



## MEETING MINUTES

**Monday 25th April 2022**

Minutes of a meeting of the Fowey Port User Group held on this day at 1400 conducted both in person in the Harbour Office and virtually on Microsoft Teams

<b>Present:</b>
Chris Ogg – Fowey RNLI (Acting Chairman)
Jeremy Morcom – Imerys Minerals
John Pollard – Mixtow Residents
Philip Henson – RFYC / Fowey Sailing Committee
Gary Barr – FGSC
Andrew Dellow – Fowey Town Council
Nevin Carmichael - Lanteglos Parish Council
David Johns - Golant Quay Users / St. Sampson Parish Council
David Guiterman – Lostwithiel Boat Owners Association
Brian Cook – Polruan Town Trust
Lucy Daniel - Fowey Chamber of Commerce
Emma Riley - Canoeists
Jeremy Crapp – River Fowey Gig Club
Alistair Barr – Castle Dore Rowing Club
Nick de Sarandy - RYA
Andy Simmons – National Trust
Jeff Pearce – Fowey River Association (freshwater fisheries and river environment)
Capt. Paul Thomas – FHC Harbour Master & Chief Exec.
Claire Hoddinott – Minutes Secretary / Fowey Estuary Partnership

<b>Apologies:</b>
Capt. Will Mitchell - Chairman FHC
Andy Virr - Cornwall Council
Colin Martin – Cornwall Council
Edwina Hannaford – Cornwall Council
Chrissie Anders - Lostwithiel Town Council
Kerry Pearce - St Winnow Parish Council
Flynn Pearce – St. Veep Parish Council
Mike Elliott – Pilot Boatmen
Chris Davis - RYA
Trevor Quail - Penmarlam Quay Users
Peter Robinson – Fowey Tourist Information
Dave Swiggs - Aquaculture
John Barker – Licensed Boatmen

### ACTING CHAIR & PROGRESS ON NEW CHAIR

Chris Ogg explained that he has taken on the role of acting Chair until another candidate is found. He feels with his position in the RNLI, he has a conflicted interest for some matters and that the Chair should have a neutral status.

It was agreed that the PUG would prefer an independent and neutral Chair so it was proposed to advertise this position using local newsletters. **Captain Thomas to arrange advertisement**

**of the Chairman position.** Alongside this approach, members should encourage any individual they thought suitable to step forward.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

Chris Ogg reminded members that the Fowey Harbour Revision Order has formalised the role of the PUG as a statutory consultee to the process of producing General Directions in addition to the statutory consultees of the RYA and Chamber of Shipping. Terms of Reference have been drafted to formalise the role of the group.

The Terms of Reference (April 2022) were distributed, and it was proposed to accept as a working document with a review at the next meeting.

### **Terms of Reference to be an agenda item for the next meeting – Claire to action**

Captain Thomas added that General Directions will in time replace Harbour Byelaws and will allow a more reactive approach to harbour management.

## MINUTES

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

## MATTERS ARISING

All matters will be covered in subsequent agenda items

## REPORT FROM FHC - Captain Thomas

Capt. Will Mitchell will retire as the Chair of the Commissioners at the end of April after 12 years on the Board. The current Vice-Chair Nick Gill will become Chairman of the Commissioners with John Scullion moving up to Vice Chair.

Commercial – there are small but pleasing signs of increases in both aggregate and china clay cargoes.

Leisure – demand remains high for moorings and are again over-subscribed this year. There is a balance between encouraging access to the water and being able to provide enough facilities to accommodate everyone's needs.

The refurbishment of the workshops at Brazen Island is the next significant project for the Commissioners. They are working with consultants to finalise a design that modernises the workshops and maximises the working area and there may also be the opportunity for additional boat storage areas.

The Chairman asked for questions:

John Pollard said the increase in aggregates, although pleasing for the Port, was causing some concern from Mixtow residents especially relating to noise from the loading activity which can start early in the morning. Jeremy Morcom explained that loading will not be before 06:00 and if unsociable hours for loading are known in advance, he will contact the residents where possible to advise. It was explained that ship's loads vary from 2000 to 9000 tonnes and that some of the ships are self-loading using their own crane on deck which gives them an advantage for unloading at their destination at Tilbury Docks, London.

David Johns asked about the length of waiting lists for moorings. Captain Thomas said that drying moorings at Golant generally have a 1 to 2 year waiting period and a deep water mooring for a 9-12metre boat is in excess of a 15 year wait. This is compounded by the fact that the average size of boat is getting larger.

## PADDLE SPORTS REGISTRATION

Chris Ogg declared an interest in this matter on the grounds of water safety and the RNLI.

Chris also advised the PUG that as we had not been consulted prior to the last meeting, and SUP issue does not require any formal sign off from PUG at this stage we should not debate the issue, as this infers our agreement.

Captain Thomas explained that there are two separate matters to discuss here which seem to have been merged. The safety campaign/registration scheme and the payment of harbour dues.

Concerns for safety were reiterated around the increased numbers of SUPs, kayaks and canoes on the water and the frequency that Harbour Patrol were responding to these craft. The tragic fatal accidents in Wales and on the Camel Estuary further highlighted the issue. With overall liability, Duty of Care and Search and Rescue responsibility remaining with FHC as the Harbour Authority, action was required to ensure users are engaged and safety advice shared to prevent incidents. The registration scheme is part of this safety campaign and 250 craft have been registered so far this season.

