

Newhaven Port User Group Meeting Minutes – 1430hrs Thursday 2nd May 2024

Venue: - Newhaven Enterprise Centre, Denton Island.

Attendees: -

Dave Collins-Williams, Port Manager, NPP. (DCW).
Steve Tindale, Harbour Master & Pilot, NPP. (ST).
Mark Beaver, Office & Finance Manager, NPP.
Connor Jones, Port Operative, NPP.
Andy Shiel, Port Operative, NPP.
Steff Goux, DFDS.
Szymon Kordacz, LCT Support/DFDS.
Sarah, Border Force.
Ben, Border Force.
Heather Salvage, Border Force.
Maurice Elford, Newhaven Yacht Club.
Gerald Simmons, Newhaven Yacht Club.
Ian Lambert, Newhaven & Seaford Sailing Club. (IL).
John Simcock, Sussex Boat Trips.
Jim Skinner, Friends of Tidemills. (JSk).
David Miller, SubSearch Marine.
Susi Miller, SubSearch Marine & Fairways Marine Brokerage. (SM).
Joseph Howe, FM Conway.
Paul Delaney, FM Conway. (PD).
Graham Pearson, Casper Group.
Andy Wells, Cargo Flow Agency.
Mark Riminton, Newhaven Gig Rowing Club. (MR).
Jules Nicholson, Sussex Police.
A.N. Other, Sussex Police
Steve Hall, Rampion/RWE.
Reece Gibson, Freight Express Seacon.
George Dean, Freight Express Seacon.
Russ Levett, Newhaven Marina. (RL).

Apologies: -

Paul Heslop, Senior Pilot. NPP.
Dwain Rodgers, Deputy Harbour Master & Pilot, NPP. (DR).
Alex Probyn, ESFRS.
Caroline Reynolds, Sussex Police.
Simon Thomas, Lochin Marine.
Jo Barker-Collins, FM Conway.
Kevin Mullinger, Brett Aggregates.
Zia Fikardos, MMO.
Dave Guy, Newhaven Fish & Flake Ice Society.

Welcome

DCW as chairman welcomed all to the meeting. The list of apologies was read out. DCW reminded those present that this group has existed for 14 years to enable a forum for consultation and exchange between all stakeholders in the Port and it is a requirement under the PMSC for Harbour Authorities to consult with their stakeholders. DCW used a PowerPoint presentation throughout the meeting.

Minutes of last meeting held 11th May 2023 and update notes issued in lieu of the November 2023 meeting (cancelled due to Storm Ciaran).

These were accepted as being a true record and approved.

Actions Arising

None.

Matters Arising not covered on this agenda

Nothing arising.

Terms of Reference and Membership Updates

Available on the Port website (www.newhavenport.com) and copies were included in the meeting notes. There were now 45 organisations represented and 102 individuals on the PUG email distribution list. DCW asked if there was any other person or organisation that had been omitted from the group or if any amendments were proposed to the TOR's, to which there were none raised. DCW said he and ST could be contacted anytime if any member of the group had suggestions.

Port Masterplan Strategic Objectives Update

i). Railway Quay Redevelopment.

LDC have completed the conversion of the old Marine Workshops into Council offices, community use space, educational space and business space.

The ferry terminal refurbishment was supposed to be completed in June 2023, but there were severe delays due to problems with the contractors and sub-contractors. It was finally completed in April 2024 and looks good. Of the 4 new offices created on the first floor, one has already been let out and the remaining 3 are being marketed soon.

The installation of solar panels on the terminal and freight shed roofs was completed last June and we are now seeing the benefits of that, although the amount of electricity produced is obviously seasonal.

ii). Infrastructure for Renewables/Port Development.

Rampion Windfarm – DCW said the Rampion 2 project (extension of the existing windfarm) continued to move slowly forwards. With regards to Rampion 1, the operation & maintenance continues with 2 to 3 CTV's (crew transfer vessels) in Newhaven throughout the year.

East Quay Areas – The new port access road (McKinlay Way) has now been open into Dock Gate 4 since February 2022 and is working well with 99% of HGV's now using the new road. The traffic through South Gate entrance is almost entirely limited to cars, vans and pedestrians. There has still been no requirement to construct the southern link road through Gate 5, so this remains on hold for now, but NPP are talking to a potential hydrogen production company that may construct facilities on the LDA (land south of the Port offices). That combined with the Rampion 2 project will then make it necessary to construct the Gate 5 link road.

The Brexit DEFRA checks on SPS goods (sanitary and phytosanitary) commenced on 30th April and so after 3 years of Government delays, the BCP (Border Control Post) is fully operational. The Port is designated to receive all types of goods except live animals. After 2 days of the new rules coming into force, there had been no vehicles flagged up for inspection yet.

DCW said that the Hydrogen Company must remain anonymous at the moment, but there are discussions to lease to them approximately 5000m² of the LDA for a R&D facility. This will be phase 1 of their project. Phase 2 will involve leasing part of the Area E1 in the Lewes District Local Plan subject to NPP obtaining planning permission.

