosswell in October. PT's view on a refurbished groyne is that over a short period of time, sand would overtop it, the build-up from which could then be removed by the contractor.

It was recognised that the level of dredging being carried out alters the situation and could prove beneficial to the ingress of material into the Harbour. This will be closely monitored. **Action: BHA**

6. Legal Challenges (see also item 6 of minutes of 6.10.21)

MT summary:

JR1 - BHT appeal of 2 items from their original challenge was totally refused by the Court of Appeal on 21.2.22 (post meeting: copies available from the Harbour Office).

JR2 Challenge against MT/FT concerning financial aspects within the Harbour is on-going. BHT claimed on 7 grounds, 6 of which were refused. The final 1 remaining will be heard in the courts. No date yet known.

7. Harbour Development Plan

The High Court decision releases the planning approval and J106 agreement which can now be progressed. A Project Manager will be appointed in the near future. Phase 1 will be the admin/facilities complex, new sewerage treatment plant and sea wall at the Duver, and the Marina car park and floating facilities block; MT confirmed that the timescale is to commence construction in September 2022 for completion in March 2023.

GMT asked if MT would release update reports so that people could understand how the development plan would evolve. MT confirmed the community will be kept informed of progress. Phase 1 can only be undertaken out of season in the winter period and the level of disruption to Harbour users and local residents/businesses, expected to be minimal, will be discussed in advance with those who may be affected. MT stated that he hopes that after 6 years of constant interference from BHT, having lost their case against this planning approval on every front, they will now allow these Harbour improvements to continue without further intervention.

MT confirmed that having only recently received planning, no final decisions had been made on the structure of the residential development. Various options were being considered.

(Gemma Wall left the meeting)

8. Events programme 2022

FT confirmed 2022 dates (with one amendment being the Bembridge Gig Fest which has moved to September):

- **Duver Dash** (part of the Isle of Wight Festival of Running) - Sunday 29th May
- **Rock the Boat** - Saturday 4th June
- **Bembridge Harbour Family Fun Weekend** - Friday 12th to Sunday 14th August
- **Bembridge Gig Fest** - Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th September

St Helens Parish Council will be discussing the **Duver Dash** at their next meeting. West Wight Sports and Community Centre Trust are the organisers of the IoW Festival of Running and will be supporting the event and hopefully able to supply a few volunteer Marshals (although the Festival culminates in various events in West Wight the following weekend where their volunteers mostly live). It is hoped that some volunteers may come from the St Helens community. TR mentioned Ryde Harriers as having a bank of potential Marshals - FT will make enquiries (many thanks Tom).

FT has also written to St Helens CE Primary School to encourage involvement and participation.

Rock the Boat in June coincides with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Bembridge PC - led by Councillor Harriet Brabazon, is developing a programme of events in liaison with St Helens PC.

The **Family Fun Weekend** will not include a Village Regatta this year. There are a number of anniversaries this season and the Redwings (125) and Scows (70) are planning celebratory events including a sail past on Saturday 13th.

The RNLI has moved their Open Day to Sunday 14th and MS kindly offered to establish whether the Lifeboat could come into the Harbour on Saturday 13th (many thanks Mike). **Action: MS**

9. Harbour website

After much delay, a new Harbour website was launched at the end of January. It replaces the 10-year-old site which utilised Adobe Flash, now discontinued, and outdated technology. Its successor has been fully adapted for use on mobile devices such as smart phones, tablets etc and is hopefully more user friendly and versatile.

Some pages are not yet ready (eg Places to Visit) but will be reinstated in due course. Feedback welcome. The security of sites was discussed. FT confirmed the new site has a security certificate.

10. Members' Reports

BHUG (GMT) - BHUG is not currently active other than keeping its members updated.

The issue of siltation from the River Yar was discussed - BHUG had previously approached the EA but nothing was gained.

MT has requested a meeting with the EA and Southern Water to establish the current position. MS had previously offered to make enquires about an EA contact of John Raymond who had been very helpful. **Action: MS**

AD noted the severe and growing problem of siltation around the area of the Angling Club.

