

Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Southwold Harbour Management Committee** held in the Stella Peskett Millennium Hall, on **Thursday, 27 January 2022 at 4:00 PM**

Members of the Committee present:

Councillor Maurice Cook, Mr David Gledhill, Mr Alistair MacFarlane, Mr Richard Musgrove, Mr Mike Pickles, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Letitia Smith

Other Members present:

Councillor David Beavan

Officers present: Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Duncan Coleman (Estates Manager), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Lorraine Rogers (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mallinder.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Southwold Advisory Group had met prior to this meeting and elected Simon Flunder as Chair. The Chair would be invited to comment on items at this meeting, and a paper confirming this process would be received at the March meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

During discussions on item 9, the exempt report 'Asset Rental Summary and Proposed Future Reviews', Mr M Pickles declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as he leased a landing stage and a fishing hut within Southwold Harbour. Having declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Mr Pickles took no further part in the discussions or voting and left the meeting.

During discussions on item 9, the exempt report 'Asset Rental Summary and Proposed Future Reviews', Mr S Flunder, Chair of the Stakeholders Advisory Group who had been invited to stay for this part of the meeting, declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as he leased a landing stage within Southwold Harbour. Having declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, Mr Flunder took no further part in the discussions and left the meeting.

3 Minutes

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 11 November 2021 be agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

4 Southwold Harbour Management Committee Budget 2022/23

The Committee received report **ES/1030**, which outlined the draft budget for 2022/23 and provided an overview of the budget monitoring position for Quarter 3 2021/22.

The Vice Chairman introduced the report and advised that as at Quarter 3 net income and expenditure for the Harbour was showing a favourable variance. It was anticipated that the outrun position for the year would be in line with budget.

The budget for the Caravan and Campsite was in an improved position compared to the budget to date. Officers had explored the potential for Government support for income lost during the pandemic and it was estimated that support funding in the region of £30,000 could be attributed to the Caravan and Campsite.

The Vice Chairman informed the Committee that the Councils Capital Programme had been approved by Full Council, and included £14 million of investment for the Harbour over the next four years.

Mr MacFarlane asked whether the expense of the proposed Southwold Harbour and Asset Manager had been included in the budget. The Vice Chairman confirmed that this cost had been taken into account.

The Chairman was pleased that the Harbour and Caravan and Campsite were bringing in an income of around £300,000 at present before investment. It was recognised that more money would be spent than would be raised, but that this was necessary investment.

Following a question on whether works to the North Wall and depreciation of the asset had been accounted for in the Harbour accounts, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer confirmed that these works had been funded through the Council's Capital Programme rather than the Harbour's revenue accounts and would have been included in previous years accounts. The Strategic Director confirmed that past work done on the North Wall had been funded through grants and capital income from the Council, which was being paid back from the Harbour accounts. Repairs to the North Pier had been funded in part by a Environment Agency grant and in part through the Harbour account. Depreciation on local authority assets was treated differently to depreciation of private assets, and it was agreed that the HMC would receive additional training on local authority finance and how depreciation was handled.

The Chairman invited the Chair of the Southwold Advisory Group to comment on the report. The Advisory Group Chair was pleased to hear the HMC questioning how depreciation worked and would appreciate the opportunity for further clarification on

this subject. He also thanked the HMC for presenting the harbour accounts clearly and publicly. He asked why there was a line in the accounts for vacant pitches, and why they had not been reused. The Head of Operations confirmed that there was a Working Group looking at the caravan site, including vacant pitches. It was clear that people were holding back from letting pitches due to anticipated investment and changes in lease terms, and until the way forward was clear it was unlikely that would change.

The Chairman highlighted to the Committee that although they recommended the budget, this did not mean that everything detailed in the budget would happen and that there would be variance.

On the proposal of the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Cook it was by a majority vote

RESOLVED

1. That the Budget Monitoring position for Quarter 3 2021/22 be noted
2. That the draft Budget for the Harbour for 2022/23 be recommended to Cabinet.

5 Recruitment of Southwold Harbour and Asset Manager

The Committee received report **ES/1028** which provided a summary of the reasons for the creation of the post of Southwold Harbour and Asset Manager.

