

**THE CROUCH HARBOUR AUTHORITY**

**MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ZOOM MEETING**

**HELD ON**

**7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021**

**CHAIRMAN:**           **K Wickham**

**PRESENT:**           **C Bailey, M Cohen, T Dann, C Freeman, R Hawkins, R Hall, J James, C Marfleet, M Outten, N Parsons, P Pope, C Slade, Z Shean, P Woodford**

**APOLOGIES:**       **P Cottis, R Fancy, V Gouldsmith, S Hollington, R Pitt**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**   **Susan Harrison Harbour Master**

The following members were introduced and welcomed onto the Committee

Mandy Cohen & Charlene Slade representing the Essex Association of Local Councils

Ryan Hall representing Port of London Authority

Clive Marfleet representing Kayakers

Marc Outten representing the Essex Wildlife Trust

Zena Shean representing Swimmers

14       MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021.

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

15       Any Other Business:

15.1     *Jet Skis*

Mr Parsons said he was pleased to report that the issues with the Jet skis had significantly decreased since the CHA had been putting in a presence up-river and gave credit to the CHA.

The Harbour Master said that it was proposed to have a presence during the weekends and Bank Holiday in August. The Marine Police are also being encouraged to put in a presence.

16       MINUTES OF THE CROUCH HARBOUR AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON THE 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021 & 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021

16.1     Mr Parsons queried the numbering on the Gold Minutes. The Chairman pointed out that the content of the Minutes was in fact correct but there had been a typo error on the numbering which will be amended.

17 *2022 Schedule of Fees*

In answer to a query from Mr Woodford concerning the measurement of boats, the Harbour Master confirmed that there were no changes to the measurement of leisure boats, but the changes only referred to ski boats. (Ski Licences will only be granted to vessels with an overall length, not greater than 7 metres. This measurement is to be taken from the stem to stern and **does not** include any bathing platform fittings).

Mr Marfleet said he was pleased to see no increase in charges for the kayaks and asked how many kayaks had been sold this year. The Harbour Master said there had been a huge uptake for people registering their kayaks, sailboards and paddle boards and had been well received.

Mr Marfleet queried craft which were exempt from training and felt that it required clearer definition of what the CHA interpret as a training session. The Harbour Master said that if the wording was misleading it was something to take up at a later stage but confirmed that if you were a Club and had craft used solely for training purposes then it would be exempt.

Mr Parsons said there had been a couple of examples at North Farnbridge where kayaks and paddleboards were being launched and the problem was that they believed that by having a CHA Licence they did not need to seek permission to launch their craft from private areas.

Information is publicised on the CHA website about launching but the Harbour Master agreed to send an email to all registered craft for Canoes, Kayaks, SUPs and Sailboards to get the message across that privately owned areas cannot be used for launching without permission of the owners.

Mr Marfleet said he would pass the information onto his members.

In answer to a query regarding the proposed costs for a PWC. The Harbour Master confirmed that the costs of the PWC and Tracker was still under discussion with the Trustees and a final decision yet to be made. It was mooted that PWC Licence holders may require for the jet ski to have a tracker on board. The thoughts are that if a licence is obtained from the CHA a tracker would be provided and the costs would be passed onto the applicant. The idea being to try and encourage jet skis who use the river to do so in a safe and practical manner.

There were no further comments on the Schedule of Harbour Dues and Charges.

18 *2022 Dredging & Works Licence Fees*

These have gone up in line of 2% across the board.

Mr Woodford queried how the Works Licence fees were calculated as they were unclear. The Harbour Master confirmed that these were dependent on the value of the works that were taking place and was a mathematical calculation.

Mr James pointed out that the fee was based on the value of the projects which represented the complexity and the amount of labour and work the CHA had to put in managing them. It has been the case for some time and was generally accepted by everybody.

There were no further comments on the Dredging and Works Licence Fees.

19 *Policing of the Launching at Hullbridge*

The Chairman reported that issues have been raised with the Parish Council and with Rochford District Council on trying to control people using the section of the road at Hullbridge and several ideas have come up. Deputising Managing Director of RDC has been talking with the Chief Superintendent of Essex Police and there have been assurances that they will be attending the launching area just before high tides over the Bank Holidays. This follows on from an incident on the south side involving a group of vans/people who came with jet skis.

A proposal has been put forward to make the road a private road which is owned by the District Council so they have control over who can use it. It is a proposal which could take a long time and be expensive, but an idea put forward to try and control the jet skis and launching of RIBs.

Mr James said that the CHA should not have any involvement in any matters ashore as the roadways were the responsibility of the Essex Highways Authority.

The Harbour Master said that anything above High Water Mark was not within CHA jurisdiction but what Mr Wickham had been endeavouring to do and had her support to try and somehow co-ordinate the access into the water which is where CHA responsibilities came into force.

Cllr. Cohen agreed it must be with Essex Highways and did not see how any Parish Council had the power or finance to get involved in something like that.

Mr Wickham has made it clear to RDC that it is down to the Council and CHA cannot do anything until a craft hits the water and then they would take charge.