MT expressed frustration that the RYA Green/Blue team seemed reluctant to engage in any detail, but it's a great initiative which could be brilliant. MS said he would feed this back.

BHYC (SF) - Sandy is in her 4th week. The Club is very busy and membership is buoyant. Re Covid, business is back to normal and they are looking to maximise efficiencies and invest in site maintenance.

The Club had been nominated for an RYA Club of the Year Award - results due on 26th Feb (MS noted that newly appointed RYA CE, Sara Sutcliffe is due to visit both clubs this year).

AD asked if cadet members could be reminded to take care when sailing near moored boats, and that if a collision occurs, an Accident Report is completed. Damage has sometimes been done to Angling Club boats.

Bembridge Sailing Club (RM) - cadet courses will be run normally this season. The new Sailing Manager is Tim Smith. There are 37 Illusions in the dinghy park, with 20 out most weekends. MT confirmed mid-Harbour mooring buoys will be reinstated before the end of March, commencing nearest to Fisherman's pontoon.

There are various anniversaries throughout what is looking like being a very busy season, and 2023 marks 40 years of Illusion sailing at BSC.

Bembridge Angling Club (AD) - AD reported a paint splatter on a boat (Amy) which is thought to have occurred during some BHA maintenance. AD would investigate further. *(post the meeting FT spoke to the owner, who was in the office for unrelated reasons, so no need for further investigation Alan - many thanks FT)*

AD confirmed that new byelaws are about to come into force banning netting in the Harbour.

AD queried whether there was a new requirement for insurance to include wreck removal, possibly included in Harbour Dues? - FT confirmed that Harbour Dues remain unchanged. *(post meeting note: BHA General Terms and Conditions item 3 - Liability, Indemnity and Insurance para 3.1.2 stipulates. This is not a new requirement, having been part of the T&Cs for some time FT)*

Hampshire & IoW Wildlife Trust - Secrets of the Solent, are creating wall murals of local fish. MS noted all have now been allocated but there are jigsaw puzzle pieces which might be of interest.

AD - government funding is available for commercial and hobby fishing including recycling of old nets (in case of non-use on Fisherman's pontoon)

Bembridge Parish Council (MG) - litter picks restart on 26th February. Volunteers start from the lifeboat station and work round into the Harbour.

Plans are underway to tidy up the slipway at Paddock Drive - there are 5 or 6 dinghies, a number of which appear abandoned, owners unknown, that will need dealing with first.

Bembridge RNLI (MS) – the offshore boathouse has now reopened (post-Covid) but the weekly raffle not yet reinstated (national policy). MS recorded thanks for car parking revenue made available through Bembridge Point Beach. Together with BSC overflow parking donation over £1,300 had been raised.

No shouts as yet this year. 37 in 2021 including one "life saved" call out. Dawn Hodge has recently become the first lady helm of the D-class boat.

Beach life rings on Silver Sands Beach - these are in a poor state and BHA have previously confirmed to BPC that they will not maintain them.

Sea Buckthorn - needs attention. Volunteers have in the past done a general cut-back. FT to liaise with Mark Larter (Natural England). DG has a contact who might be willing to help - FT will send info to DG. **Action: FT**

The rock piles created on the beach during lockdown have now been removed.

St Helens Parish Council (CH) - the Council has lots of new members. Council meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month.

Marine businesses (TR) - all are very busy. New builds are ongoing but everyone is finding it very difficult to source materials and parts, including engines. Bembridge Marine's RIB hire is already full for August and most of July, and their staff of 6 has been increased to 9. MT noted that BBS is completely full, with a waiting list of 18 boats.

11. Any other business

AD query on the condition of Colonel's Hard near the Lifeboat Station. In the past there has been an annual clear up of weed, but to repair it could create potential liability. The foreshore is currently used at own risk.

Houseboat waste facilities: the Harbour installed FOC treatment plants to 2 older houseboats in 2020, with 5-6 remaining from the original 12-13 in 2012.

Possible entrance channel south of St Helens Fort - on hold as current emphasis is on improving the current channel.

12. Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 1140. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 28th April 2022.