

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 11 May 2010 at Navigation House, The Docks, Sharpness

Present: See attached list

Apologies: John Christie, Edmund Dorman, Alan Sutton, Duncan Forrester. Martin Quaile

John Christie was unfortunately unable to come to the meeting so Gordon Craig as Vice –Chairman welcomed members and introduced Dr Anthony Lynch, a Minsterworth resident, and Ian Brookes and Brian White from the Hovercraft Club of Great Britain who would be giving a short presentation on their activities.

1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Advisory Body meeting held on 17 November 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

2 GHT STAKEHOLDERS' LUNCH

As a Trust Port, GHT had a duty to be open and accountable to its stakeholders and give them an opportunity to meet board members. The Trustees considered all harbour users to be its stakeholders and had hosted a lunch last January to which its commercial stakeholders had been invited. John Christie also attended to represent the Advisory Body. The lunch was very successful and GHT intended to hold another next year and this time proposed to invite all the members of the Advisory Body so that they too would have an opportunity to meet the Trustees and representatives of other organisations with which GHT had dealings.

AB members agreed that this was a worthwhile opportunity and would like to be invited to the next lunch. Consequently, they reviewed the pattern of their meetings, currently May and November, and concluded that the January lunch should replace the November meeting, with a second, formal, meeting at the end of June. There would be an opportunity to discuss any urgent matters after the January lunch if necessary.

2 UPDATE FROM GHT

Reports which highlighted matters of interest to GHT had been circulated prior to the meeting.

- **Navigation Aids**

The Marine Officer reported that work had been undertaken on a number of old navigation aids to bring them up to date and comply with modern health and safety standards. The old latticework tower at Shepderdine rear light had recently been replaced by a modern lighting column and similar work was scheduled for Chapel Rock in the very near future. Experience had shown that the lighting columns were better than buoys in the long run as they required less maintenance and were therefore more cost effective.

- **The Severn Bore**

Dr Lynch explained that there was considerable concern in Minsterworth about the number of boats riding on the Bore which were spoiling the spectacle for spectators on the bank. Recent publicity had drawn large numbers of people, some from a considerable distance, to the area and their disappointment widely expressed on the internet could damage tourism in the area. He had been tasked by the local parish meeting to lobby local councils, media organisations and other relevant authorities to raise awareness of the problems and attempt to educate people about proper behaviour on the Bore.

The Marine Officer commented that GHT had been concerned for some time that press and publicity material about the Bore did not supply guidance on how to act in order to maintain the spectacle and safety of the bore for all participants and onlookers. It was pointed out that motorboats trying to ride the bore could destroy the wave and that they should always be some way back from it. GHT did not have the resources to direct these events, but would press the media and other agencies on the need to draw attention to proper behaviour expected of participants in order to preserve the spectacle for participants and onlookers alike. He also planned to design flyers and safety signs and would encourage the owners of the private slipways where most of these boats launched to draw these to the attention of boat owners before they set off on the river. He would also make these available to Dr Lynch.

Graham Turner commented that Minsterworth Water Ski Club did all it could to promote safety. All boats had to display visible numbers and any violations would lead to expulsion from the club. The Marine Officer would provide material to be included on the club's website to reinforce the message.

AB members discussed this problem at some length and agreed that publicity and education was the best way forward. They endorsed the Marine Officer's proposals to ask the EA and media organisations to include usage advice in their coverage of the Bore; to encourage local slipway owners to display usage and safety information; and to support Dr Lynch to raise the profile of this issue, particularly in the lead-up to the next large Bore expected in August.

3 OPEN FORUM

- **Tallards Marsh**

Henry Hodges flagged up local concern that Welsh Water wanted to get the old boats off this land and hoped that it would not lead to them wanting to keep people off the water.

- **Chepstow**

Don Sutherland commented that Fairfield Mabey were planning to move out of its current site near the river, which was likely to be developed for housing, which could lead to an increase in boats and moorings in that area.

- **Finding Sanctuary**

Don Sutherland explained that this partnership project was working on developing a network of marine protected areas around the coast. The Somerset steering group's remit extended up into Gloucestershire. GHT had not yet been approached and the Marine Officer commented that staff at the Bristol Port Company had the expertise to deal with on its behalf.

