



MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 2nd November 2021

Minutes of a meeting of the Fowey Port User Group held on this day at 1400.
The meeting was conducted both in person in the Harbour Office and virtually on Zoom.

Present:
James Staughton (Chairman)
Chris Ogg – Fowey RNLI (Vice Chair)
Jeremy Morcom – Imerys Minerals
John Pollard – Mixtow Residents
Adam Luck – RFYC
Gary Barr – FGSC / POFROC
Andrew Dellow – Fowey Town Council
Penny Rowe - St Winnow Parish Council
Kerry Pearce - St Winnow Parish Council
Nevin Carmichael - Lanteglos Parish Council
Flynn Pearce – St. Veep Parish Council
David Johns - Golant Quay Users / St. Sampson Parish Council
Brian Cook – Polruan Town Trust
Lucy Daniel - Fowey Chamber of Commerce
John Barker – Licensed Boatmen
Jeremy Crapp – River Fowey Gig Club
Andy Simmons – National Trust
Jeff Pearce – Fowey River Association (freshwater fisheries)
Capt. Paul Thomas – FHC Harbour Master & Chief Exec.
Claire Hoddinott – Minutes Secretary / Fowey Estuary Partnership

Apologies:
Capt. Will Mitchell - Chairman FHC
Andy Virr - Cornwall Council
Colin Martin – Cornwall Council
Edwina Hannaford – Cornwall Council
David Guiterman – Lostwithiel Town Council
Philip Henson – RFYC / POFROC
Mike Elliott – Pilot Boatmen
Chris Davis - RYA
Alistair Barr – Castle Dore Rowing Club
Trevor Quail - Penmarlam Quay Users
Peter Robinson – Fowey Tourist Information
Dave Swiggs - Aquaculture

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record of the last meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

- Devolution of Caffa Mill – Captain Thomas updated that the heads of terms have been agreed and solicitors' details have been exchanged. The areas to be devolved are

Readymoney Beach, Whitehouse including the paddling pool and the toilets. Caffa Mill boat storage area and slipway (toilets are responsibility of Fowey Town Council and main parking area will remain with Cornwall Council). FHC plan to undertake a general tidy up of Caffa Mill, rationalise storage and importantly, improve safety of launching.

- Access/Esplanade Ladder – Captain Thomas outlined that following comment from the last meeting, this planning application was objected to by FHC and the application was withdrawn and replaced by a more sympathetic design.
- Noise complaints at Penmarlam – Captain Thomas explained that there had not been many complaints this year, will continue to advise users to consider neighbouring properties in newsletters. John Pollard agreed that he had not received complaints from residents either.
- Charges at North Street Yard – Adam Luck explained that there had been substantial decline in the numbers of dinghy racers which could be linked to changes in charges at NSY. Captain Thomas explained that charges had been brought into line with other sites. A 50% discount is available on storage to under 18s to encourage younger sailing and FGSC junior sailing boat storage is provided FOC by FHC. There was further discussion about encouraging dinghy sailors to Fowey and it was agreed to convene a separate meeting with FHC and POFROC to discuss.
- Town Vitality Grant – Andrew Dellow explained that the grant application had been successful and includes proposals to improve Town Quay and Fore Street. There is a meeting next week and a further update will be given at the next PUG meeting.

REPORT FROM FHC - Captain Thomas

Commercial – a busy year and pleased to report that aggregate cargo is going well and 110K tonnes have been exported from the port so far this year. The material is being shipped to SE England for building and infrastructure projects. There are currently some challenges with finding ships due to high demand for shipping, but overall good news for the Port. China clay is slightly up on 2020 figures at approximately 250K tonnes.

Cruise calls have been particularly busy this year with 24 visits, this was mainly due to rescheduling of itineraries due to Covid restrictions. There are 14 bookings for 2022. Marketing of the port as a cruise destination continues, with particular interest from expedition cruise companies.

Marine Services remain strong with one tug being permanently moored in Plymouth to support the hydrocarbon tankers.

The dredger Lantic Bay has been out of action for a long time and significant work has been undertaken including replacing hull plating, fitting a bow thruster and a new digger. It will have a permanent crew working all year round to catch up on dredging works.