20 *Proposal from Mr Wilson to Install Jetty/Pontoon at Wallasea Nr to Creeksea Ferry Inn*

Mr Wilson had initially put in a proposal to the CHA seeking their views on his proposal to erect a small Jetty. We have now responded back to Mr Wilson with a number of caveats that he would have to adhere to. It is now down to Mr Wilson to get the relevant permissions from the MMO, Natural England and the local Planning Authority which would need to be in place before CHA consider the issue a Works Licence.

Mr Outten pointed out that the area in question was within a triple SSSI/SPA area and the applicant would have to carry out certain assessments.

21 *Little Hayes Railway Embankment Stabilisation Works*

A Works Licence has been granted and the works have now commenced.

22 *Alterations to the Swallowtail Channel and Whitaker Channel Buoys*

The Harbour Master reported that the alterations to the navigation marks in the Swallowtail and Whitaker Channels were now complete.

23 *Environment Agency Flood Defence Repair Work at Hullbridge*

The Harbour Master reported that the Environment Agency were exempt from a Works Licence from the CHA but due to the Environment Agencies failure to obtain a Licence from within their department the works did not take place and all commercial craft had to be demobilised. It is anticipated that the work will recommence sometime in September.

24 *2022 Harbour Guide*

The Chairman said now was the time to start thinking about updating some of the material in the Harbour Guide so it could be reviewed by everyone and agreed.

He asked if Mr Parsons could contact all the Yacht Clubs within CAYF to see if they wanted to update their text/photos for inclusion in the 2022 Harbour Guide.

Items to be emailed to [elaine@crouchharbour.org.uk](mailto:elaine@crouchharbour.org.uk)

The Chairman reported that Rochford District Council were carrying out a Water Aware Safety Campaign and were using the Crouch Harbour Guide as a centrepiece for the campaign as they were attempting to get water safety highlighted in the district.

Mr Marfleet and Mrs Shean were asked to consider if they felt any information would be of value for inclusion regarding safety on the river in connection with swimming and kayaking.

Mr Pope said careful consideration should be given as to what information was published in the Guide in relation to swimming. The Harbour Master responded by saying that is why she believed there should be more co-opted members on the Advisory Committee, who could be called upon when their expertise was required for any subjects that the CHA did not have proficient knowledge of.

Mr James then went on to express his concerns, that on many occasions, particularly this year, at the number of youngsters using the town pontoon for leisure purposes who did not understand safety and the tides. He said the pontoon is owned by Maldon District Council and should be managed by them. He felt that the Authority should be pushing to get more representation and input from them. The Harbour Master said that the Chairman of the Authority was pushing for a meeting with some of the senior members of MDC.

Mr Parsons confirmed that these problems were not just in Burnham but also further up-river.

The Chairman pointed out that was the reason why they were getting Parish Councils at Hullbridge to start to look at monitoring their own pieces of ground that they have control over to try and educate the youngsters who are causing problems.

The Harbour Master said that it was important that the message to get across to not only organised swimmers, but individuals as well was not to swim in the Fairway. Mrs Shean said she would try and make contact with the Burnham Group of swimmers.

Mr Pope said that he felt that signs at the edge of the river was probably one of the best ways of getting across the safety message.

25 Any Other Business:

25.1 *PWC Training*

Mr Parsons said that members had received a proposal for a training area to the east of the Fambridge moorings on the north bank for a commercial Sailing School for Jet Ski Training and asked why this was not on the agenda.

The Harbour Master said that the owner of the Sea School has had a meeting with the Chairman of the Authority.

The CHA is not granting the school a licence as such but granting permission that will be reviewed at the end of September. The Trustees stance is that they cannot ban jet skis on its river, but the mandate would be through training and education.

The Harbour Master then went on to outline the caveats that the owner has been advised that he must adhere to. The owner has been advised that CHA do not think it should be at the western end which is close to the Fambridge moorings, and he should concentrate his training more towards the eastern end of this area so that there is minimum amount of disruption to the people who have their moorings there.

Mr Parsons said he had responded on behalf of CAYF and that to start considering setting areas of the river aside for training sets a precedent.

Mr Pope pointed out that on the signboards up-river of Hayes Farm towards Battlesbridge clearly shows that there is a jet ski area there. The Harbour Master said to her knowledge she did not believe this was correct but said she would check. Mr Wickham said he would check the Hullbridge side in the morning.

Mr Woodford expressed concern and said that if it had now been decided that the training area was going to be sited somewhere else then surely the Advisory Committee should be consulted again.

The Harbour Master pointed out that the owner was going to be able to run a training facility within the area that was designated for the public to use for either jet skiing or for water skiing, to the east of the Fambridge moorings, just before Black Point.

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Mr Outten said more consideration should be given at additional recreational pressure on an area of sensitivity in regard to roosting birds which were a feature and interest of an SSSI.

The Harbour Master said that if the Advisory Committee were unhappy, they would need to take up this up with the Trustees but ultimately it was the Trustees that have the final decision-making capacity.

25.2 *Note from the Chairman*

The Chairman referred to the notes he had circulated following what had taken place at the “Beating of the Bounds”. He asked if members could look at it and take on board and read what the limitations were because the CHA were going to have to look at the make-up of the Advisory Committee to try and improve how the information was fed to the Trustees and back to the Committee.

25.3 *Next Meeting Date:*

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021

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