- **Barrage**
It would be for the new Minister to consider the proposals from the feasibility studies and there had been no indication when any decision might be made.
- **Oldbury**
Horizon had already indicated that the scheme at Wylfa would go ahead first should permission be given to build nuclear power stations. Planning was continuing for Oldbury, but at a much slower pace and GHT continued to be consulted about the practicalities of bringing in material by sea.

4 PRESENTATION BY THE HOVERCRAFT CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN

Ian Brookes explain that the HCGB had been in existence since 1966 and now had a membership of about 1,000. Hovercraft had been using the Severn for about ten years and members were keen to forge links with local organisations. He and his colleague Brian White belonged to the recreational side of hovercraft which encouraged responsible cruising. All hovercraft users were encouraged to join the club which emphasised the importance of proper training so that craft were operated safely.

New members were offered progressive training on land and in boat handling skills to ensure that they became competent operators and understood the importance of carrying the right equipment. Advanced RYA qualifications including navigation, passage planning, first aid and VHF skills were also available. Locally, the Berkeley Treasure Hunt was used as a fun way to hone these skills.

The club had its own code of conduct. Hovercraft were not allowed to operate on beaches (apart from access), and stayed clear of canals and rivers as the noise could annoy neighbours.

Modern hovercraft were now bigger with better engines than 40 years ago and consequently much quieter. However, noise was a problem, but club members used their expertise to analyse individual problems and make modifications where possible. Although cheap hovercraft were often advertised on the internet, these were of poor quality and generally bought by people who didn't know what they were doing and gave hovercraft a bad name. A decent second hand craft would be in the order of £5,000, whilst new ones would cost between £12-15,000.

Ian and Brian enjoyed the cruising aspect of hovercraft – they had grown out of racing which led to crashes and injuries and was only for adrenaline junkies.

Gordon Craig thanked Ian and Brian for their fascinating insights into hovercraft and encouraged them to make contact with relevant organisations represented at the meeting. More information about the club is available on their website: www.hovercraft.org.uk.

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – STAKEHOLDERS LUNCH

Friday 21 January 2011 at 12.30 pm at Navigation House, Sharpness

Meeting commenced: 19.00
Meeting concluded: 21.10

ADVISORY BODY MEETING – 11 May 2010

Present

Gordon Craig	Thornbury Sailing Club
Jean Hanks	Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils (East Side)
Nic Price	Maritime Volunteer Service
Graham Turner	Minsterworth Waterski Club
Wendy Turner	Minsterworth Waterski Club
Don Sutherland	RYA (South West) / BCYA
Colin Crick	Newport Harbour Commissioners
Henry Hodges	Chepstow Town Council
Anthony Lynch	Minsterworth Resident
Ian Brookes	Hovercraft Club of Great Britain
Brian White	Hovercraft Club of Great Britain

GHT

Mike Johnson	GHT
Rosemary Elsey	Clerk to the Advisory Body

Apologies

John Christie	Lydney Yacht Club
Edmund Dorman	GHT Chairman
Martin Quaile	Forest of Dean District Council
Alan Stanley	SARA
Duncan Forrester	Minsterworth Waterski Club

Copies for Information

Matthew Riddle	South Gloucestershire Council
Colin Evers	Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils (West Side)
Andrew Francis	Tintern Community Council
Keith Hadley	Severn Estuary Fishermen's Association
Bill Payne	Gloucester Pilots Partnership
Fred Larkham	Larkham Ships
Hartley Everett	Severn Estuary Fishermen's Association
Andrew Blake	Wye Valley AONB
Sue Howard	Countryside Council for Wales
Charlotte Pagendam	Natural England
Stuart Ballard	Severn Surfer
Paul Hooper	Inland Waterways Association (Glos/Hereford Branch)
Bob Breen	Severn Sands Ltd
Stephen Phillips	British Canoe Union
Graham Robertson	Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers
Paul Senior	Environment Agency
Dane Broomfield	Environment Agency (Wales)
Jonathan Calderbank	Sport England (SW)
N Phillip	Barry Yacht Club
Jon Phillips	Government Representative
Jim Clune	Severn River Crossing plc
Capt Neils Westberg	Bristol Port Co
Steve Grist	D & B Shipping