

Report: Operational Services Manager
To: Bideford Harbour Board Working group
Subject: Harbour Masters Quarterly Report
Date: Thursday 16th June 2022

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To report to members of the Bideford Harbour Board Working Group about the activities and commercial vessel movements in the port and estuary since the last meeting on Friday 20th April 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

Torrige District Council is the Statutory Harbour Authority for the Port of Bideford and the Competent Harbour Authority for the Taw and Torrige Pilotage District.

The Harbour Board provides strategic direction to the Harbour Authority. The Harbour Board reports to the Community and Resources Committee who are the Duty Holder for the Harbour Authority as described in the Port Marine Safety Code.

2. REPORT

This has been a brisk quarter with measurable progress on implementation of the new Bideford Harbour mooring policy, formal approval of the Oil Spill Management Plan, the Bankside Slipway clearance plan and many others.

Vessel Movements

Bideford

1. The Vessel "Fruitful Harvest" arrived from Falmouth to take up her licenced mooring spot. Her compliance with the stipulations of the mooring policy will be carefully monitored.
2. No clay ship movements have occurred in this quarter, but please see below for an update on discussions with Sibelco.

Appledore

1. The Crane barge "Bristol Giant" remains alongside at Middle Dock where she will remain waiting for orders or, until the dock is required for other TDC business. The owners continue to promptly pay their dues on time and in full.
2. The hopper dredger the "Al Avocet" is due to depart on 12 June 2022 – 4 weeks overdue. The poor communication flow from the shipyard has prompted HM to request a meeting with Tom Hart, the General Manager to try and improve mutual understanding going forward.

Yelland

1. The Dredger Deo Gloria arrived for a 2 week dredge campaign mid-May to replenish the stock of agricultural sand held at Yelland.
2. Starting on the 13th January she completed 18 Acts of Pilotage (9 in and 9 out) of which 10 (5 in and 5 out) needed to be under the supervision of a pilot before a new exemption



examination and certificates could be awarded to a new Master and a refresher certificate for a returning Mate. The Deo Gloria is expected to return again in May 2023.

Other Items

Sibelco – There have been numerous rumours circulating that Sibelco were looking to move their North Devon clay shipping to Avonmouth rather than through Bideford – this was supported by the lack of a clay ship coming to the port – a ship was due in April 2022. After considerable efforts contact was established with the UK marketing manager of Sibelco who started the conversation by reporting that they had heard rumours that Bideford was closing and asking us what level of shipping would be required to keep the port open! Both parties agreed that a goal of a ship every 2 months (rather than the present every 3-4 months) would be preferable, and they undertook to reconnect in mid-June. The genesis of the Avonmouth rumour was that in order to replace their lost source of coarser Ukrainian clay, Sibelco were trying to increase quarry production and ship out from Avonmouth - using 8,000 ton vessels with an 8-10 m draught and requiring covered storage for the clay: unfortunately too big for Bideford or anywhere else on the estuary.

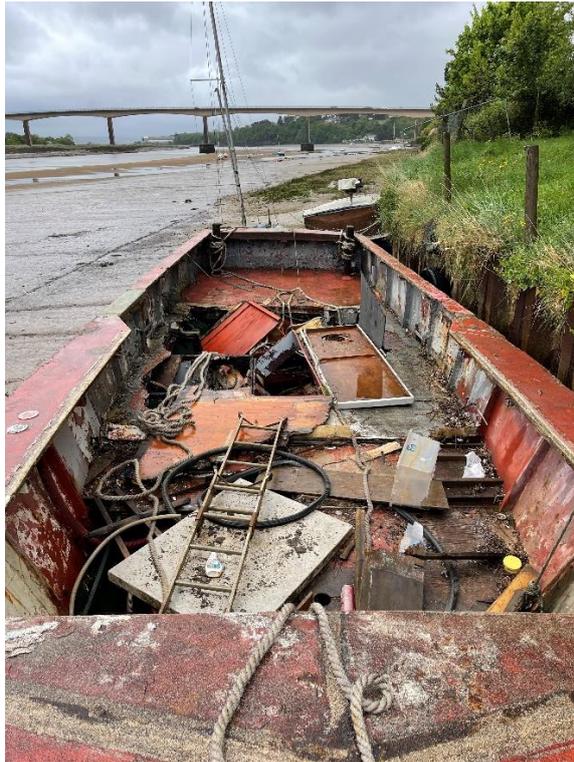
Lundy Island Company – A meeting is scheduled for 10 June with Mr Green of the Lundy Island Company to agree rates and charges to the Lundy Island Company for the future operating the “Oldenburg” out of Bideford. A verbal update will be provided at the Board meeting.

