

Watchet Boat Owners Association
Meeting Monday 13th November 2017
The Esplanade Club, The Esplanade, Watchet

Minutes

Present: 17 members were present

Apologies: Bob Hitchings, Brian Rich, Iain Lambert

1. **Minutes of the last meeting:** Read out by Ray Ventura and agreed by all present as correct.

2. **Matters arising:**

- i. In relation to concerns re the wooden timber supports of one of the boats in the Yard – this has been reviewed by Brian Rich to be okay; the owner of the boat, also present at the meeting, confirmed this.
- ii. Martin Stevens has created signs stating that people must be competent to use the pressure washer, together with a log for those using the equipment to sign when they do so. In view of this, they will be accepting individual responsibility and liability for its use.
- iii. Brian has repaired the band saw.
- iv. There was nothing further to report on the crane incident in Watchet Harbour Marina.
- v. All other items are covered by the agenda.

3. **Officer's Reports**

- i. **Chair:** Not present.
- ii. **Commodore:** Bruce Scott reported that he had received the "RYA Around the Red Tape Book", which provides information about law and administration for sailing clubs and schools. He has also received a letter that had gone astray; this was passed to Martin as it is likely to be a missing invoice.
- iii. **Secretary:** Nothing to report not covered by agenda items.
- iv. **Treasurer/Membership Secretary**
 - Martin reported that the 2018 Tide Tables have been published and distributed to members and the usual outlets for sale.
 - Further concern expressed about the falling WBOA membership, which needs addressing (on the agenda for this meeting).
 - The Rowing section of the WBOA is to be taken on by Chris Webb, as the previous rowing leads have not had the time to progress it. The concern is that the WBOA own a gig-type rowing boat, stored in the Yard, which requires a Cox and 4 rowers, but is not used. Chris is happy to provide some training if needed, and to support to people who might like to use the boat. All agreed that it would be helpful to advertise the rowing boat for use on social media, to gauge the interest of locals, although users should be WBOA members (**Action: Martin Stevens**).
- v. **Other Officers**
 - a) **Yard Officer:** Not present.

b) **Health & Safety Officer:** Nothing further to report.

4. **Watchet Harbour Marina Feedback (Iain Lambert)**

- i. Iain was unable to attend this meeting, but he provided an email update to Ray.
- ii. He gave a further apology to the WBOA Committee and Members for the “sorry state” of the Marina and that they have been unable to recommence dredging as planned.
- iii. Dredger parts from USA finally arrived but some were missing and others not manufactured correctly. The UK engineers in Chatham are currently re-turning the incorrect bearings and hope to have the gearbox rebuilt in approx. 2 weeks. Once back in the water, the Marina team will, subject to inclement weather, be cutting every day.
- iv. Iain offered sincere apologies for circumstances, again that are beyond his control.

5. **Update on Marina/Council discussions (Ray Ventura)**

- Ray read out the response to the WBOA letter expressing concerns about ‘Watchet Harbour Marina Mud’ from Chris Hall in West Somerset Council. The main points were:
 - Mud in the outer harbour is only a matter for WSC where it impacts on access and presents a safety hazard; “there is a significant difference in responsibility for safety than aesthetics”.
 - WSC are committed to working with WHM to find solutions to issues.
 - WSC take an interest in the WHM works but are not responsible for funding these.
 - WSC are awaiting data from the dredging works in the marina.
 - Chris Hall will continue to be the officer representative for WSC for this matter.
 - They will not intervene in contractual matters between berth holders and the marina.
 - However, they would be pleased to understand relevant concerns of potential failings on the part of WHM which impact on the Harbour asset.
- Discussion included:
 - If a reply from the WBOA would actually achieve anything?
 - However, there is a need to continue to respond to the Council about the WBOA concerns, in order keep the issues highlighted on their agenda.
 - Two points should be raised by WBOA to the Council: firstly, that the depth of mud in the outer harbour is considered to be a danger; and secondly, that WBOA consider that WHM are not fulfilling the terms of their lease by not clearing mud in the inner harbour either.

- One member raised the impact of historical decisions taken in the construction of the harbour and marina in relation to WSC's responsibility for them. They asked if the Council could be called to account in this matter?
- One of the problems has been the failure of the dredger; Dr Rob Nunnery requires final information from the dredger to finalize his report, which can then be progressed by the Mud Working Group.
- All agreed that there is danger to mariners and others resulting from the level of mud in the outer harbour. WSC have a statutory obligation for safe navigation into and out of the outer harbour, which they are not fulfilling. It was reported that the mud is dry in one third of the outer harbour 30 minutes before the gate closes, which is a risk to mariners entering or leaving the harbour at this time.

