

**MINUTES OF THE SAUNDERSFOOT HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025**

**PRESENT:**

Commissioner P Evans – Chair  
Commissioner A Sangster – Vice Chair  
Commissioner P Parker  
Commissioner A Evans  
Commissioner J Codd  
Commissioner W Goldsworthy  
Commissioner D McDermott

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

N Gandy - CEO  
L Bremner – Finance & Admin Manager  
J Cray – Harbour Manager

**APOLOGIES:**

A Thomas - Accountant

**604. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Thanks were extended to the commissioners for their attendance.  
The Chair announced he would be stepping down at the end of March. Expressions of interest are to be invited for prospective new Board members.

The Board were informed that there are currently nine members of the strategy group and meetings have been taking place with the strategy group members to collate information. The Board will be provided with the strategy group report for advice and comment before passing it on to the advisory committee for information. The final strategy will be decided by the Board and signed off in March.

**605. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were stated.

**606. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

All present agreed that the minutes represent a true and accurate record of the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

**607. MATTERS ARISING**

No matters arising.

**608. HARBOUR OPERATIONS**

Nicola Gandy addressed the meeting.

**Crane issue**

No further update on the Offshore Marine matter since the last meeting. Welsh Government have been contacted for a meeting to discuss next steps but are yet to respond.

John Cray addressed the meeting.

**Fishing Fleet**

The fishing fleet are operating well, although adjustments have been made with regard to timings for entry and exit of the harbour due to the sand build up currently present following the recent adverse weather and strong tidal surges.

### **Tripping Boat Operators**

Individual meetings were organised with the operators to review performance during the 2024 season. One operator continually failed to demonstrate professionalism and failed to operate in a manner that aligned with the requirements of the harbour and failed to comply with agreed terms therefore has not been offered the chance to operate from Saundersfoot Harbour going forward. In light of this decision, invitations for applications have been advertised to fill both vacant positions for the 2025 season. Continuation will be subject to performance and adherence to the requirements of the harbour. Deadline for applications has been set as 17<sup>th</sup> February

### **Community Engagement**

With the community engagement element of the role of a harbour master in mind and with the view to bolstering an improved working relationship between SHC and SCC, the Harbour Master has joined SCC as a community councillor for the Saundersfoot south ward.

- Chair congratulated John on behalf of the Board.

### **Mooring Demand and Commercial Opportunities**

Demand for certain leisure moorings within the harbour has reduced significantly over the last couple of years, possibly due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. Several vacancies exist that cannot currently be filled. Recent consultations with commercial fishermen and our existing waiting list indicate a strong demand for commercial moorings to accommodate smaller vessels.

It is proposed that a selection of centre moorings be reverted from leisure usage over to commercial use to support additional small commercial vessels, currently only one commercial fishing vessel operates from a centre mooring with no reported issues. The offering of such moorings could allow more fish landed at the harbour to be sold at the harbour creating more business opportunities. Seeking views and propose reverting a number of centre leisure moorings to commercial moorings.

- Proposal was supported by the Board.
- Chair mentioned that comments from the strategy group indicated the possibility of a fish market in Saundersfoot which could link with the additional commercial moorings.

### **Sand Works**

The harbour team will be looking at completing some sand works shortly to try to address the large sand bank at the harbour entrance. This work is necessary to remove a hazard to navigation and a risk to vessel operators. The main annual works within the harbour will commence as normal in April again using TRJ.

### **Harbour Team**

The harbour team continue complete maintenance tasks around the harbour, the next stage of works will be to prioritise mooring maintenance throughout Feb, March and April. This work is to ensure the harbour's mooring chain grid and associated riser chains are in good order.

## **609. COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS**

Nicola Gandy addressed the commissioners.

### **WB Griffiths**

The CEO requested approval to appoint a lawyer as it is thought that WBG have their insurers involved. Nicola had an initial discussion with a lawyer who has indicated we have a very strong case, and that he would act for us.

WBG are bringing specialist surveyors this Friday, but this has been going on for years now, so we need to stand firmer.

