

Confirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Southwold Harbour Management Committee** held in the Stella Peskett Millennium Hall, on **Thursday, 14 September 2023 at 4:00 PM**

Members of the Committee present:

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

Other Members present:

Officers present: Kerry Blair (Head of Operations), Lorraine Fitch (Democratic Services Manager), Andy Jarvis (Strategic Director), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Musgrove and Cllr Toby Hammond.

2 Minutes

On the proposal of Councillor Candy, seconded by David Gledhill it was

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

Mr Mike Pickles declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 13, the Chair note he had received a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer to participate in discussion on this item.

4 Appointment of non-voting members to the Harbour Management Committee

The Committee received report **ES/1660** which related to the appointment of two non-voting co-opted members to the Harbour Management Committee.

The Democratic Services Officer stated that there was an allowance in the Harbour Revision Order for these positions. Although the Harbour Revision Order was not yet complete, it was hoped that the two additional members would provide additional local experience and knowledge to the Committee.

By a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That it be recommended to the Leader of the Council that Councillor Simon Flunder and Ms Diane Perry Yates be co-opted as non-voting members of the Southwold Harbour Management Committee for a period of twelve months until September 2024.

5 Appointment of Representatives to the Stakeholder Advisory Group

The Committee received report **ES/1655** which related to the appointment of two representatives to the Stakeholder Advisory Group.

The Democratic Services Officer stated that the RNLI position had become vacant recently and would now be filled by the Southwold Lifeboat Operations Manager. There were two positions to represent shoreside businesses, one of which had already been appointed to. There was one vacancy remaining to represent charter boats and someone had been approached about taking up this role.

On the proposal of David Gledhill, seconded by Mike Pickles it was

RESOLVED

That Mr Simon Hazelgrove be appointed as East Suffolk Council's named representative for the RNLI on the Stakeholder Advisory Group, with immediate effect.
That Mr Gerard Amiel be appointed as East Suffolk Council's named representative for the shoreside traders/businesses on the Stakeholder Advisory Group, with immediate effect.

6 Staff Structure Update

The Committee received report **ES/1659** which summarised staffing changes which would have an impact on the harbour.

The Head of Operations summarised the reasons for these changes. Firstly there was a need for a more experienced manager for the caravan and campsite with a different skillset to oversee the development of the site. The role had been regraded and was now a few grades higher, and as a result a restructure was required. The site manager had opted to take redundancy rather than apply for the new role.

Following the fire it also became clear that there were some skills missing in the harbour which could be provided by the Asset Management Team. When the previous Harbour Manager had left it was clear that there would be a very limited pool of

people to fulfil this role and it would be very difficult to recruit to this. The post was therefore regraded to a Harbour and Caravan Site Manager. Interviews had take place and a candidate had been appointed who had experience managing complex asset issues involving competing interests and a variety of stakeholders. They would start in the next few weeks and would be based in the caravan site office and would manage both the caravan site and harbour master team.

John Ogden asked who this role would report to and where it would sit in the context of the wider team. The Head of Operations stated that they would report to the Estates Manager, which was currently vacant. The Estates Manager would have a wider oversight of the Council assets. The Head of Operations would ultimately oversee this team.

The Chair of the Advisory Group asked how many of these posts were being paid for by the harbour. The Head of Operations stated that the Estate Manager role was an East Suffolk role and was not funded by the Harbour as they had a wider remit. The new role along with the harbour master team and the caravan site team were funded through the harbour funds. The new role was a combination of two other roles, the caravan site manager and the harbour manager and so there would be a saving overall. The Head of Operations stated that the harbour team would have a larger group of professionals to call on to help with projects rather than the team having to resolve things on their own.

By a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That the Harbour Management Committee (HMC) note the contents of the report.

7 Mid-Year Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24

The Committee received report ES/1657 which provided a mid year overview of financial performance against approved budgets.

The Head of Operations introduced the report. Income had held up reasonably well across both harbour and caravan site. The accounts had been hit by higher than anticipated expenditure due to inflation and significant one-off costs such as the shower block. The forecast profit at this point was lower than anticipated but it was expected that this would recover by the end of the financial year.

