

Advisory Body to Gloucester Harbour Trustees

Navigation House, the Docks, Sharpness, Berkeley GL13 9UD Tel: 01453 811913 Fax: 01453 810381

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 15 November 2011 at Navigation House, Sharpness

Present: See attached list

Apologies: See attached list

John Christie welcomed members to the meeting.

I MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Advisory Body meeting held on 12 July 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

2 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Aylburton Fishing Engine

The sailing clubs were pleased that this obstruction was now marked by a visible post on land and were promulgating this information to their members. The mark should now appear on official charts. They commented that it would be helpful for the end of the engine to be marked as well. However, Mike Johnson explained that this would raise a number of issues because of the tidal flow and once installed there would be a continuing commitment to maintenance. It was possible that the EA might eventually buy out the lease and then arrange for the structure to be removed, but this was a long-term solution.

(ii) Obstructions to Navigation

John Christie advised that Lydney Yacht Club intended to sail up to Gloucester in 2012, but were concerned about navigating in the Lower Parting. This was severely choked by significant vegetation on both sides. Mike Johnson commented that it was the responsibility of landowners to keep river banks clear, but also recommended involving the EA as part of their duties under the Water Framework Directive.

- Martin Quaille commented that he would be meeting EA officials on 29 November primarily to discuss managed retreat in the Arlingham / Minsterworth area, but would take the opportunity to raise this issue as well. It would be useful to have letters and/or briefing notes for this meeting.
- Don Sutherland volunteered to bring up the issue of debris accumulation in the SAC at the ASERA AGM next week.
- John Christie would consider contacting the Hereford & Gloucester Canal Trust about vegetation encroachment as this group now owned the old Llanthony Lock near Gloucester and hoped one day to restore it to its former glory.

3 UPDATE FROM GHT

(i) Marine Officer's Report

A report summarising recent activities had been circulated.

(a) Counts Beacon

Mike Johnson admitted that the Counts Beacon, a north cardinal mark painted yellow and black, was still not as conspicuous as he would have wished and welcomed suggestions that might improve the situation at little cost. Gordon Craig suggested that increasing the percentage of yellow compared with the black could help. It was agreed to repaint the beacon and move the tide gauge to different face to see whether this made a difference.

(b) Safety Management System

GHT's Safety Management System had been updated and was available on the website.

(c) Incident in the Estuary

A recent incident when a commercial ship had to take action to avoid a sailing dinghy had been widely publicised to sailing clubs in the Estuary and lessons had been learned.

(d) British Waterways

Members noted that British Waterways was to become a charitable trust in April 2012 and would be known as the Canal and River Trust.

(e) Environmental Issues

Mike Johnson advised that with the passing of the Marine Act and the creation of the Marine Maritime Organisation, Natural England had begun to look at the effects of leisure sailing, especially regattas, on marine habitats. If attention was turned to the Severn Estuary, GHT would advise that it had neither the means nor inclination to get involved. Members cited other examples of areas where environmental consents would be needed in future for minor works such as sampling and maintenance dredging.

(f) Website

A webcam had now been mounted on the mast by GHT's office and eager ship spotters could now watch ships entering and leaving the lock gates at Sharpness. The tide gauge information had also been improved and any comments on its usefulness would be welcome.

(ii) GHT Chairman's Report

• **Finances**

GHT's finances were in a healthy position as the level of tonnage had remained above expectation. The revival of the scrap trade with the refurbishment of EMR's terminal, which was now a hub for the area, had brought extra trade to the port. Scrap was collected at the Sharpness site and shipped to Liverpool before being exported around the world on larger vessels. Gordon Craig commented that there had been local disquiet about the extra noise pollution from this development, though Edmund Dorman pointed out that these ships could only use the port on certain tides and there were, therefore, considerable lulls in the trade. However, Sharpness was an operational port and work could legitimately be undertaken 24/7, 365 days a year.

GHT had now completed the modernisation programme for its lights and navigation aids and had no major spending plans in mind. However, the issue of the Pilots National Pension Fund remained a significant problem. Its Trustee was still looking at ways to deal with the very considerable deficit in the fund. GHT still contended that it had no liability and would be unable to fund any significant contribution that might be demanded after all the ongoing legal cases had finally been settled.

- **BPA Conference**
He had attended the ports conference in Orkney. The talks themselves had little of relevance to GHT, but there were useful opportunities to meet representatives from other ports and organisations within the industry.
- **GHT Chairman**
Edmund reported that he would be standing down as GHT chairman at the end of the year and would be succeeded by John Beevor who had a background in commercial law.
- **Review of Documents**
Following on from the discussion on the future of the AB at the last meeting, it had been thought appropriate to review and update where appropriate the Aims and Objectives, Terms of Reference and Procedures for the AB. These had been circulated to members for the meeting and their adoption was agreed unanimously. In particular, members agreed that the quorum for meetings should now be five members.
- **Stakeholder Lunch**
The lunch earlier in the year had been considered a great success and it was likely that the GHT trustees would decide to hold a similar event next year to which its stakeholders would be invited. The lunch would probably be held on 20 January 2012. Formal invitations would be issued nearer the time.

4 OPEN FORUM

- **Railway Plan**
Gordon Craig advised that a local businessman was promoting a scheme to promote a stream railway which would come to the Berkeley / Sharpness area. Part of his proposal would involve crossing Berkeley Pill. Mike Johnson commented that, in the unlikely event of this scheme coming to fruition, he would have to apply for consent from GHT for works in the Harbour area and strict conditions would be imposed to ensure that nothing interfered with navigation.
- **Operation Kraken**
Don Sutherland reported that he had attended a meeting with officers involved with Operation Kraken, a counter-terrorism operation specifically looking at risks to the 2012 Olympics from the English seaboard. Harbour authorities and boating organisations were being asked to be vigilant and report anything suspicious via the national non-emergency number 101. He also advised that a 'Boat Watch' scheme, similar to Neighbourhood Watch' was having some success in deterring thefts involving boats.

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

THURSDAY 17 MAY 2012 at 7 pm at Navigation House, Sharpness

Meeting commenced: 19.00
Meeting concluded: 20.50

ADVISORY BODY MEETING – 15 November 2011

Present

Gordon Craig	Thornbury Sailing Club
Jean Hanks	Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils (East Side)
Nic Price	Maritime Volunteer Service
Don Sutherland	RYA (South West) / BCYA
Colin Crick	Newport Harbour Commissioners
John Christie	Lydney Yacht Club
Martin Quaile	Gloucestershire County Council / Forest of Dean District Council
Steve Pocock	Tintern Community Council

GHT

Edmund Dorman	Chairman
Mike Johnson	Marine Officer
Rosemary Elsey	Clerk to the Advisory Body

Apologies

Henry Hodges	Chepstow Town Council
Alan Stanley	SARA
Keith Hadley	Severn Estuary Fishermen's Association
Nick Worthington	British Waterways
Colin Evers	Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils (West Side)

Copies for Information

Matthew Riddle	South Gloucestershire Council
Bill Payne	Gloucester Pilots Partnership
Hartley Everett	Severn Estuary Fishermen's Association
Charlotte Pagendam	Natural England
Bob Breen	Severn Sands Ltd
Paul Senior	Environment Agency
Jon Phillips	Government Representative
Jim Clune	Severn River Crossing plc
Capt Jerry Stanford	Bristol Port Co
Steve Grist	D & B Shipping
Graham Turner	Minsterworth Waterski Club
Stephen Phillips	British Canoe Union
Fred Larkham	Larkham Ships
Lance Allen	Gloucestershire Association of Parish & town Councils (Wye)
Stephen Philips	British Canoe Union