



## **Meeting of the Teignmouth Harbour Consultative Body at Bitton House, Teignmouth on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 @ 1830 - 2000**

### **Present: -**

Robert Hughes - Devon Sea Safari  
Ross Pyne and Tom Mahon - Pike Ward  
Giles Squirrel - Teignmouth Maritime Services  
Amy Stenner - Teignmouth Maritime Property Services  
James Crawford - Shaldon Marine Mariners Weigh  
Teign Fisherman and Waterman Association - Paul Barczok  
Mark Layton - Teign Dive Centre and River Teign Rowing Club  
Sue Cox and Charlie Maddocks - Seasports Southwest  
Mark Brookfield - Boat Owners Association  
Steve Pocock and James Brett - Teign Corinthian Yacht Club  
Roger Bufton and Nick Clarence - Shaldon Sailing Club  
Chris Clarence - Shaldon Regatta  
Nick Clarence - Shaldon Shaldon Sailing Club / Shaldon Regatta  
Elliot Lovell - South Devon Water Ski Club  
Tony Smith and Aadila Morton - Teignmouth Canoe Club  
Councillors Chris East and Reg Gill - Bishopsteignton Parish Council  
Tim Biddlestone - Shaldon Parish Council  
Graeme Smith - Teignbridge District Council and Teign Estuary and Coastal Partnership  
Keith Underhill - Teignmouth Chamber of Trade  
Charlie Woolnough - RNLI  
Sgt Robert Harvey and PC Clarke Orchard - Devon & Cornwall Police

### Teignmouth Harbour Commissioners: -

Vic Weston  
Derek Davis - and Teign Valley Sea Cadets  
Jo Sparks  
Jude Chilvers

### Teignmouth Harbour Staff

Karen Dalton-Fyfe  
Humphrey Vince  
Marcus Walton  
Jayne Orchard  
William Burton

## **Apologies: -**

Tom Batchelor – ABP  
Mark Fleming and Kevin Clifton - Pilotage and Marine Services Teignmouth  
Peter Stenner - Teignmouth Maritime Services / Teign Fisherman and Waterman Association  
Steve Combestock - Teign Boat Hire  
Lisa Edworthy and Lucy Pitt - Teignmouth Regatta  
Matt Crawford - Shaldon Marine Mariners Weigh  
Sue Astbury - Commissioner  
Kate Barczok - River Teign Rowing Club

## **No response: -**

Bill Hook – Teignmouth and Shaldon Ferry / Teign Salmon Fishers  
Matt Sessions – Teign Musselmen's Society  
Ricky Cox – Lyme Bay Baits  
Newton Abbot Town Council  
River Teign Sea Scouts  
Teignmouth Town Council

1. Harbour Master and Chief Executive Officer of Teignmouth Harbour Commission (THC) gave a presentation covering three main areas:

- About THC including the legal framework; roles and responsibilities; draft strategy and vision; what has been achieved in improving visibility and transparency; the new dredging regime to balance cost/benefit and limit impact, whilst focussing on maintaining a safe harbour.
- The Consultancy Group: the legal framework, how and why it needed a refresh to reflect the whole stakeholder user community; the importance of working together to safeguard the river for future generations, whilst keeping the river safe today, including de-confliction.
  - The next meeting will be held in Jan 23 where the HM will provisionally Chair the meeting, to ensure that the Terms of Reference are endorsed; a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary is nominated and voted for and the meeting is set up in a sustainable way. The agenda and examples of a similar meeting held in the Port of Plymouth will be provided.
- The annual report, with a focus on finance and safety and balance between the port funding and subsidising the small commercial & leisure side of the business. Costs are rocketing, the port is suffering with the war in Ukraine and the impact of record global temperatures.

2. Questions from audience:

a) **Nick Clarence - Shaldon Sailing Club/ Shaldon Regatta**

- Thanked Karen for the presentation and questioned whether the commercial side of the business was viable - talked about pilots/dredging - open port duty and the fact that the leisure side should not be subsidising the port.

**HM responded**

- Reminding everyone that the port was commercially viable and able to fund all its operations, including the external dredging, PNP requirements, with an operating profit of c. £250k which subsidises the mooring operation and administration to the tune of £125k during 2021/22. THC chose to apportion the surplus profit against the

PNPF liability, bringing THC up to date and so reducing late payment and interest costs.

- The Plough (Teign C) was managing the channel due to the new regime and would be required to do so, whether the port existed or not and would in time need to be replaced regardless.
- The pilots are subcontracted and only get paid when ships enter the port, there would be no liability if there were no ships.

**Charlie Woolnough - RNLI**

- Added further thoughts... if dredging were to stop, there would be increase flooding to houses and businesses, as channel allows rise and back flow of the water.
- Protecting life and environmental impact.

**b) James Crawford - Shaldon Marine**

- The use of the moorings was not being maximised. Not everyone was using moorings all the time and he had customers who would want to use them.

**HM responded**

- That she would investigate use and any lack of use. PMN – As long as mooring holders paid their annual licence; they were entitled to use the mooring iaw the terms and conditions of the licence. THC reserves the right to place visitors at the visiting rate on unused moorings. Shaldon Marine are welcome to request customers to use unused moorings, through THC Office and will be charge at the visitor rate.