There were around thirty vacant plots on the caravan site which would be worth £100,000 a year in income, but income was higher on the touring side. Some refunds had been issued due to flooding on the site which would be reflected in the next years accounts. Drainage work would be done to try and remedy the flooding issues on the site.

David Gledhill referred to point 2.3 in the report which showed an overspend of £34,000 which was expected to reduce to £17,000 by the end of the year due to the cost of the hydrographic survey and asked how this was possible. The Head of Operations stated he would confirm the detail around this.

The Chair of the Advisory Group asked how the French drain work mentioned in the report would be paid for as this was on the third camping field. The Head of Operations stated drains would be done installed in areas where the water pooled around the surf shack. Income from this land was received in the harbour account and so work would be paid for from the harbour account.

John Ogden asked if there was any pressure on the finances from the fallout of the fire. The Head of Operations stated that at this stage there was not at this moment, but this could change. This would be discussed further under item 13.

Mike Pickles stated that more tourists were now coming into the harbour from abroad, and there were opportunities for money to be made from them through facilities. There were frequent complaints that the harbour fees were too high for the facilities provided.

The Chair stated that there was a need for some master planning to be done by the Harbour Management Committee and the Advisory Group to discuss what the harbour should look like.

By a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED

That having reviewed the Mid-Year Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24, the Committee report this to Cabinet.

8 Update from the Stakeholder Advisory Group

The Chairperson of the Stakeholder Advisory Group provided an update on the recent meeting of the group. The Advisory Group felt that a master plan next project that was needed to provide guidance on the future of the harbour. There was some frustration around the time it was taking for things to happen following the Harbour Revision Order and the Royal Haskoning Report. There was a gap between what was anticipated from the Advisory Group and the actions that were being taken. There were similar views on the caravan site where there was a lack of knowledge of the next step.

The Head of Operations updated the meeting on the Royal Haskoning Report. The last Committee meeting had agreed the replacement of the south training arm and to progress with a detailed costing and final design. The Coastal Partnership East team were advertising a role for a coastal engineer, and this person would lead on and manage this project and another project at Hemsby. A project manager with a marine engineering background was needed to work up the final design and oversee the project. There was money allocated to this in the budget, but the coastal partnership funding team would assist with applying for grants from elsewhere.

The Strategic Director confirmed that the application for the Harbour Revision Order had been submitted in September 2022. Ashfords had indicated that there was a backlog of orders, and the Council was now waiting to be told when the Southwold

Order would be considered. There was not a lot that could be done to drive this forward. David Gledhill stated he had known some applications take up to five years, and realistically it would be taking at least a year. The Chair stated this would not have a major effect on what was being done and main projects could be dealt with.

The Strategic Director agreed that a masterplan for the harbour was needed. There was a commitment to bring forward a vision and masterplan for the harbour and caravan site. The Chair stated that the local flood board was doing a similar exercise which could contribute to this. The Head of Operations stated he hoped that the stakeholder group could drive this forward. Mike Pickles stated that this was important, and it was also important to look at the relationship between the harbour and the town.

Regarding the caravan site, the Head of Operations stated that some visions had been produced but had not been shared. This would be one of the first tasks of the new Harbour and Caravan Site Manager. The Head of Operations stated that the three layouts for the site would be taken to the caravan site for people to see and discuss. The Chair of the Caravan Owners Association emphasized that this needed to be done before people left for winter when they would be making their decisions about the next year.

9 Update from the Committee's Working Groups

The Committee's working groups would be meeting in the next few weeks and there would be an update at the next meeting.

10 Southwold Harbour Management Committee's Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its work programme. The Chair asked that a timeframe for a masterplanning exercise be considered.

11 Dates of the next meetings

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

12 Exempt/Confidential Items

On the proposal of David Gledhill, seconded by Councillor Ashton it was

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item 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.

13 Update on Harbour Management Following Harbour Fire

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

The meeting concluded at 17.12

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Chair