Slipway Clearance – the Bank End slipway is schedule to be cleared on 13th/14th June by SEL Clarke. After the first clearance, the re-silting rate will be monitored so that a long term routine dredge plan can be instituted – it is not expected to need to be dredged more than 3 times a year, but the operation will require an annual licence from the MMO.

Oil Spill Plan and IME – The Bideford Oil Spill Plan was finally approved at the end of May by the MCA. The Incident Management Exercise, “Ribena” originally planned for the 7th June was requested to be postponed by Adler and Allan our Tier 2 provider. This was because the company was fully committed elsewhere with a number of live operational incidents ongoing including the much publicised super yacht fire in Torquay.

Mooring Policy - The conditions of the new mooring policy are beginning to be applied to all of the berth holders within the SHA area. As an illustration, the owner of the “Boa Pescadore” pictured below, vigorously protests and claims that she is seaworthy. The HM has given the owner until the end of July to provide evidence of this either by way of production of a valid insurance policy or by the provision of a funded, realistic planning timeline to achieve this. Failure to deliver this will result in the owner having his mooring licence revoked and the vessel being removed from the SHA at the owner expense.





Harland – The HM has been asked to act as an Expert Witness in the Harland Case – meaning that the reporting emphasis has changed from him acting as a witness for the defence in the case to being an impartial servant of the Court responsible for providing balanced advice on the technical harbour mastering and marine aspects of the case. The production of the Expert Witness report has taken nearly 6 weeks and is still in going. The HM will provide a verbal update at the Board meeting with emphasis on explaining the “Open Port Duty” of a port and especially “reasonableness” in applying the considerable powers of the Harbour Master and the requirements of the Disability Act.

Appledore - The activities of the new team at Bideford has not gone unnoticed elsewhere in the 2 rivers area and in the last reporting period the HM has been approached to provide marine advice on the activities of the Appledore Fish Dock, the routing and sound signals of the Instow / Appledore Ferry / the Appledore Rowing Regatta as well as being involved in the production of the Estuary Management Strategy. While this is not strictly within the remit of the Bideford Harbour Master, it is sensible to continue to provide specialist marine advice to the Council and other water users.

Bideford Harbour Office - Bideford Harbour Office is still unpainted but we did receive a visit from the damp surveyors who were horrified to find the entire building subject to rising damp - harbour staff are still waiting for a date for addressing this issue or painting the building.

Squirty Fountains – The original manufacturing company has been engaged to provide a quote to restore and repair the 24 jet Bideford Harbour tidal fountains. The 3 phase supporting machinery has been switched on but in fault mode since 2017! On the assumption that the repair cost is not astronomical, the intention is to try to have the fountains back in service by the Water Festival.



Harbour Dredging - Dialogue with the MMO continues with regard to harbour dredging.

Harbour Users Group – A proposed agenda for the inaugural HUG is outlined below. The setting of a date for the first meeting waits only for an agreed list of selected invitees – HM is not ready for an open invite just yet!

Suggested attendees – representatives from:

- a.** Lundy Island Company.
- b.** Representative of the Bideford Berth Holders.
- c.** Severn Seas Shipping.
- d.** Bideford Fishing vessels.
- e.** Freshspring Trust.
- f.** Bideford Reds.
- g.** Bideford Blues / Amateur Athletic Club.
- h.** Bideford Canoe Club.
- i.** Bideford Sea Cadets.
- j.** Harland and Wolff.
- k.** Red Rock / Brunswick Wharf Developers.
- l.** RNLI.
- m.** Members of the public by prior arrangement.
- n.** Others as suggested by members.

Proposed Agenda:

- 1. Introductions.
- 2. Aim, frequency of meeting, membership.
- 3. Agreement of Terms of Reference of the HUG.
- 4. 6 monthly forecast of events on the River:
 - a. Commercial Vessels.
 - b. Water Festival.
 - c. Rowing Regatta.
- 5. Mooring Policy.
- 6. Slipways and steps
- 7. Items from members (ideally submitted in advance)
- 8. Questions from public submitted by mail.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

None

Financial Implications

None

Human Resources Implications

None

Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

The Harbour Authority is committed to working with colleagues and Partner organisations in supporting all relevant environmental protection legislation.



Equality/Diversity

The Harbour Authority seeks to comply with all Equality and Diversity Legislation.

Risk Management

The Harbour Authority has a Safety Management system in compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code and all risk assessments were reviewed in January 2022.

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

Bideford Harbour Authority seeks to comply with all Torrridge District council policies and Strategies.

Ward Member and Leader Member Views

Date of Consultation –

3. CONCLUSIONS

Bideford Harbour authority continue to work towards maintaining full compliance with all statutory legislation and government Policy on the Port Marine safety Code.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report by noted and discussed by members.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations:

Date of Consultation –
Officers Consulted –

Contact Officer:
Paul Brown,
Harbour Master
Bideford

