

AT A MEETING of the RIVER HAMBLE HARBOUR BOARD held at the Warsash Sailing Club on 8 July 2011.

PRESENT:

Hampshire County Council

Councillors:

p K. Evans (Chairman)

a G. Hockley

p K. House

Independent Members

a Mr. T. Lovell

p Mr. C. Moody

p Dr. S. Tomson

Marine Director

p D. Evans

114. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G. Hockley. The Chairman noted that the term of office for Mr. T. Lovell (not in attendance) was due to end and that Mr. D. Jobson had been nominated to replace him as the co-opted Member for recreational sailing. It was confirmed that Mr. Jobson's appointment needed to first be approved by the County Council and that the transfer of office from Mr Lovell to Mr Jobson would take place when Mr Jobson's appointment was approved.

115. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally at the time of the debate declare their interest, and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

The Marine Director declared a non-prejudicial financial interest in item 12 on the agenda (Harbour Works Consent – Deacon's Boatyard) as he was an occasional private customer of Deacon's Boatyard.

116. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 8 April 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

117. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements

118. **DEPUTATIONS**

Pursuant to Standing Order 21, the Chairman reported that there were five deputations to be made at the meeting. These had been received from Mr. T. Blewett, Mr. L. Shotts and Dr. P. Tosswell on behalf of the Deacon's Boatyard, Mr. J. Clark on behalf of the River Hamble Mooring Holders Association, Sqn Ldr D. Le Mare on behalf of the Royal Air Force Yacht Club and Mr. N. Hughes on behalf of the Upper Hamble Canoe Club. The Chairman noted that he had used his discretion with regards Standing Order 21(a) in the case of Mr Hughes and Standing Order 21(f) in the case of Mr. Blewett, Mr. Shotts and Dr. Tosswell and Mr. Clark, to allow them to speak. The Chairman indicated his intention to bring the discussion of item 12 forward in order that it take place immediately after deputations had been received.

Mr Blewett, in making his deputation, highlighted his professional technical background as a chartered surveyor and his experience of the River Hamble. He objected to the proposals on the grounds of inaccuracies in the drawings, concerns regarding the dredging requirements and possible damage to the A27 bridge foundations from a scour effect, and tidal velocity data that did not account for tidal extremes. He also objected on safety grounds, claiming that the proposals would leave boats only one half of the current turning area and that the loss of the secondary channel would force small craft into the main channel. He proposed a compromise whereby the existing outer row of moorings would be kept, thus retaining the secondary channel and modifications to the boatyard be built within that area.

Mr. Shotts and Dr. Tosswell, in making their deputation on behalf of the Deacon's Boatyard and in favour of the proposals, emphasised that although the boatyard was long established, its facilities did not meet the requirements of modern customers and their boats and therefore needed upgrading. Mr. Shotts confirmed that the aim was not to attract bigger boats, but to better serve existing customers. He also pointed out that development of the boatyard was likely to lead to new employment opportunities. Dr. Tosswell detailed his professional background and spoke in favour of the application. In particular he pointed out that new fairways were proposed to provide refuge points for smaller craft. He also referred to the results of a log that was being kept, which suggested that there was very little, if any, use of the inner channel. He addressed the concerns raised about the scour effect

of the A27 bridge, claiming that this was due to a misinterpretation of the drawings.

Mr. Clark, in making his deputation on behalf of the River Hamble Mooring Holders Association, provided the Board with a photograph of the inner channel. This was to support his view that it was sufficiently wide enough to be navigable and he likened the proposed closure of the channel to removing a pavement or replacing a slip road with a T-junction. Mr. Clark questioned the process of the application, in particular that objections to the proposals had been responded to directly by the applicant. He also felt that the assertion of the renovations being a like for like replacement was an over simplification as it only referenced the number of berths. Mr. Clark highlighted the propensity for high tides on the river and warned that especially with the possible effects of climate change causing even higher (and therefore faster) tides in the future, this should be accounted for properly. He pointed out that the local community like to access the upper Hamble but must do so from public slipways downstream of the Deacon's boatyard. Therefore he further objected to the proposals, which would make it more difficult and dangerous to pass the boatyard and thus reduce public access, which contradicts the work underway to improve access in other areas of the River. Mr. Clark concluded that although not against development and improvement, the Mooring Holders Association objected to the proposals as being unsafe and not in the interests of the community.

