

THE CROUCH HARBOUR AUTHORITY

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ZOOM MEETING

HELD ON

2ND DECEMBER 2020

CHAIRMAN: **K Wickham**

PRESENT: **C Bailey, B Calver, T Dann, R Fancy, M Fellows, C Freeman, R Hawkins, J James, A Shearring, P Woodford**

APOLOGIES: **P Channer, R Pitt**

IN ATTENDANCE: **Susan Harrison Harbour Master, M Robarts D.P.**

The Chairman welcomed Millie Fellows representing Natural England.

39 MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020

39.1 It was proposed by Mr Freeman and seconded by Mr James that the Minutes of the Advisory Committee be signed as a true record. **AGREED.**

40 Any Other Business:

The Chairman asked if there were any items members wished to raise that were not on the Agenda.

41.1 *Risk Assessment & Hazard Identification*

The D.P. asked members to give some consideration as to how the Advisory Committee could fit in with the Risk Assessment process and hazard identification through dissemination of information and utilising the advisory body who have representative seats for different users.

All ideas welcome. Either email the D.P. or the Chairman.

41.2 To try and bring some efficiency and making it easier for the Harbour Office when co-ordinating documentation on receipt of applications etc to make the process more streamline both for the benefit of the applicant and the Office.

The D.P. is currently waiting to hear back from the MMO about the processing of applications.

There were no further items under Any Other Business.

42 MINUTES OF THE CROUCH HARBOUR AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON THE 29TH OCTOBER 2020

42.1 MINUTES OF THE CROUCH HARBOUR AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON THE 26TH NOVEMBER 2020

Not available for acceptance but will be circulated when approved.

43 *Request from Paul Woodford*

Mr Woodford reported that a lot of people had expressed concern that the tides were becoming higher and the seawalls were getting into a perilous state in some places on the Crouch. He asked whether the larger powered boats could be stopped when there was an Environment Agency alert or flood warning before a high tide to try and prevent over topping of the seawalls.

The D.P. responded by saying that the Authority were required by law to allow freedom of navigation or open port duty. The Authority did not have the powers to prohibit certain craft and would require a full HRO. Therefore, the first step would have to be through education.

Mr Woodford said he had put together a video on YouTube which showed on a high tide how much water was displaced by some of the larger boats. The Harbour Master asked if Mr Woodford could provide a copy of the video link as it could be something that could be utilised amongst other safety measures.

Mr James pointed out that there was a Flood Map on the Environment Agency website which showed the areas that were most likely to be flooded at various stages and said he would send the Chairman the appropriate link to download the Map.

The Chairman said that he would then draft a document with the evidence and present it to the Chairman of the Authority for his consideration to take possible action.

44 *PWC's*

The D.P. explained that the Authority were not alone in what it had experienced over the last season with the invasion of PWC's, open water swimming, jet skis etc. The UKHMA has written to the Dft explaining that the powers given are not sufficient. The Authority will continue with the national lobby and work with them as everyone has concerns at the reports in the media of loss of life in the UK with inexperienced people using the waterways.

In the New Year, the Authority will be looking to form a safety plan with the intention of consulting with the leisure user groups, as it was important that people were made aware of the new risks that were being posed and to also get the Clubs involved. The Authority are looking at several options to try and get the message across through the education process and to also try and identify where people are launching.

Rachel Fancy asked if this was purely to do with the safety of people as there were problems along the rivers with disturbance to wildlife which had increased due to the use of inflatables/paddleboards etc. This was backed by Mr Shearring. He said he had raised the matter some time ago about the disturbance to the waders and that something needed to be done at Clements Green Creek. He pointed out that the 8k signs were completely obscured now. The Harbour Master confirmed that the 8k speed limit signs were down for renewal next year.

It was established that Clements Green Creek comes under the jurisdiction of the Authority, but the top end of the Creek was privately owned. The Chairman suggested that Essex Wildlife Trust contact with the owners, who are believed to be Simon Hollington and Essex County Council to seek their permission to put some signs up.

The D.P. pointed out that the Authority's powers did not extend beyond the waterway, but they would be happy to listen to the RSPB or those associations that have concerns to try and target an education campaign together.

Mr Shearring also raised the issues of PWC's operating in the river and that Essex Marina had been granted permission to demonstrate Jet Skis opposite Bridgemarsh Island. This was endorsed by Mr James who said that he would like to promote a policy to ban Jet skis in the River Crouch. The Chairman said that this proposal was being discussed by the Chairman of the Authority and the Harbour Master.

The Harbour Master said the Authority did not have the power to ban the use of PWC's but a formal contract had been entered into with Essex Marina who had been given certain caveats to adhere to which had given the Authority more control and helped with identification of the craft.

45 *Essex Marina – Works Licence Application to Replace 6 Existing Piles due to Corrosion*

Awaiting feedback from Essex Marina who have been asked to provide a set of plans with more details.

46 *Essex Marina – Works Licence Application to Install 2 Additional Piles to give the Fuel Barge a New Permanent Location Next to the Hoist Dock*

Awaiting feedback from Essex Marina who have been asked to provide a set of plans with more details. The Harbour Master pointed out that this was for the existing fuel barge to relocate it to a more useful location.

47 *Initial Enquiry for Proposed Jetty at Creeksea Ferry Inn*

The applicant has been asked to provide further details. On receipt of documentation these will be circulated to the members for their consideration whether the Authority were likely to grant a Works Licence.

The Harbour Master pointed out that this could be contentious because of the proximity to the commercial wharf and the shipping movements.

Further details are awaited from the applicant.

48 *MMO Consultation on Application for MLA/2020/00260, Little Hayes Railway Embankment Stabilisation*

Further information is awaited. The cost of the Works Licence fees was raised at the last Authority meeting.

49 *Enquiry from Liam Ellis to Bring Barge into the River*

The initial enquiry to bring a much larger vessel into the river has been shelved. The owners are now wishing to bring a smaller barge approximately 79ft into the River Crouch.

The Authority have asked for clarification of the usage of the vessel and have also been in contact with Chelmsford City Council whose area of jurisdiction it falls into, the owners are also in dialogue with the Council.

Before the vessel is allowed into the river the owner must adhere to certain caveats and providing these are all met the Authority have no ground to say that the vessel cannot come into the river.

Mr James expressed his concern as to the usage of the vessel and said the Authority should be cautious.

50 Any Other Business:

50.1 The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 7th April 2021. For the foreseeable future it appears likely that the meetings will continue to be held via Zoom. If any matters arise before the next meeting members will be notified and provided with the relevant information.

The Chairman will liaise with the Chairman of the Authority as to whether the AGM will revert to the April meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.