

THE CROUCH HARBOUR AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON

10th APRIL 2024

CHAIRMAN: C Freeman

PRESENT: C Bailey, B Calver, P Cottis, R Fancy, S Hollington, J James, N Parsons, P Rawson, Cllr. N Skeens, K Wickham

APOLOGIES: T Dann, S Harrison, C Marfleet, R Pitt, I Radford, Z Shean, P Woodford

6 *Declaration of Business Interests*

Mr Parsons declared an interest in his capacity as Mooring Agent to the Crouch Harbour Authority.

Mr James declared an interest as the CHA's Consultant Architect.

7 *Roach Area Fairways & Conservation Committee*

The Chairman reported that on the 1st April 2024 a decision had been made between himself and Mr Wickham to wind up the Roach Area Fairways & Conservation Committee, as they had been the only two remaining members for several years.

This resulted in Mr Wickham no longer having a seat on the Advisory Committee representing the RAFCC.

The Chairman said he would like to propose subject to members agreement that Mr Wickham continue to attend the Advisory Committee meetings in his role as Chairman of the Crouch Harbour Authority giving members the opportunity to discuss matters directly with the Chairman. It would be a none voting position and all discussions would continue to be officially minuted and passed through the Authority. Agreed.

8 MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6TH DECEMBER 2023.

8.1 It was proposed by PC Rawson and seconded by Mrs Fancy to approve the Minutes as a correct record.

8.2 *Water Quality*

Mr Calver acknowledged receipt of emails concerning ecoli levels in the river and whilst not a matter for the Authority, he would like to know, following the recent news report of ecoli levels which were found on the river Thames, where to seek advice as to whether it was safe to swim in the Crouch.

This was endorsed by Mr Skeens who pointed out that the Council were having difficulty in getting a dialogue going with the local sewerage facility and wondered if the Authority had a relationship with them and whether it was possible to speak to someone who provided the information on the ecoli levels to try and find out what the figures meant.

Mr Wickham responded by saying that the same question had been asked of the Authority on more than one occasion by various bodies if the river was safe for recreational use, so he took it upon himself as Chairman of the Authority to contact several organisations to try and get some form up to date information. Very little information came back from those who were consulted other than a definitive answer from Sir John Whittingdale's researcher. Mr Wickham then went on to give a summary of the outcome of his research. He said that a report would be presented to the CHA members at their meeting on the 2nd May and would then be presented to the Advisory Committee. Mr Skeens advised that on receipt of the report he would pass on the information to the Council and the Yacht Clubs.

Mr Parsons reported that enquiries were being made as to outcome of raw sewerage being leaked from a sewerage outlet in Wickford at the top of the Crouch at the beginning of January. He said there should be an obligation that if there was a sewerage leak from a known discharge point then those people should be obligated to tell the authorities.

Mr Wickham said that the Authority had done all they could to try and find out as much information as possible regarding water quality.

9 MINUTES OF THE CROUCH HARBOUR AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON THE 7TH SEPTEMBER 2023

10 *Works Licence application for Replacement of Burnham Town Pontoon*

The Chairman reported that all members should have received the documentation for the Works Licence application to replace Burnham Town Pontoon.

There was a query concerning the positioning of the handrail, and whether it should be placed down the middle or on the outer edges of the pontoon. Mr James responded by saying that when the CHA members had been consulted, he had objected strongly to the placement of railings on the edges of the pontoon, as he felt it could potentially be dangerous, and went on to express his concerns.

Mr Calver pointed out that from the information provided, it was unclear as to what was being recommended for the placement of the railings. Mr James said that he was of the understanding that the planning application and design of the new pontoon had railings down both sides, and this is what had gone into the Council. Mr Skeens whilst he was not at the Burnham Town Council meeting when discussions took place, but it was his understanding that it had also been suggested railings down the middle. He asked if a recommendation in this regard should be sent to Maldon Council Planning, however the Chairman pointed out that from the Advisory Committee's point of view, the information provided to them was just to note.

Mr Wickham confirmed that the Works Licence application had not yet been approved by the Authority and was still to be finalised and discussed.

The Chairman said it was clear from discussions that members favoured a middle railing, which would be minuted and passed onto the CHA Trustees.

Members then went on to discuss the merits of having "floating wings" on the pontoon to facilitate crabbing thus avoiding obstruction on the main walkway, which had been done at the public pontoon at West Mersey. Mr Wickham pointed out that the Authority could only make comment on information provided to the Authority.

11 *Dredging Licences Issued*

These were noted.

11.1 *Dredging License Application to Dredge 750 cu.m - Kingsman's Farm Road, Hullbridge,*

In answer to a query raised by Mr Parsons's regarding dredging that had taken place at Kingsman's Farm Road, Mr Wickham confirmed that the amount dredged was minimal and had resulted from work being carried out for the installation of a pontoon to the property.

12 *Harbour Masters Update*

There was nothing to report.

13 Any Other Business:

13.1 *Noise Complaints at Baltic Wharf*

Mr Skeens reported that there had been complaints coming to the Council about the noise at Baltic Wharf and sought members views and whether it was an increasing problem.

Mr Cottis pointed out that since Christmas Baltic Wharf had started to export scrap metal from the Wharf, which had resulted in increased noise levels and countless lorries coming to and from the Wharf each day.

The Chairman advised that any noise complaints regarding the activities at Baltic wharf should be addressed to Rochford District Council.

13.2 *Report from Marine Unit*

P.C. Rawson reported that the Marine Unit had started their anti-social behaviour patrols last weekend, which would continue each weekend through to September.

He went on to say that following the speeding awareness they had caught two jet skis in the river Colne and another one in the Blackwater at Steeple Bay who had been given words of advice and details taken.

Mr Wickham referred to the jet skis at Southend and the cost of launching a jet ski for a day. P.C. Rawson went on to say that Southend had got a Public Space Protection Order and explained the rules for anyone wishing to jet ski from the Thorpe Bay slip. Colchester Council are also looking at their rules and regulations and making possible changes, but this is still ongoing. He confirmed that whilst every effort had been made to get a Public Space Protection Order in place for the river Crouch the decision was made that it was not deemed severe enough to warrant one being in place.

He also went on to say that the Marine Unit had taken delivery of a small 4m RIB two weeks ago and were currently waiting for it to be coded. Whilst it would not be moored in the Harbour permanently it would still be out on patrol in the Crouch. Delivery of the 13m cabin RIB is anticipated sometime in the summer and will be based permanently at BYH.

Mr Parsons praised the efforts that had been made by the Authority and the Marine Police which had resulted in less abuse on the river by jet skiers and hoped that the same emphasis would be put in place this year.

He pointed out that at Fambridge, they were suffering from large motorboats speeding and creating large amounts of wash, which was a matter of concern. P.C. Rawson said he would make a note.

13.3 *Report from Clive Marfleet*

The Chairman summarised a report submitted by Mr Marfleet on the canoe activities during last year. He said that there was nothing in the report that had not been discussed at the meeting, however, he would ensure that the members received a copy.

13.4 *Next meeting Date*

10th July 2024.

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There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.