Sqn Ldr Le Mare, in making his deputation on behalf of the Royal Air Force Yacht Club, outlined his professional background as a search and rescue pilot and his experience as a sailing instructor. He informed the Board that he was speaking on behalf of approximately 1000 members of his club, many of whom use small boats. Sqn Ldr Le Mare objected to the proposals on the grounds that the most difficult area of the River in accessing its upper reaches was the section near the A27 bridge due to tidal flows and the levels of wash, therefore this area should not be made more difficult to navigate. He pointed out that high levels of seamanship could and should not be relied upon and felt that the safety in the channel was essential. This was of particular relevance given the proposed T-junction style access and egress to the River. Sqn Ldr Le Mare felt that a long midstream pontoon (as at present) was a far safer option for access reasons and proposed that modifications be made to Deacon's boatyard on a similar model to the layout at the Universal boatyard.

Mr. Hughes, in making his deputation on behalf of the Upper Hamble Canoe Club, objected to the closure of the inner channel on the basis that it gave a second option to canoeists. This was particularly relevant as a canoe could only travel at between one and three knots, therefore could face difficulties making headway in tidal areas. Mr Hughes also pointed out that especially when it was windy, canoeists tended to stay close to the side of the marina and therefore were not easily visible to larger boats.

119. HARBOUR WORKS CONSENT – DEACON’S BOATYARD

Following the deputations received by the Board, the Chairman brought consideration of the Harbour Works Consent – Deacon’s Boatyard (Item 12 in the Minute Book) forward, in order that it be discussed in light of these.

The Marine Director was asked to expand on the process for the compilation of the drawings included in the report. The Board was informed that they had been prepared by Lymington Technical Services, a respected marine consultancy, and that the quality and accuracy of the drawings was a matter for the applicant. The Marine Director added that the ABP Mer report, which dealt with navigational safety and environmental impact had also been considered. He confirmed that following concerns regarding sedimentation the applicant had been instructed to provide independent advice, which was included in the reports.

The impact on the turning circle for large craft was questioned. The Marine Director confirmed that the proposed increase in pontoon length would constrict the space available for turning by approximately 20 percent. He noted that this would primarily impact on boats attempting to reach the hammerhead berths. However there was an option to wait at a berth inside the marina until conditions were more suitable for reaching the hammerhead.

Possible damage to the A27 bridge foundations was discussed and the Marine Director confirmed that Hampshire Highways had been consulted and that they had no concerns.

The Marine Director was asked for his view on concerns about access to the main channel via T-junctions. He pointed out that these would not be the only T-junction style access points on the River and that there were no recorded incidents in the past. He confirmed that concerns about safe access and egress had caused a condition to be included that only low sided boats be allowed on the hammerhead, to ensure better visibility.

The use of the inner channel was questioned and the Marine Director pointed out that the survey was ongoing, but so far suggested that it was not heavily used. In his view, it was also not really suitable for canoes and kayaks, given that large boats were regularly manoeuvred in it (often without power, using a ‘hip’ tow).

Councillor House highlighted that although quorate, only four of the six Board Members were present at the meeting and expressed his preference that all Members be given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Noting that Mr. D. Jobson (nominee to the position of co-opted Board Member for recreational sailing) was observing the meeting, it was proposed that his view be sought. The Chairman agreed to use his discretion to allow a deputation from Mr. Jobson.

Mr Jobson, in making his deputation, supported Deacon's Boatyard in their bid to seize a commercial opportunity. However he also expressed concern that there would be less space in an already narrow area of the river, in particular given the high tidal flow. He hoped that a compromise could be reached in which the width of the channel be maintained.

Councillor House expressed his concern that an impartial planning officer had not provided a view for the Board to consider. The Chairman acknowledged this, pointing out that for a Harbour Works Consent, the duty of the Board was to make a decision regarding navigational safety and environmental impact, therefore a planning officer was not required.

A proposal was made by Councillor House that due to the incomplete nature of the Board and the lack of Planning Officer advice, the decision be deferred. The Chairman refused this request on the grounds that it was not necessary, upon which Councillor House withdrew himself from the meeting.

The Chairman noted that without at least two County Council Members in attendance, the Board was not quorate and therefore was unable to reach a decision. As a result of this, the meeting was closed. It was proposed and agreed that an additional meeting of the Board be convened as quickly as possible in order that the application process was not delayed and that the other agenda items receive consideration.