

FALMOUTH HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS

**MINUTES OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2003 AT 1000 HOURS**

Present:

Mr R J Toy – Chairman
Mr C Brown
Mr R L Jones
Mr J Bottomley
Mr P Morgan
Mr J Langan
Capt M J Sansom
Mr W Amos

1. Apologies for absence

Mr P Fox

2. Appointment of New Member

Mr W Amos was introduced to the Committee and Mr Toy explained the purpose and conduct of the Committee to him.

3. Approval of Minutes

Mr Brown pointed out that he was not happy about the accuracy of Item 3 e) – **Sailing Races**. He read out his amended version and it was agreed that the Minutes of the Meeting on 11 March 2003 would be duly corrected.

Mr Bottomley wanted to make a small amendment to the paragraph in Item 3 e) **Sailing Races** to read “there was always an element of danger and trepidation when ‘all boats’ were racing....’ not just working boats.

Mr Langan asked if Item 3 e) regarding **Personal Water Craft** could read “Capt Sansom recommended that FHC continue to ban PWC’s launching from the Boat Park as they will get in the way of other small craft ‘during’ the height of the season ‘mainly July & August’.”

The Minutes including revisions were agreed and will be re-circulated.

4. Matters arising

a) Waterfront Development

Capt Sansom reported that no report for the Harbour Commissioners had been received from Carrick.

Mr Brown explained that the Report has been condensed to three options instead of eleven and is almost ready. It is being presented next Monday to the Falmouth Town Council and Town Centre Forum at a combined Planning meeting. Capt Sansom said that the Commissioners had not been informed of the new report. It was agreed that he would chase Carrick for the information.

b) Maerl Dredging

Capt Sansom explained that a study would shortly be conducted into the reserves of maerl remaining within the Estuary and incorporating a comparison of the communities inhabiting the dredged and un-dredged areas.

Posford Haskoning have specified the study which the Commissioners are funding. They have written to Carrick to see if they will make a contribution.

Capt Sansom reported that EN had admitted that they would be advising that extraction ceased regardless of the conclusions of the study.

Mr Amos wanted to know why the dredging is not limited to one area and dredged deeper. Capt Sansom stated that Maerl Dredgers need a long run. The public have not raised any concerns regarding Maerl Dredging though Mr Brown had encountered one person who seems to have strong objections.

Mr Jones wanted English Nature to pay something towards the Study, Capt Sansom pointed out that as FHC are the relevant Authority they cannot be forced to pay anything.

c) Falmouth Harbour Revision Order

There is no local opposition now to the HRO. The Order has been amended again in line with DfT comments. Progress is proving to be very slow and expensive with large numbers of amendments having to be done.

d) Falmouth Harbour Bye Laws

The DfT has not got any further with these due to a huge backlog within the Department. It was pointed out that there is a problem relating to a difficulty repealing one of the Bye-laws relating to boats and boatmen where FHC are still partially implementing dual licensing with the MCA. The re-zoning and management Bye-Laws are unlikely to be possible to implement in the near future.

Zoning Proposals

Capt Sansom showed a sample brochure of new codes which will be published in time for next years zoning proposals, at the moment there is no specific legislation to back it up. The brochures will be made up and distributed. Mr Langan suggested advertising space in the brochure to help with the funding.

SAILING RACES

It was agreed that an exclusion zone was needed to prevent racing craft impeding large commercial vessels.

With regard to the latest Flushing Sailing Club race Mr Amos explained that firstly the competitor who caused the incident was a beginner and was apparently unaware of the result of his action. He added that the Flushing Sailing Club have a system of designated courses which do not in his view have adequate flexibility, he felt that this should be abandoned in favour of courses that are set on the day of the Race.

A discussion followed as to how an exclusion zone could be applied. If a competitor entered an exclusion zone the Pilot Boat Crew should take the sailing number of the vessel and should a Protest Meeting be arranged, the Pilot Boat Crew may be asked to give evidence. Mr Amos suggested that if a competitor finds himself in danger of entering an exclusion zone then their engine may be used and the competitor would not be penalised if this was his only course of action. It was suggested that the Pilot Crew liaise with the Race Officer regarding a designated channel and any delays with commercial vessels. He thought that the Captain of the commercial vessel should be aware of any races. Mr Amos went on to explain about a potential incident involving himself and a commercial vessel when racing on the 1st July. There were 5 people on board the sailing boat. They did not know which course the ship was going to take as it did not take the usual route through the deep water channel. He felt that the Pilot put the racers in a very difficult position and a protocol should be made for larger boats. He asked if there were any suggestions.

Capt Sansom thought that practical management measures could be put into practice and co-ordinations of vessel movements and communication could be better. Mr Amos suggested that the Pilot Boat could be positioned to mark the exclusion zone. A discussion ensued regarding how to communicate which way vessels are going; VHF radio was suggested by Mr Jones but it was explained that not all vessels have radios. It was suggested that there should be a Marine Safety Forum meeting to discuss all matters and come up with procedures. Mr Amos said the exclusion zone will apply through Falmouth Week.

It was agreed that the Committee would ask the Commissioners to require the Marine Safety Committee to look at matters relating to the management of races.

5. Minutes of the Harbour Board Meetings

Mr Brown asked about the position of General Manager as mentioned in the Minutes and whether it was a new position. Capt Sansom explained that Barry Buist's title was to change from Administration Officer to Leisure Facilities Manager and he assured Mr Brown that FHC were not planning to employ more staff.

Capt Sansom was to be involved in Commercial Shipping, Capt Killingback was in charge of maintenance etc and Barry Buist would be involved in the management of leisure activities.

A General Manager has also been employed by the Commissioners for the Falmouth Watersports Association to assist them in improving their business which was in some difficulty. FHC had been keen to save the FWSA as they were a key public amenity with a strategically important lease.

Mr Jones asked what "winforecast" meant. Capt Sansom explained that it was accounts modelling software.

Mr Brown asked when the fuel barge would be on station. Capt Sansom was unsure of an exact date but thought it was likely to be in August.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 30th September 2003 at 14.00 hrs.

The meeting closed at 11.05.