

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILHARBOUR BOARD MEETINGVirtual Meeting via Zoom - Remote meeting via ZoomThursday, 23 September 2021 - 2.30 pm

PRESENT	Councillor R Hicks (Chair)	
	Councillors K James	
ALSO PRESENT	R Haste	- Operational Services Manager
	P Brown	- Interim Harbour Master
	S Cawsey	- Democratic Services Officer
	T Vanstone	- Senior Electoral & Democratic Services Officer

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Councillor Hicks advised Mr Puddy from the Freshspring Trust, that his appointment onto the Harbour Board would be going to Full Council for ratification in due course.

It was confirmed to Mr Puddy that the Survey Report he had forwarded had been circulated to Members. Mr Puddy said he was grateful for the support Torridge had given to the Freshspring Trust and would be providing regular reports on the progress of the ship.

Councillor Hicks gave an update on his trip on the Pilot Boat with Councillor James and praised the quality of the Authority's staff on the work they carry out. Both Councillor Hicks and Councillor James expressed their thanks to the staff for the trip.

80. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Christie and Mr Tim Gibb.

81. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on the 24 June 2021 be agreed.

82. ACTION LIST

Minute No. 8 - Estuary Sampling/Dredging

The Operational Services Manager gave an initial update, reporting that following a review of this item by the Interim Harbour Master slight progress had now been made.

The aim is for Officers to investigate and to establish whether to make it a serious project or to decide whether it will be viable or not.

The Interim Harbour Master gave the following update:

The situation is that the 1925 Bideford Harbour Act means that the Harbour Authority is licensed or able to sell for capital gains any sand within the harbour limits. The only action the Authority will have to do in order to commercially dredge the seabed is to prove to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) that it is not contaminated and also permission from Natural England.

Mr Glover approached the Authority a few months ago to say he was interested in trying to commercially work that part of the Bideford Harbour Act. This was discussed with the Operational Services Manager, and it was agreed it would be worth looking at.

Mr Glover took samples of the seabed in the statutory Harbour Authority area and sent them to MMO – awaiting their reaction. Mr Glover has been advised that before any decision or thoughts are brought before Harbour Board, he must have plans in place on how he will execute it and what the effects would be in terms of using the Quay to land the sand. It will then be presented to Harbour Board for a decision to be made. It is hoped that by the next meeting the samples will be back and will be presented to Members for approval or not.

Minute No. 37 – Storage ideas for the Harbour

Councillor Hicks mentioned his trip in the pilot boat the previous Tuesday looking at Brunswick Wharf and the car park and enquired as to who owns the gap before the Health Centre and whether the Council could make use of this land. The Operational Services Manager advised the land is part of the Brunswick Wharf development and will be developed in time.

The Operational Services Manager had discussed this matter with Nigel Evans who had said Bideford Quay Harbour would not be a suitable area for a covered storage building. This is a difficult issue, with uncertainty as to how far Officers can go with this matter.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Hicks who asked if the refuse vehicle parking area could be used for loading and unloading, the Operational Services Manager said this was a matter to be discussed with the Economic Development Team. He raised concerns with ships accessing the area, but if the Chair wished to progress this matter, Officers can investigate. The Interim Harbour Master agreed with the comments of the Operational Services Manager, stating that the issue is not the viability of the Harbour, but the cargo that goes out from Appledore Quay and the access for large trucks and storage of the cargo.

Councillor James confirmed that Officers had looked at options and there have been approaches to use the site. The above option to be put forward for consideration. The site was purchased with the aim of providing the Authority with a dock side site. Any matters/issues coming from Harbour Board can go forward.

The Operational Services Manager agreed to discuss the matter further with the Head of Communities & Place and SMT and to investigate further viability options and costings and to bring back a report to a future meeting.

83. PUBLIC CONTRIBUTIONS

There were no public contributions.

84. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PARTS I AND II

In the absence of the Head of Legal & Governance, the Part II item was deferred.

85. URGENT MATTERS OF INFORMATION BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND THE COMMITTEE

There were no urgent matters brought forward.

86. HARBOUR MASTERS QUARTERLY REPORT

Prior to the presentation of this item, the Interim Harbour Master clarified that following discussion with the Operational Services Manager, it had been agreed that for continuity and until a longer-term solution can be found he would continue to act as the Interim Harbour Master.

The presence of a person in the Harbour Office had proved to be an asset to the Harbour, allowing for enquiries to be dealt with in an effective and efficient manner.

The purpose of the report, presented by the Interim Harbour Master, was to report to Members of the Bideford Harbour Board Working Group the activities and commercial vessel movements in the Port since the last meeting held on 24 June 2021.

Members were informed of an amendment to the report, namely that there had been one commercial vessel movement into Bideford Harbour in the reporting period. The report had said no movements.

Port Security/Department for Transport – The Bideford Port Facility Security Plan has recently gone out of date and requires a review. As this needs to be conducted by a Port Facility Security Officer, the Interim Harbour Master had spoken to the Harbour Master at Ilfracombe, who is a qualified Port Facility Security Officer, and with the approval of the Department of Transport, the Port of Bideford will, for the next few months, come under the Port of Ilfracombe.

Councillor Hicks referred to the comments made by the Interim Harbour Master that there are ledgers in the Harbour Office over 150 years old and asked that Councillor Christie be given the opportunity to review them prior to them being moved. Mr Hardaker also requested sight of the ledgers. The Operational Services Manager agreed to meet with Kelly, Councillor Christie and Mr Hardaker at the Harbour Office.

Mr Puddy reiterated the importance of the documents and asked that they be kept in the local area, possibly the Maritime Museum in Appledore or Burton Art Gallery.

Repair works to the pilot boat – the Operational Services Manager confirmed the quote for the works was in the region of £6,000 and these items are not negotiable when repairing the boat. Members highlighted the importance of regular maintenance works to ensure the safety of those persons on the pilot boat.

87. PORT & HARBOUR ACCOUNTS

The Operational Services Manager gave an overview of the Harbour Board Finance report for Quarter ending 30 June 2021.

Following a question from Mr Puddy, the Operational Services Manager detailed how the ongoing maintenance costs and repairs for both the crane and pilot boat are budgeted for.

The Interim Harbour Master had captured on video the ship “Caledonia” securing its hatches and sailing out to sea. This video was shown to Members who said how impressed they were with the time lapse video. The Operational Services Manager advised that the Interim Harbour Master will be doing a further video capturing a ship’s journey in, loading/unloading and the journey out.

88. BIDEFORD HARBOUR - SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Interim Harbour Master gave a verbal update as follows:

The Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) is the 11 risk assessments that govern the marine based activities within the Ports and is then covered by the Port Marine Safety Code which is Policy Statements and Method Statements. An audit was undertaken by the Interim Harbour Master in January, with a further audit planned for November to update on progress made since then.

At the next meeting it is anticipated the report will include that the audit had been completed.

89. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Hardaker asked if the Harbour Board could go back to face to face meetings. Councillor Hicks stated it was very unlikely this would happen in the near future, but suggested that an Officer attends at Mr Hardaker’s house to give tuition. The Officer agreed to arrange a date.

90. PART II - CLOSED SESSION

91. UPDATE ON ALLEGED BREACH OF EQUALITIES MEASURES

In the absence of the Head of Legal & Governance, this item was deferred to a future meeting.

The meeting commenced at 14.30 and closed at 15.35.

Chair:

Date: