

Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Southwold Harbour Management Committee** held in the Stella Peskett Millennium Hall, on **Monday, 24 July 2023** at **9:30 AM**

Members of the Committee present:

Councillor Paul Ashton, Councillor David Beavan, Councillor Jan Candy, Mr David Gledhill, Mr Richard Musgrove, Mr John Ogden, Mr Mike Pickles, Councillor Lee Reeves

Other Members present:

Councillor Katie Graham

Officers present: Andrew Jarvis (Strategic Director), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer), Nicola Wotton (Deputy Democratic Services Manager)

Others present: Simon Flunder (Chairperson of the Stakeholder Advisory Group), Diane Perry-Yates (Southwold Caravan Owners Association)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Toby Hammond. Councillor Katie Graham attended as substitute.

The Chair stated that item 12 would be moved and heard after item 6.

2 Declarations of Interest

Mr Mike Pickles declared a pecuniary interest in items 5, 7 and 9 on the agenda. The Chair noted that he had received dispensation from the Monitoring Officer and would be allowed take part in discussion and vote on the matter.

3 Election of a Vice-Chair

Councillor Paul Ashton was nominated for the role of Vice Chair for the 2023/24 municipal year. There being no other nominations and on the proposal of Councillor Candy, seconded by Councillor Reeves it was

RESOLVED

That Councillor Paul Ashton be elected Vice Chair of the Southwold Harbour Management Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

5 Report on Harbour Fire and Impacts

The Committee received report **ES/1599** which provided the Committee with an update following the fire at the harbour on 1 May 2023. The Strategic Director summarised the report and commented that the response from the Harbour Management Committee and East Suffolk Council was now key in ensuring this did not happen again. The fire was a wake up call for both the Council, tenants and stakeholders in the harbour, and changes now needed to be made. Investigations had shown the fire could have been a lot worse and damage more widespread. The Strategic Director summarised the work that now needed to be done on leases with tenants and more rigour needed to be applied on all sides to responsibilities in leases. The Council had written to tenants and would be following up with a timeframe for actions.

The Chair agreed that storage in the harbour and reviewing of the leases was a priority to ensure safety in the harbour for all users.

The Chairperson of the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) commented that the SAG had requested for a follow up to the initial letter, with a time limit on action to be taken by tenants and a survey of what was being stored in the harbour. The fire could have been much worse than it was, and action needed to be taken to prevent this happening again. There needed to be a review of what materials were being stored and used in the harbour by the beginning of the next season.

Mr Pickles commented that there were concerns about the state of some of the premises, and that some buildings had been converted without planning permission or permission for change of use. It was a general issue in the harbour that people had extended premises and use beyond their leases and this needed to be policed. The General Manager for the Harbour had made a good start and this needed to be continued.

The Strategic Director commented that some leases were historic and so needed to be bought up to date to ensure they were safe. It was also a concern that some people had not sought either planning permission or permission from the Council as a landlord for changes of user and extension of premises. There were also concerns about the operations of premises and there would need to be discussions about the safe operation.

Mr Gledhill agreed with these comments and hoped that the harbour could become a safer place for businesses and visitors.

By unanimous agreement it was

RESOLVED

That the Harbour Management Committee:

1. Notes the review of all leases to ensure tenancy agreements are in place, consistent and up to date.
2. Notes the use of the Councils' powers under leases to ensure compliance with lease obligations and effectively manage its assets.
3. Notes that any redevelopment of tenanted areas needs to be undertaken with coordination with the Council as Landowner and with appropriate Planning and Building Control consents.

6 Southwold Harbour Investment Plan Study and options for replacement of the South Pier

The Committee received report **ES/1600** which provided an update on the final Southwold Harbour Study and Investment Plan and options to address the future function, operation, and survivability of the entrance to Southwold Harbour. The Strategic Director stated that the report had been considered over a number of meetings and the next step was to prepare a scope for a more detailed design and business case for the preferred option.

The Chair stated that work needed to be done to determine how the whole of the harbour should look and to guide future works. Works on the South Pier were a priority due to the expected lifetime of the structure.

The Committee discussed the options for replacement structures and noted that several different options were listed under option H6 in the report. Therefore, it was agreed to remove the mention of option H6 and amend the recommendation to refer to the 'preferred option' so as not to restrict the initial design and scope.

Mr Pickles asked how the Committee could ensure the proposal would move forward, and who would be managing this to ensure that local insight was not ignored and that a structure would not be built that proved detrimental to the harbour. The Chair stated that the recommendation at this point gave the go ahead to refine the size and shape of the replacement structure, and that the creation of a business case and more detailed design would be done with local engagement.

Mr Musgrove commented that there needed to be proper engineering oversight to ensure that what was planned was achieved. The Strategic Director agreed that this was important and that engineers from Coastal Partnership East would be involved to provide this oversight. The Strategic Director confirmed that once a full business case and designs had been created this Committee would then discuss and recommend this to Cabinet for approval.

By a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That having considered the report, the Harbour Management Committee supports the preparation of a Scope to go forward to an Outline or Detailed Design, including Environmental Assessments, and a Business Case for the preferred option to replace the South Pier with a breakwater.

7 Update from the Stakeholder Advisory Group

The Chairperson of the Stakeholder Advisory Group provided an update on the recent meeting of the group.

Regarding works to the South Pier, there was not total support for the proposals. Engineering oversight and control of contractors had been lacking previously, and it was reassuring that this had been discussed in today's meeting. The Chairperson agreed that work now needed to move on, especially at the South Pier, and asked what the timeframe for the completion of a business case would be. The Strategic Director commented that he could not give a timeframe for works at this point as this was a complicated project. Mr Gledhill agreed that the design would easily take six months or more to complete. The Chairperson also commented on the importance of the rest of the estuary in the survival of the harbour and asked that this was considered in future works.

Mr Gledhill commented that the HMC was prevented from taking action in the whole estuary. The Strategic Director agreed and commented that the HMC could facilitate discussions around the estuary and support action in the estuary, but not do anything further. The HMC could also ensure that works did not negatively impact the wider estuary.

Councillor Candy commented that there was a lot going on, and the HMC needed to concentrate on what it could do and accept that it could not act outside of the estuary. There should not be confusion between the HMC encouraging other organisations to engage with the process and the HMC being able to spend money outside of the harbour.

The Chair of the Southwold Caravan Owners Association commented that a plan had been developed for the caravan site, and asked when these would be shared so that consultation could begin. Caravan owners were unsure of what was happening and some guidance and a timeline would be helpful. The Strategic Director confirmed that a huge amount needed doing on the caravan site. The report and plans for the site had been submitted and still needed to be evaluated by officers. The Council was committed to involving the caravan site owners and ensuring that the site achieved its potential and could contribute to the wider harbour area.

The Chairperson of the Advisory Group raised the issue of water cleanliness in the harbour. Concerns had been raised by Southwold Town Council around Anglian Water discharging into the river, and the potential for this to impact the blue flag status of the

beach in Southwold. Work also needed to be done to ensure that sewage was not dumped into the harbour, either by water companies or harbour users. The Strategic Director commented that any issues with individual users dumping waste needed to be reported to the Harbourmaster. Wider checking and monitoring of the harbour could also be looked at, however, working out all the sources of pollution would take some time.

Mr Pickles commented that there were no local bylaws preventing people from pumping out and there were no facilities for pumping out in the harbour. As a result it would be difficult to require people to use holding tanks if no facilities for pumping out were provided. There was also an issue with septic tanks in residential properties which overflowed when the harbour flooded.

The Chair commented that Anglian Water had agreed to notify the Town Council when they were discharging into the harbour, and that the water needed to be tested when this happened to determine if there was an impact on the bathing water. Mr Musgrove asked that when a survey of leases and assets was carried out, septic tanks were also included.

The Chairperson of the Advisory Group raised the issue of jet skis in the harbour. The Harbourmaster controlled them within the boundaries of the harbour, but craft that were launched in the harbour did cause issues for swimmers in the wider area. The Strategic Director commented that this was an issue along other parts of the coast and in rivers and some temporary measures could be put in place to control this.

The Chairperson of the Advisory Group also raised concerns about the cables coming onshore for the LionLink Interconnector. One of the plans was for the cables to come onshore at Southwold and the cables would potentially run through the harbour. The Strategic Director commented that there were a number of consultations on these plans which the Council was involved in more widely, and issues would be brought to the Committee's attention in due course.

There was a discussion on the recent bathymetric survey of the harbour. Stakeholders were concerned that this was not an accurate reflection of the conditions in the harbour. The Chair asked that the survey was sent round for feedback.

8 Southwold Harbour Emergency Plan

The Committee considered report **ES/1601** which provided the Committee with the draft Southwold Harbour Emergency Plan for comment and approval.

The Strategic Director stated that ABP Mer had completed a gap analysis and identified thirty three items that were a requirement of the Port Marine Safety Code or other regulatory requirements that had not been completed for the harbour. An emergency plan had now been drawn up and was in use by harbour staff.

Mr Musgrove stated that the plan should be exercised every year, and asked for this to be scheduled in. The Chair suggested that this be done in coordination with exercises of the Southwold and Reydon emergency plans.

Mr Ogden commented that there was no specific mention of a storm surge and stated that as this was one of the more likely emergencies that would occur in the harbour it should be included. The Strategic Director agreed that this should be included and stated he would confirm whether this was captured through either the County or District emergency plans.

By unanimous agreement it was

RESOLVED

That the Harbour Management Committee note and approve the Southwold Harbour Emergency Plan.

9 Draft Standard Operating Procedure (Harbour Craft) and Marine Key Performance Indicators

The Committee received report **ES/1602** which provided the Committee with the proposed standard operating procedure for harbour craft and marine key performance indicators.

The Strategic Director stated that the need for these had been identified by ABP Mer in their gap analysis. Some standard operating procedures had already been written and approved by the Committee, this was the last procedure to be approved and would complete this action.

By a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

1. That having considered the draft Standard Operating Procedures the Harbour Management Committee note their contents.
2. That the Harbour Management Committee read and approve the draft key performance indicators for Southwold Harbour

10 Reporting Forms (Marine Activity)

The Committee received report ES/1603 which provided members with the draft reporting forms for use in the harbour. The Strategic Director introduced the report and stated that the need for these had been identified by ABP Mer in their gap analysis.

By a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Harbour Management Committee note the reporting forms.

11 Draft Outturn report for Budget 2022/23 & Monitoring Report Quarter 1 2023/24

The Committee received report ES/1604 which provided the Committee with an overview of the draft outturn position for the year ending 31 March 2023 and financial performance to the end of Q1 2023/24.

The Strategic Director commented that the finance team had done a great deal of work based on feedback from stakeholders to improve the reports. There was now a lot more detail provided which ensured the Harbour Management Committee and the public had a much clearer understanding of the harbour finances.

By a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That having reviewed the Draft Budget Monitoring Report for 2022/23 Outturn and Q1 2023/24 the Harbour Management Committee report this to Cabinet

12 Update from the Committee's Working Groups

The Committees working groups were yet to meet following the formation of the new Harbour Management Committee.

The Chair asked for a work programme to be drawn up for the working groups.

13 Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme.

It was noted that there were additional reports on harbour works to be brought to the committee, and these would be added into the work programme as timescales became clear.

14 Dates of the next meetings

The dates of the next meetings were noted as 14 September 2023, 9 November 2023, 11 January 2024 and 14 March 2024.

The meeting concluded at 10.35am.

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Chair