The Head of Operations introduced the report, and highlighted the importance of the role in providing more capacity for work in the Harbour, especially around compliance. In the past this role had been performed by the Sentinel Leisure Trust, but this had lapsed. It was now felt that there was a growing gap in responsibilities between the Harbourmaster and Caravan Site Manager, and the Head of Operations. By adding in this post additional capacity would be provided to deliver the ambitions of the HMC and provide more capacity locally.

Mr MacFarlane pointed out that there were a number of urgent compliance issues that needed to be addressed and welcomed the addition of this role to address these issues and provide the extra capacity needed to ensure the Harbour was up to date with current legislation.

The Vice Chairman highlighted that this post would be an investment by the Council, helping to fulfil the Council's ambitions to improve facilities and generate more income from the Harbour.

Mr Pickles expressed concern that it was too early to advertise this job, as projects had not yet been identified. He added that there were a lack of people who would have the skills required for this role who would be willing to work in a small harbour. He appreciated the need for the post within the organisational structure but wondered whether recruitment could be delayed and the role performed by the Asset and Investment Manager in the interim. The Head of Operations confirmed that the current Asset and Investment Manager's remit covered the whole of the ESC area and

they did not have capacity to give enough focus to the requirements at Southwold. The Head of Operations appreciated that larger projects were still very much in the early stages of development, but felt that there was enough work that needed to be done immediately to justify the post.

Mr Gledhill commented that the balance between essential/desirable requirements was right, but agreed that it would be difficult to fill the post. Mr Musgrove felt that the Council should be looking for a project manager with some marine skills rather than a mariner with some project skills and hoped that the recruitment process would reflect this.

The Chairman felt that this was an essential role, and recognised that the recruitment process for the post could take some time to ensure that the right person was employed. It was recognised that there was more work to be done than Harbour users may have realised.

There being no further comments from the Committee, the Chairman invited the Chair of the Advisory Group to comment on the report. The Chair commented that there seemed to be some duplication between this role and the Harbourmasters role. He felt that this role should be strategic to identify priorities within the Harbour, and expressed concern that the Harbour Asset Manager could get caught up in the day to day activities of the Harbour. In light of the discussion by the Committee he asked whether it would be appropriate to employ a temporary member of staff to do immediate compliance works and a project manager further down the line.

Mr MacFarlane agreed with this proposal and pointed out that as best practise there was a requirement for an external marine expert as well as an internal person to consider health and safety.

Councillor Rivett agreed that there was some pressing compliance work to be done in the Harbour, and felt that this person should be employed as a matter of urgency. He proposed that the role should be reviewed in a years time by the HMC to ensure that it was still suitable.

Mr Musgrove asked where the function of designated person fit in with this post. The Head of Operations confirmed that the role of designated person was being picked up by the Compliance Working Group and options for this post would come to the HMC. A specialist would be required for some of the health and safety work on the 'wet' side of the Harbour as a matter of urgency.

On the proposal of Councillor Rivett, seconded by Councillor Smith it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That having reviewed and commented on the role and its responsibilities, the HMC approve the recruitment of the Southwold Harbour and Asset Manager.

6 Southwold Harbour Management Committee's Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the work programme for 2022.

The Head of Operations highlighted the Harbour Revision Order item on the work programme for March. This was not the agenda for the March meeting as a revision order was being considered, but was an opportunity for the HMC to take advice on why a Harbour Revision Order might be appropriate. There was a brief discussion about the reasons for revising the Harbour Order and it was agreed that any revision would need to be carefully considered to ensure that power around the Harbour was not given to external organisations, and that local stakeholders were fully supportive of changes. It was agreed that the Southwold Advisory Group be invited to the Harbour Management Committee's meeting with Lara Moore (Legal Director, Ashfords LLP) on Harbour Revision Orders.

The Vice Chairman asked that updates from the Working Groups and the Advisory Group be added to the forward plan as a regular item in future. It was recognised that it might be necessary to alternate between working groups to allow sufficient time for issues to be addressed.

The final report from Royal Haskoning would be added to the work programme for the HMC and SAG when it was finalised.

7 Exempt/Confidential Items

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

8 Exempt Minutes

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

9 Asset Rental Summary and Proposed Future Reviews

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

10 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting be held on Thursday 10 March at 4.00pm.

Additional meeting dates of Thursday 5 May at 4.00pm and Thursday 14 July at 4.00pm were agreed.

The meeting concluded at 6.09pm.

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Chairman