



## **Introduction**

The new Chair of the Crouch Harbour Authority took over in mid-January and listed as his objectives: to continue making the CHA more transparent; balancing the annual expenditure to annual income annually; to improving communication; to improving the quality of the tidal waters in the Rivers Crouch and Roach; to demonstrate value for money to all stakeholders and users of the rivers under the authority of the CHA. Since then, and along with all other Statutory Authorities, the CHA has had to implement Coronavirus policies and are facing very uncertain times ahead.

## **Coronavirus**

As of 09 March 2020 the CHA considered a risk assessment by its Designated Person, Capt Mike Roberts and decided to stand the Harbourmaster down from public and external meetings, to postpone advisory and external meetings and to separate other key staff to work in appropriate places and locations who maintain harbour patrols and pilot services. This action also includes pilots, the Designated Person and includes strictly limiting office hours when the harbour office is open to the public. Ships entering the port are now required to submit to the CHA a Maritime Declaration of Health (MDH) – a document from the International Health Regulations that contains information about health on board a ship.

## **Safety for everyone**

It was with regret that the CHA issued a notice in line with current Government Coronavirus (COVID 19) Policies to reduce social contact and leisure use within the tidal Harbour limits. The CHA strongly recommends that all recreational and leisure activities on the tidal Rivers Crouch and Roach are avoided until the current Government Policy restrictions are relaxed. Your cooperation and understanding of these circumstances during the National Emergency is requested.

## **Early Payment Rate**

At a recent CHA “virtual meeting” the boat owners early Payment Rate was extended to the end of the present Emergency. By extending the discounted rate date, the CHA is allowing boat owners to receive this benefit as and when, and should they launch this year. It was also decided that it was too early in the Emergency to consider possible non-cash refund methods.

## **Future CHA Projects**

The CHA identified 23 Projects in plans to reduce costs and to build essential new revenue streams, that together with our 5 Year Strategic plan have unfortunately had to be halted because of the present Emergency. Nevertheless, the CHA is presently implementing necessary Contingency Planning and in conjunction with Trinity House progressing the removal of 5 navigational marks, to effect economies in port operations.

## **Accounts**

Following the change of the financial year to the 31 December, although the draft accounts for the nine months to 31 December 2019 show an operating profit of £38,839 (mainly due to continuous cost-cutting exercises) and income from the final phase of the Cross rail project removal of the two unloading facility pontoons. It should be stressed this will not be repeated, and the ongoing trading position predicts a loss, the year remains challenging even without the effects of the Coronus virus crisis.

## **Staffing.**

The CHA staff continue, working selflessly in isolation on behalf of the Authority, under difficult circumstances, Roz Fisher working from home, Elaine Hawksworth in the office, Susan Harrison the Harbourmaster continues with her duties in the virtual office and on the water and Malcolm Fisher on the pilot boat.

We ask for your cooperation and understanding during these uncertain times.

## **Litter Picks**

Before the lockdown The Roach Sailing Association and River Care Rochford, carried out a litter pick in the River Roach, clearing about 2 miles of riverbanks of rubbish. The Upper Crouch was also cleared by a paddleboarding group SupSect, volunteers collecting 30 bags of rubbish. The CHA congratulates them on behalf of all river users and the public in general. The proposed litter pick in Burnham has been postponed.

## **Enforcement**

The CHA is presently pursuing court summonses against 4 boat owners for non-payment of 2019 harbour dues despite repeated requests.

Doug MacEwen

Chair Crouch Harbour Authority

9 April 2020