Plans to upgrade the workshops at Brazen Island are in progress and this may include extra boat storage areas.

Leisure – a strong season with statistics outperforming recent years, Covid restrictions encouraged visitors from the Solent area to visit SW region rather than crossing to France. There was also another surge in casual users to the estuary including small boats, stand up paddleboards (SUPs) and kayaks.

The pontoon extension at Penmarlam has been well received and additional resident berths are fully subscribed. There will be some planting and screening works starting in the Spring to ensure minimal visual impact for the Mixtow residents.

Wild swimming has been extremely popular this season and there have been some incidences of swimmers in the busy harbour area, which is of safety concern. The swimming zone buoys will be retained at Readymoney this winter as a trial, at the request of swimmers, as a safety measure.

There continues to be high demand for pontoon space for small boats, there may be some further options at Caffa Mill when this is devolved.

The Chairman asked for questions:

Chris Ogg said that Berrill's Yard had been particularly badly congested this year despite new signage. The HM agreed it is a capacity issue, enforcement has been stepped up this summer with unlicensed boats towed away. Nevin Carmichael explained that hire boats were a particular issue and suggested a possible designated area on the pontoons for them.

Nevin Carmichael added that there is a lack of tender storage at Polruan and Bodinnick. Captain Thomas said he would be pleased to work with Polruan Town Trust or other landowners to facilitate a storage option. Brian Cook undertook to take this back to Polruan Town Trust to consider.

Adam Luck raised the issue of car parking demand with reference to Old Station Yard car park. Captain Thomas explained that the land is owned by Imerys and FHC manage parking under an agreement, discussions are due for renewal of this agreement. Brian Cook added that potholes and drainage were a particular problem here.

FOWEY HARBOUR REVISION ORDER (HRO) UPDATE

Captain Thomas said that the Fowey Harbour Revision Order is now an Act of Parliament and again thanked the PUG members for their input to the consultation process. This Act formalises the role of the PUG as a statutory consultee to the process of producing General Directions. Terms of Reference for the group is important to outline the role of the group.

Captain Thomas to develop Terms of Reference for comment by the members.

MODERNISATION OF BYELAWS

Captain Thomas explained that the HRO gives FHC Powers of General Direction which allows General Directions to replace Byelaws which are a more reactive way to manage harbour activities. Particular points of focus will be to improve the definition of a vessel and certain issues such as swimming. The formation of General Directions is getting underway and the PUG will continue to be involved.

Chris Ogg asked if there was a deadline for completion of this process, Captain Thomas said there is no deadline other than FHC's own desire to get the process completed to modernise this aspect of harbour management.

SUP/KAYAK LICENSING

Captain Thomas reiterated his concerns for safety around the increased numbers of SUPs and kayaks on the water this summer. As a Harbour Authority there is a duty of care to these users and the tragic drowning incidents with SUPs recently in Wales and on the Camel estuary last summer, highlight this issue. FHC will require registration of craft from 2022 and harbour dues will be paid. Captain Thomas explained that this will apply estuary wide. A Code of Conduct will be produced to highlight safety and other information to users.

Jeff Pearce added that these craft were also a frustration for freshwater users, particularly anglers. David Johns said that the Norfolk Broads produced good information. Chris Ogg reported that RNLI shouts were up 30% and included these types of craft, he asked if a space for the user's emergency phone number could be incorporated into the licence sticker. Jeff Pearce added that a buddy scheme was a condition for use of SW Lakes Trust areas. Flynn

Pearce asked if revenue from harbour dues could be used to provide a member of staff to enforce safety. Captain Thomas replied that a safety officer would be positioned at Caffa Mill and periodically patrol upriver areas.

Adam Luck asked about launching of jetskis and would harbour dues apply to them. Captain Thomas explained that all vessels using the harbour should pay harbour dues.

Jeremy Crapp welcomed the idea of safety controls at Caffa Mill whilst launching.

Canoes to be added to Code of Conduct wording and buddy scheme. Investigate space for emergency contact number on licence sticker.

