

Watchet Boat Owners Association
Meeting Monday 9th October 2017
The Esplanade Club, The Esplanade, Watchet

Minutes

Present: 14 members were present:

Apologies: No apologies were given

1. Minutes of the last meeting

- One correction: Martin reported that, due to an inaccuracy on his Excel spreadsheet, the membership total is 50 and not 60, as was reported and noted at the last meeting.
- Otherwise, the minutes were agreed as correct.

2. Matters arising: There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.

3. Officer's Reports

i. **Chair:** Nothing to report.

ii. **Commodore:** Not present.

iii. **Secretary:** Nothing to report not covered by agenda items.

iv. **Treasurer/Membership Secretary**

Martin expressed concern again about the falling numbers of WBOA members, with one further member leaving to move their boat to Portishead.

v. **Other Officers**

a) **Yard Officer:** Nothing to report.

b) **Health & Safety Officer:** Richard reported concern about the following –

- The apparent poor state of the wooden supports under the boat just to the inside right of the yard. **Action: Brian to review this and take action accordingly.**
- The pressure washer is unsecured and with instructions that no one has signed to say that they have used it. In view of these, there is a risk of an accident.
- The band saw appears to have a loose blade.
- Discussion that a review is needed of the health and safety requirements of these pieces of equipment; both need a Standard Operating Procedure-type document or instructions. Before using the machines, a member will need to read the instructions and sign to state that they have done so. It was also acknowledged that all users of the equipment needed to be competent to do so, with a sign possibly to include that they are using the machines at their own risk. Members using any equipment should have the appropriate training and therefore perhaps there is a need for them to indicate self-certification when they sign to state they

have read the instructions. Discussion also regarding the possible need to lock up dangerous pieces of equipment, but then a procedure will be required to access the key.

Action: Martin to review the health and safety procedures of these pieces of equipment and develop instructions if required. Sam to type/laminate these for display with the equipment.

4. Watchet Harbour Marina Feedback

No update was received for this meeting. Apparently, parts for the dredger have started to arrive now.

5. Discussion and follow-up actions re Proposal requesting a discount for berth holders due the Marina not meeting its contractual obligations.

- Following the proposals at the previous meeting, it was agreed that the WBOA would contact West Somerset Council in writing outlining the concerns of members.

Ray has made contact with the RYA Legal Department and shared both the berth holders' contract, and the contract between the Council and Watchet Harbour Marina (WHM). In the latter contract, a number of points were identified where WHM are not adhering to their contract, which is then not supportive to berth holders.

A draft letter to the West Somerset Council was discussed and amended at the WBOA Committee Meeting last Thursday; this letter was sent to Chris Hall, with a copy to Councillor Martin Dewdney, on Friday. Ray read out the letter to members, which included the following points:

- Statement of the berth holder's exasperation with the mud in the marina.
 - That legal advice has been sought from the RYA.
 - Concern regarding the increasing levels of mud in the outer harbour and impact on safety of vessels.
 - That there are other areas of concern regarding services in the marina.
 - That there is a contract between the West Somerset Council and WHM, which includes performance guarantees that have a major impact on berth holders.
 - Working together is the preferred way forward.
 - That the WBOA would appreciate the input of the Council in these matters.
- It was also agreed that the WBOA would write to Tim Taylor with our concerns, however, it is thought that further detail is required as the berth holder contract with the marina is not legally supportive of berth holders; instead it is a list of rules for berth holders to comply with in relation to the marina.

A questionnaire for WBOA berth holders has been developed to gather views on the services in WHM, in order to be more specific about concerns when writing to Tim Taylor. This has been separated out into issues relating to the mud in the marina, health and safety, and the facilities and services provided; these have all been raised during discussions at previous meetings, but not detailed. It was noted that no comments will be specifically attributed to individuals in the letter from the WBOA and Tim Taylor.

Action: all to complete if they have views to express and email/send to Ray Ventura.

Ray reported that the RYA completely endorses our approach and that we do have a say as berth holders.

- Question: Is there really a solution to the mud problem?

Answer: Yes. We are awaiting Dr. Rob Nunney to finalize his report once the dredger is repaired, which should include a strategy for dealing with the mud, encompassing a capital dredge.

- Question: The marina is of utmost importance to Watchet, but the community doesn't seem to be concerned about it. How might the Watchet community be further engaged about this?