- Chair stated that he supports the proposal. Water ingress in MCOE is beyond acceptable snagging.
- The engagement of legal representation was supported by the Board.

### **Accommodation**

Two booking systems are now up and running hopefully resolving the issues with people bringing dogs to the wrong properties. Just one hurdle with Booking.com which is being acted on with the assistance of Stay Pembrokeshire.

In terms of marketing, it has been decided to end the contract with Coastal Cottages, as it can be handled in-house and extra staff will be needed to run the accommodation.

### **Tenants**

Restaurant still has no interest. Proposal for authority to be delegated to CEO to look for alternative uses, may involve requirement for planning permission, whether that be as offices, indoor event space, gym, accommodation.

Board all in favour of CEO seeking alternative uses for the restaurant space.

Unit 10 hairdresser will be leaving. There is some interest from a salon owner but lots of interest from retail. Reletting is unlikely to be a problem.

Received a proposal from an operator to rent the entire Schooner as a bar with small plate offer and distillery/bar retaining some of the heritage offer.

Seeking Commissioners approval for this rental for the Schooner as last year it proved to be very costly to run, high ropes were not a viable option for the company running it and even with the doors open on busy summer days people did not want to pay to enter the Schooner.

- Commissioner Goldsworthy asked if they would use outside space.
- CEO outlined that inside and upstairs outside and also considering use of some tables on the decking, but these would have to be shared with Teatime.
- Commissioner Goldsworthy asked how would it affect future events.
- CEO confirmed there would be clauses in the lease that the outside seating area would be removed or the deck closed for certain events.
- Commissioner A Evans offered a note of caution for sensitivity as the crabbing area is used by children.
- CEO said that the prospective tenants are keen on the family element of the decking area.
- Commissioner Sangster asked how will it impact the heritage display.
- CEO indicated that the tenant would keep certain elements, and the remainder will be moved to Coal Building.

### **Welcome Centre**

The staff member left in mid-December and due to the time of year the Welcome Centre closed for the winter months.

Seeking approval to section off an area (facing the street) as a separate rental unit.

Persimmon have indicated an interest and would do the fit out for us and rent it for a period

of 6 -9 months with a door to the remainder of the history room, when they leave we are left with either another rental space or a separate room in the Coal Building.

- Commissioner Goldsworthy asked if the heritage displays would stay.
- Chair explained that Persimmon are interested in the projector area so no displays would be lost.

#### **610. EVENTS**

Successful Christmas Market at the Coal Building, much improved footfall and traders indicated they would like to come back.

Events programme for 2025 developed and working on, music, cinema nights, sailing club events, potential football festival, street food festival, vintage bike show.

The harbour has booked its first wedding for April, there has been a lot of interest but mostly for 2026.

#### **611. FINANCE & GOVERNANCE**

CEO addressed the commissioners.

Some good news that interest rates have marginally reduced, reducing monthly interest payments.

Controls on spending are tight, as expected this time of year.

HSBC recommended Saundersfoot Harbour for the not for profit award at the Swansea Bay Annual Business Awards and we were highly commended at the event.

#### **612. HRO**

Commissioner Sangster addressed the commissioners.

No update since last report.

CEO reported that it has been chased up and there is no update.

John Cray and Nicola Gandy attended Welsh Ports meeting and concern was raised several times.

#### **613. ADVISORY AND STAKEHOLDERS**

Advisory Committee met Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January, only 2 members were present. Sue Boughton-Thomas has resigned.

Health and Safety advisor trained the team on risk assessments.

CEO and Harbour Master attended Welsh Ports Group meeting.

#### **614. HR**

Seasonal recruitment is planned for April.

#### **615. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Harbour has a football team and entered a tournament on Friday in the Street Football Champions League. Hoping to host European Street Football in July.

- Commissioner McDermott asked if there had been any update on the person attempting to claim £9,000 as they can't see the sea from the crabbing area.

**616. DIARY CONFIRMATION**

No meeting in February

Next official Board meeting will be March 26<sup>th</sup>.