The payment of harbour dues applies to all vessels using the harbour and has done since the formation of the Commissioners over 150 years ago. Payment by paddle sports users has been low in the past but it is felt that it is only fair and equitable that all users contribute towards the management of the harbour through payment of dues.

Following discussion, it was agreed that signage and sharing of information was key and that although local residents will likely be aware of the scheme, it is important to get the message out to visitors. David Johns highlighted users of Golant Pill as an example of not knowing the requirement for harbour dues.

Captain Thomas said this season will be about education and, where necessary, enforcement but it is hoped that there will be familiarity over time. Plan to have up-river patrols as well as in the lower harbour when funds allow for an additional member of staff.

Philip Henson enquired about hire boat operators and the capacity for these vessels in the harbour. Captain Thomas said that all commercial operators on the estuary are engaged with FHC, their craft are licensed and harbour dues paid. Self-drive boat numbers are at capacity and there are no current restrictions on the numbers of paddle craft these operators are using, although this may be considered in the future. Commercial operators have to provide a safety briefing to their customers as part of their licence.

Concern was also raised about swimming in the harbour, sometimes from SUPs. This was also seen as 'an accident waiting to happen'.

Gary Barr queried the number of incidents logged and suggested a frequency of accidents board to re-enforce the message. Captain Thomas and Chris Ogg explained that generally only incidents involving a Harbour Patrol or RNLI response are logged, providing safety advice or minor interventions are not captured in the records. **Captain Thomas to consider how incidents are recorded and how information is shared with the public.**

Chris Ogg proposed that an end of season briefing be given at the next meeting to give an update on the registration scheme and other issues. **Paddle Sports Registration update to be an agenda item for the next meeting – Claire to action**

## STAKEHOLDER'S FEEDBACK

Alistair Barr (Castledore Rowing Club) are an affiliated club providing safety boats for their activities. Harbour dues are paid for their craft.

David Guiterman (Lostwithiel Boat Owners Association) have recently formed to focus on the boat storage area north of the railway bridge. Ownership of the land is being investigated but think it is Lostwithiel Town Council. Hope to tidy the area and remove redundant craft and can provide advice to users. Captain Thomas thanked him for his efforts and will be pleased to support them where possible.

Jeremy Crapp (Fowey Gig Club) highlighted the new moorings at Mixtow Reach and the navigation of the gig in this area. Captain Thomas explained that these are moorings for Mixtow residents and should not impede navigation.

Jeff Pearce (Fowey River Association) explained that the association represents freshwater fishing interests and environmental matters in the upper river areas.

David Johns (GQUA and St. Sampson PC) asked whether, following the last meeting, the land to the south of Golant Quay had been assessed for its suitability as an additional storage/launch area. Captain Thomas said that a site visit had been conducted but a pontoon would be necessary for access and would probably be challenging to move forwards in terms of funds and MMO licensing.

Brian Cook (Polruan Town Trust) updated that following the last meeting the Trust asked residents if they would be interested in some kayak storage on Polruan Quay. There was limited interest and concerns that a storage facility would be unsightly on the quay. Therefore, this is not being taken any further at this time.

Gary Barr (FGSC) asked about the possibility of providing a manual winch to assist pulling boats up North Street Yard slipway which is a steep slope and a slippery surface. Captain Thomas said this could be assessed for risk.

**Captain Thomas to investigate provision of manual winch at NSY.**

Andrew Dellow (Fowey Town Council) enquired about the progress of the devolution of Caffa Mill. Captain Thomas updated that the legal side of the devolution has been agreed but FHC will not take on the areas until the end of September.

Andrew Dellow and Lucy Daniel updated on the Town Vitality Grant which will draw up a Master Plan to revitalise the Caffa Mill to Whitehouse area of the town. The plan is due to be complete by September and any interested groups are invited to get involved.

Chris Ogg (Fowey RNLI) said the RNLI pontoon pile replacement project is complete. Water safety incidents have tended to involve 'casual users' in recent times with relatively fewer incidents involving commercial vessels, fishing boats etc. It is felt that lack of water experience is a contributing factor. Water Safety area covers Bodmin to Polperro, there are no lifeguarded beaches in the area. Lifejacket lockers continue to be popular. The recent Lifejacket Clinic event was well received but concerning that 50% of the lifejackets assessed needed some attention. Gary Barr enquired how sailing clubs could engage more with this issue and could look into running another event if an approved provider was used to install parts.

Chris Ogg said that congestion continues to be an issue at Berrill's Yard pontoon. Enforcement of tender size had helped along with changes to the rules for hire boats but overall, it is just a matter of lack of capacity.

Philip Henson (RFYC / Fowey Sailing Committee (formerly POFROC)) enquired about CCTV coverage of Albert Quay and Berrill's Yard pontoon following recent incidents where a boat had been set adrift and fuel stolen from another. Claire Hoddinott said it was important that all incidents whether related to safety, marine crime or environmental, should be reported to the

Harbour Office for inclusion in the Incident Log. There is CCTV coverage of both of these pontoons and footage is recorded.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 9th November 2022 at 1400 in the Harbour Office

The Chairman thanked everyone for their input and there being no further business, the meeting closed at 1515.