Answer: It was thought that pressure needs to be applied to the Town and District Council regarding funding support, but that this isn't the role of the WBOA by itself.

6. Update on Disability Hoist

Following the visit to Plymouth to view a disability hoist there, RYA advice and support from WHM for plans to build a hoist in Watchet Marina, there has been no further progress. Ray has forwarded relevant information to Chris Danby to progress this initiative.

Action: Chris Danby and Iain Lambert to provide an update at the next meeting.

7. Proposal for a Quiz night

Suggestion from Bob to try to reinstate the social aspect of the WBOA, in order to bring a more positive focus to the membership. In view of this, he and Cathy are planning to set up a Quiz night in the Esplanade Club, which will be open to WBOA members, berth holders who are not members, and any others who use the marina. Once a date has been set with Roy from the Esplanade Club, the event will be publicised.

Action: Cathy to contact Roy with possible dates and liaise back with Bob to confirm.

8. Actions for increasing membership

Discussion about potential initiatives to increase the membership of the WBOA. It was proposed that:

- a) Members with email addresses could receive the minutes of the WBOA meeting via email, although there would be a cost for these to be sent to those members without email. It was therefore agreed to begin by sending the minutes by email. It was also noted that the minutes are published on the WBOA website each month for members to access.

Action: Cathy/Mike to liaise with Martin regarding membership email addresses so the minutes can be electronically distributed after each meeting.

- b) All new berth holders in the Watchet Harbour Marina to receive a WBOA welcome letter and pack of information to include:

- WBOA membership registration form.
- The history of the WBOA.
- The WBOA leaflet.
- A summary of what the WBOA can do for you (e.g. including a discount in the Esplanade Club and use of the Yard).

Action: Martin to provide Bob with the previous WBOA welcome letter and information; Bob to review and update this. Once this is done, for them to liaise with Iain about distribution to new berth holders in the Marina.

- c) More leaflets to be put at the front desk of the Watchet Harbour Marina office (Owen has stated that they have run out) and possibly in the Boat Museum.

Action: Martin

- d) Regeneration of the Rowing Section of the WBOA – Martin reported that the WBOA owns a rowing craft, which needs four rowers and a cox to use it. However, it has not been used very much during the past summer apparently due to the weather, and could do with more people being interested in rowing to get value from it. No one offered at this meeting.

9. Any other business

Martin provided feedback from the West Somerset Harbour Board meeting, which he attends as a representative of the Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee. The following points were discussed:

- i. Crane incident in WHM: It was a reasonable assumption that the incident was covered by RIDDOR and was therefore reportable to the Health & Safety Executive (i.e. in relation to the Health & Safety at Work Act), but the Council provided assurance that they are carrying out a full audit of the Watchet Marina activities and procedures, which will include the Crane incident. Following the audit, the Council will produce a report, and Martin will request a copy.

Action: Martin

- ii. Impact on mariners of people fishing off the roundhead at the end of the West Pier: Martin reported the potentially serious incident described by Mike and Cathy when they last sailed from the outer harbour towards Minehead. Two fishing lines were caught under their yacht, with another line wrapped around the forestay, and two hooks/weights on the foredeck. Concern wasn't just expressed about this, but also relating to the verbal abuse they received from the people who had cast the lines. In view of this incident, past reports of similar incidents, and the risk of serious injury/death of casting of lines from the roundhead, the Council is considering action. There is no right of way for pedestrians to the end of the West Pier, only permissive rights, and it has been suggested that signs were erected to clarify this. Members present expressed equal concern about the fishing activities, describing further incidents that had happened to them in the past.

As mariners have the right to free navigation and the Council is responsible for safe navigation into and out of the harbour, the Council is making proposals regarding the fishing activities in the harbour, to go to a full Council meeting for ratification at a later date.

- iii. RYA advice: The Council expressed concern that the WBOA had sought the advice of the RYA regarding situation of the mud in the Watchet Marina and outer harbour. The WBOA would maintain however, that it has a right to do this.
- iv. Watchet Harbour Advisory Board: Martin is to attend a meeting of the Board this week; he asked if there were any issues that members would like him to take to it.
- v. Fishing Stakes: The Council has accepted that they are responsible for this, as they are responsible for the safe navigation into and out of the harbour. It was noted that there are no 'grandfather rights' for fishing stakes.

10. Time meeting closed: 20:16 hours