



Falmouth Harbour Commissioners

- MEDIA RELEASE -

FALMOUTH HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS REPORT ON A BUSY YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENT

All the headlines were good ones; turnover up by £200,000 to nearly £1.6million with pre-tax profits up by £46,000 to over £148,000. Falmouth Harbour Commissioners saw an increase in all elements of their business, both in the commercial and leisure sectors.

A big excitement in the year was the delivery of a new pilot boat; at nearly £750,000 a major investment and the first new pilot boat in Falmouth for 30 years. The ARROW has completed all sea trials and has been pronounced a huge asset to the Commissioners in providing piloting for commercial shipping, which has showed a 9.5% increase on the preceding year.

Another long held ambition was achieved when approval for grant funding was forthcoming from Objective One and the South West Regional Development Agency, after lengthy negotiation, for an Environmental Impact Assessment into dredging for the Falmouth Cruise Project, now awarded to Royal Haskoning and under way.

Operational resources have been increased, with particular attention being paid to an increased presence on the water during the busy summer months to prevent accidents by preventing inappropriate behaviour on the water – especially excessive speeding, drinking and not having sufficient lights at night.

A special sub committee produced and publicised the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners strategy during 2006, defining specific actions which will prove the strategy is being implemented; the Commissioners work isn't done though, a new committee is being formed to look at a new business plan, including asset management, for Falmouth Harbour Commission in the next 5 years.

Finally, the Oil Pollution Plan has been updated and submitted to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency outlining how the Harbour Commission would manage such a crisis, after being signed off by statutory consultees. At the Annual Meeting Chairman Andrew Bell OBE welcomed what was the largest ever turnout of members of the public interested in the work of the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners, with Chief Executive and Harbour Master

Captain Mark Sansom and Chair of the Strategy Committee Peter Morgan outlining in more detail the work they have been involved in during the year.

Questions were asked by the public at the end of their presentation, mainly on points of detail regarding accounts, strategy implementation and asset management, particularly in relation to public access to launching boats in Falmouth and safety.

This was then followed by a presentation from Nicola White, Project Manager for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on behalf of Royal Haskoning, on the work they would be carrying out in the next year. She confirmed a commitment to consultation, including a public exhibition in the winter of 2007, and explained much of the background to the tests and modelling they would be carrying out as part of the assessment.

Some members of the audience continued to express concern about the scale of the cruise liners, but many were interested in the specifics of the assessment, including the use of spoil from the dredging, impacts on maerl habitats, and who would make the final decision, based on the EIA, on whether dredging could go ahead; the answer being that it was DEFRA who would make decisions on consents.

The meeting was concluded by Chairman Andrew Bell expressing his appreciation for the high level of attendance and interest.

After the meeting he observed "it is gratifying to see such a wide public interest in the ever widening aspects of work which are the responsibility of the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners.

In the past we have had Annual Meetings with more Harbour Commissioners present than members of the public; such a level of interest can only be good for the future of Falmouth Trust Port with a policy of consultation helping us make decisions which accurately reflect the interests of all the communities we serve."

Harbour Master Captain Mark Sansom added "In addition to our day to day commitments we have also kept a watching brief on the issues around ship to ship oil transfers, currently under review by the Commissioners, as the national picture remains confused, and been involved in consultations on the Marine Bill through the British Ports Association. We have also responded to a Department of Transport survey on the issues facing small ports as part of the ongoing ports policy review.

Like the all the Commissioners, I welcome the increased level of interest in our work and remain committed to open communications at all times."

Details of the Annual Report and the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners Strategy can be found on the website www.falmouthport.co.uk.

Ends

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