▪ **Actions:**

- i. **The WBOA to respond to the letter received from Chris Hall, especially highlighting about safety concerns in the outer harbour.**
 - ii. **WBOA to formally write to the Harbour Advisory Board, raising concerns.**
 - iii. **Ray Ventura to draft letters and circulate to the Committee for comments.**
 - iv. **Martin Stevens to provide relevant data about mud levels in the outer harbour.**
 - v. **Sam Westmacott would like individually to try to bring more support from the Watchet community in this matter and will report back at the next meeting.**
- Ray reported that he had only received 3 responses to the survey sent out to the WBOA membership. This is disappointing as was needed to inform a letter from the WBOA to the WHM, outlining our issues and concerns. Forms were handed out to those in attendance. **(Actions: all to complete please)**

6. Update on Disability Hoist

Chris Danby has completed a draft 'Disabled Access Proposal' in the marina. This comprises the whole journey of the disabled person or person with learning difficulties from outside the marina to the boat. The main points to consider, all of which will require funding, are:

- i. The current surface of the gangway/pontoons, which will require resurfacing.
- ii. A powerful vehicle or electric wheelchair to transport the person up/down the gangway and to the fuel pontoon, where the hoist is likely to be.
- iii. The maneuverability / controllability of the wheelchair (i.e. can be controlled by a carer).
- iv. The crane and electric/hydraulic hoist to be controlled both by the person or their carer.
- v. A hut on the pontoon in the marina to securely house the charging units and the wheelchair.
- vi. Rewiring work.
- vii. Different size slings for different people of various builds.

The total cost is likely to be about £25-£30k, but we won't unfortunately be VAT-exempt. Three quotes are required for all aspects of the development and there will also be an ongoing maintenance cost. There will be benefits to the RNLI/Emergency Services, Berth Holders, Sea Scouts, 'Charger' boats, Channel Marine Sports in Minehead etc.

Actions:

- **Agreed by all that this initiative should be progressed.**
- **Chris Danby to complete the draft proposal and circulate to the Committee for comments.**
- **Consider to approach Hinkley Point Community Fund first for validation (bids to be in by February 2018).**
- **Consider other potential sponsors, such as 'Awards for All', The Co-op.**
- **Request comments from Leon Ward (RYA Disability Representative).**

7. Quiz night details

The WBOA Quiz Night has been arranged on Monday 27th November 2017, to be held at the Esplanade Club. Flyers have been distributed to the Esplanade Club and Watchet Marina, and put on the WBOA website. Roy will provide a microphone for the quiz master (i.e. Bob Hitchings). Further actions highlighted:

Action Cathy Yuill

- **To distribute the flyer to other pubs in Watchet to increase interest**
- **Agree a registration process/payment for teams on arrival**
- **Agree number of teams (i.e. 10) – i.e. first to arrive or pre-register by emailing Cathy (alter flyer to include this information)**
- **Advertise on WBOA Facebook site and We Love Watchet/Martin Stevens to advertise to his contacts.**
- **Complete questions**

A future suggestion was made, to hold a skittles night at the British Legion Skittle Alley or The Bell or the West Somerset Hotel, all in Watchet.

8. Membership Poster and other Membership Actions

Discussion took place regarding the WBOA current membership. One member asked if we have information stating how many berth holders are members of WBOA – we don't have this information. It is thought that we need to have more WBOA social activities to potentially promote an increase in membership.

9. Any other business

- i. A new body called 'Roar' has been set up to accept out of date flares. **Action: Martin Stevens to try to find out more information.**
- ii. The Harbour Advisory Website have not published the minutes of their meeting since July 2015 and it was queried why this might be? **Action: Martin to raise at the next Harbour Advisory Committee meeting.**

- iii. The Harbour Board does not have a positive perception of the RYA and appear to be dismissive of small boats, which is a concern. **Action: Martin to raise at the next Harbour Board meeting.**
- iv. The Esplanade Club's Members' Christmas do is on **Thursday 14th December, 2017**. This will include a cheap bar, live music and the Christmas Raffle Draw (tickets at the Esplanade Club, which are running out fast! Agreed to add this to the WBOA website **(Action: Bob Hitchings)** and Facebook **(Action: Martin)** sites.

10. Time meeting closed: **20:45 hours**