HARBOUR ACCESS

Captain Thomas explained that FHC policy is to encourage and facilitate access to the water, wherever possible. FHC would be pleased to work with landowners such as Polruan Town Trust to try to improve storage at Polruan which has been highlighted as an area of concern. Brian Cook would feed back request to Polruan Town Trust members.

STAKEHOLDER'S FEEDBACK

Chris Ogg (Fowey RNLI) said the RNLI pontoon pile replacement project would soon be underway and thanked FHC for their support. The number of 'shouts' this year have been at predicted levels, but noticeably a different profile of people including inexperienced water users and false alarms.

Nevin Carmichael (Lanteglos PC) raised the issue of the shallowing approach to Polruan, Captain Thomas replied that dredging will be undertaken there, probably in summer 2022. Flotsam and jetsam in the harbour was also raised, Captain Thomas said large items such as fallen trees do present a hazard and should be reported to FHC. There was a concern following recent media coverage of South West Water dumping sewage into watercourses and how this may impact the estuary. Captain Thomas replied that SWW are responsible for sewage treatment and emergency overflow situations are rare and logged. Water testing is undertaken in the estuary, formerly for shellfish harvesting (which has ceased in the estuary) but also for the bathing water between May and end of September. FHC respond to pollution risk forecasts from the Environment Agency and warning signage is displayed at Readymoney when requested. FHC are aware of some ongoing investigations by the EA and SWW at Polruan due to some possible misconnections in the sewage system.

Flynn Pearce (St Veep PC) said one third of their parish is surrounded by the river and asked for input from harbour users to their Neighbourhood Development Plan. Captain Thomas said FHC would be keen to view and input to the plan.

John Pollard (Mixtow Residents) commented on the landscaping and screening at Penmarlam, including screening of the car park, along the waterfront and second storage level. Captain Thomas said there was an ongoing programme of replanting which will start again in Spring.

Lucy Daniel (Fowey Chamber of Commerce) explained that the Chamber was now under new leadership and pleased that it can continue. Recent relaunch event went well.

Jeremy Morcom (Imerys Minerals) agreed with Captain Thomas' earlier comments about the positive impact of the aggregate cargo on the Port but added that high freight rates were causing challenges currently securing ships.

Brian Cook (Polruan Town Trust) said he will feedback about dinghy storage. He also enquired about the transfer of foreshore around Polruan Quay from FHC. **Captain Thomas to check with Conveyancer.**

Jeff Pearce (Fowey River Association) wanted to draw attention to a consultation by Cornwall IFCA on a Byelaw to protect salmonids in estuaries. Captain Thomas said FHC were aware.

David Johns (GQUA and St Sampson PC) said there was frustration at visitors and non-licensed users using the frapes at Golant. Signage inside the Pill seems to have deterred activity and Captain Thomas said similar signage will be put up on the outside frapes. Still investigating a kayak storage facility by the slipway and have been in contact with FHC. **Captain Thomas to visit and assess suitability.** Pleased to say that following enquiries about an estuary clean-up event, the need was found to be low with very small amounts of litter found.

Gary Barr (FGSC / POFROC) commented that commercial ship movements and race timings have conflicted a few times this summer. Captain Thomas said this was unfortunately unavoidable.

Adam Luck (RFYC) reported that a webcam is to be installed on the RFYC race hut so people can watch the racing from the comfort of their homes. Captain Thomas asked if there was a recording facility in case of an incident when access to footage would be welcomed.

James Staughton (Chairman) advised that he is moving to the Falmouth area and felt that as he would no longer be a Fowey Harbour user, it was time to offer his resignation as Chairman to the group. Captain Thomas offered his extreme gratitude to the Chairman for his efforts and support during his period as Chair and he will be missed from the group and from Fowey Harbour.

Captain Thomas said that the constitution of the group state that the group elect their Chair so asked for **any offers or nominations for Chair to be put forward via Claire by Friday 12th November.**

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Monday 25th April 2022 at 1400 in the Harbour Office

The Chairman thanked everyone for their input and there being no further business, the meeting closed at 1550.