**c) Tony Smith - Canoe Club**

- Safety concerned about the increase in number of swimmers and how can improvement be made.

**HM responded**

- The use of safety messages, working together, and the need to manage different users with more people on the river, we may need to in time look at zoning but not without the engagement of the consultancy group. The Commissioners are due to have an extraordinary meeting to look at how we can improve safety using the mantra: engagement, education, presence, and then enforcement.

**Charlie Woolnough added**

- Ignorance, naivety, tidal education, need to work together as a community.
- Den day talks on safety.
- Swimmers / PWCs /SUPS - swimming on back beach dangerous especially for non-locals.
- The only safe place to swim is between the Green flags!

**James Crawford commented**

- There needs to be a law - People having to have at least Power Boat Level 2.

**d) Elliot Lovell - South Devon Ski Club**

- Thoughts on Certificate of Competence
- Used to be people at Polly Steps, which made things better managed and safer
- Is there a way we can prosecute

**HM responded**

- We must look to update our Harbour Revision Order to make it appropriate for today's challenges, including the use of mandatory registrations, we can only operate within our legal powers
- Polly Steps is not owned by THC but TDC - there needs to be a safer way of landing and recovering.
- Prosecution is about establishing burden of proof, we have the power to prosecute speeders and those that are operating dangerously and we are building the

evidence, CCTV, body cams ensuring there is sufficient signage and user-friendly website etc.

**Graeme Smith - TDC and Teign Estuary and Coastal Partnership added**

- TDC staff were being abused when working at Polly steps and there was no revenue so they could no longer justify it.

e) **Chris Clarence - Shaldon Parish Council / Shaldon Regatta**

- Thanks HM for detailed report and said he had a better understanding with the detailed finances explained. Then said with the doom and gloom will harbour fees be going up 15%.

**HM responded**

- State not sure where the rumour of 15% had come from? RPI currently 12.5%, Dues were up 9% in January. Last year's increase has not met the challenge of inflation which has been between 9-12% throughout the year. Everything we do from diving to product cost, to staff, insurances, fuel, rent, everything has gone up. As THC do not own any significant real-estate (inc car parks which are a significant revenue stream for other harbours), apart from our aging fleet of boats, we are subject to variations in leasing, subcontracting and price increases.
- The commissioners have a meeting to discuss the impact of inflation, lower port activity, increasing safety issues and we are going to address all these issues and how that might affect mooring costs. See Post Meeting Note (PMN).

f) **Giles Squirrel - TMS**

- Are you planning on charging SUPS? How are you going to get more money?

**HM responded**

- Today I can only raise funds using the mechanisms authorised in my harbour order as it stands, and this is quite restrictive.
- To charge a more diverse group of river users will require an updated Harbour Order in which you will be consulted.
- In the meantime, we have a voluntary registration scheme, where we provide advice and safety information to those registers, we will continue to use this. But we must run a surplus as a trust port and currently we are struggling to do this.

*Post Meeting Note:-*

*Giles emailed on 17<sup>th</sup> October saying that he didn't ask about charging SUPS and asked about charging dues and what the HM's plans were with reference to this. We also discussed about the services the harbour provide which may make the comparison on mooring rates inaccurate. Also mentioning the fact that in Teignmouth you can't get water, there is nowhere to dump your garbage and no way of getting ashore and mooring your dinghy if you are a visitor! This makes the comparisons difficult to use.*

*HM highlighted on the evening that it was difficult to do a direct comparison, but so far as possible like for like mooring were used (particularly in terms of having no walk ashore facilities for those used in the comparisons) and there were far more expensive comparisons that could be made. She also highlighted that most if not all additional facilities drew an additional cost over and above the mooring fees. But THC are keen to work with landowners including TDC to better understand how we might improve the delivery of facilities in future. Including where water is currently provided at Polly Steps and by THC staff when requested at no extra cost. But a collaborative approach and funding surplus would be required to install*

*and maintain these facility as it is in other ports, just because you don't currently pay for this service doesn't mean that it can't be provided should there be sufficient interest. - Possibly to be added to the first action matrix when the group settles.*

3. **Post Meeting Note:** Following an extraordinary meeting of the Commissioners it was agreed:

- There is a requirement to raise mooring fees by at least RPI (Jul 22) 12.3% but this doesn't account for the increased cost experienced during FY 22/23 with rapidly rising inflation impacting every part of the business. Last year's rates set at 3.8/4.8%
- Financial due diligence shows that cost cannot be cut further in terms of operating or admin. There are some anomalies that will be corrected where a small number of mooring holders are on unpublished legacy rates, which does not fit with an open and transparent organisation and will be corrected.
- Port Dues will increase in April 23 to account for RPI and again in Jan 24 to align with wider commercial and port increases, but cannot be increased further due to the overall subsidising of the small leisure and commercial moorings.
- There is an issue with having insufficient staff, to provide more presence on the river outside hours, but the commissioners did not wish to employ more people to cover this, due to the significant increase in costs (potentially a further 15% increase) – other options to be discussed with consultancy group at next meeting, including a volunteer Harbour Patrol.
- Therefore, mooring rates will increase for 2023 by 20% to account for inflation of 12.3% and a further 7.7% to account for the deficit to date and forecast increase until the rates are implemented.