DCW explained that Area E1 is the 4 hectare site between the Port Access Road and the Nature Reserve that is earmarked for Port expansion. NPP have already submitted a pre-planning application and received feedback from Council officers. All the surveys required to submit a planning application have already commenced on the site, with the intention to submit the planning application at the end

of 2024. Whether that will be an outline or full planning application will depend on how far advanced the discussions are with the Hydrogen Company. DCW said that the detail for the site is in preliminary stages and subject to change, but indicatively, approximately 1 hectare will be used for landscaping and buffer areas; 1 hectare for the hydrogen production, storage and distribution centre; 1 hectare for new freight drivers facilities and parking; and the remaining 1 hectare for warehousing and industrial units.

JSk asked if the footpath would be diverted again and DCW confirmed this and explained with the help of the powerpoint presentation slide.

The project to stop the cut-out at the south end of the East Quay/LDA eroding away has recently started. Beckett Rankine are the civil engineers, and the contract was awarded to Jacksons, who constructed the link road into Gate 4 and also did the EA flood defence walls around Newhaven.

iii). Increase in trade.

DCW reported that Bretts were continuing to increase their throughput of material with 4 regular dredgers bringing in the seawon aggregate. No progress has been made with Network Rail to allow more freight train slots on the network and so it remains about 40% of aggregate material going out by train and 60% by road, although DCW believed discussions are going well and it won't be much longer before more slots are allocated, or longer freight trains allowed. There were no representatives from Bretts available to update the group.

For the North Quay, DCW said that FM Conway continue to operate well, and the throughput of ships remains steady. PD commented that they will be increasing the volume of cargo and vessels will soon be arriving from Norway.

EMR are still operational at North Quay, but after their 1 ship in 2022, there have been no more. The reason given is that the short sea trade is just not profitable anymore and so the scrap material continues to go out of the yard in containers to the deep seaports for export. However, that might be soon to change. EMR have recently discussed with NPP allowing slightly larger ships up to North Quay which would make it viable. Those discussions are ongoing but looking favourable. There were no representatives from EMR present to update the group.

DCW informed the group that Ripleys scrap were vacating Newhaven and have established a yard at Northfleet on the Thames in order to export larger volumes on bigger vessels. Ripleys were still clearing the East Quay site and then a condition survey of the quay has to be conducted to terminate the lease.

A French Company called Oree Shipping are planning to start a sail cargo venture between Le Treport and Newhaven East Quay later this year. Starting with one 28m sailing vessel they intend to carry palletised cargo between the 2 ports, gradually increasing the fleet to 4 ships over several years.

With Ripleys gone, the intention is to make the necessary repairs to the quay and open it up to all types of cargoes for import and export. Whereas Ripleys rented a large part of the East Quay for storage of the scrap, the idea is that it will not be rented out again. The quay will be available as a multiuser quay so that more types of cargoes can be handled with a time limit set on storage before shifting it away.

iv). Infrastructure for Fishing and Leisure.

The process for funding for the new fishing stage at West Quay (called Stage 21) via the Levelling Up Fund rumbles on very slowly. NPP submitted a revised scheme to LDC in April 2023 which reduced the original plan for a 100m stage for 16 fishing boats down to a 50m stage for 8 boats. The reduction

was due to the spiralling costs which far exceeded the allocated funding money. This meant the Government Grant Funding Application had to be revisited and we are still waiting, after a full year, for the outcome and the signing of the document to secure the funds. An advanced funding arrangement has covered the costs of the design and feasibility work, plus the numerous studies and surveys that had to be undertaken for the Marine License application. NPP are ready to go out to tender as soon as the GFA is signed. DCW said that allowing for the above, construction works are not expected to start until September 2024 and complete in July 2025. That's a delay of about 10 months on the original plan.

The Marina have received planning permission for their redevelopment and the "wet works" (removal of existing piles and pontoons, dredging and installation of new piles and pontoons) was due to start last month. However, this has been delayed due to technicalities on the landside of the project.

RL commented that to tie in with the landside aspects of the wider project, wet works will probably commence in the northern half of the Marina in October.

v). The Tidemills Conservation Area.

No updates to report but DCW took the opportunity to pass on his thanks to The Friends of Tidemills and the SDNPA for their ongoing work in, and commitment to, the area.

(vi). Port Masterplan Refresh

The majority of the Port User Group were aware that NPP are refreshing the Port Masterplan and DCW thanked all those who attended the stakeholder workshop on 17th April and to those who were continuing to engage via the AECOM PlanEngage website. DCW encouraged the group to put their views forward. There were 35 organisations represented by 47 people on the day. That was 80% of all the organisations that were invited. The PlanEngage temporary website went live on the 23rd April and is open until 15th May for those who have been invited to contribute.

The PMP was published in 2012 and much of the material is still valid and the changes at Newhaven in the intervening period have been subtle, rather than substantial. Therefore, a refresh, rather than a complete re-write, is appropriate.

It is good practice to keep PMP's updated, and as it is now 12 years since the initial masterplan was created. A periodic update is due.

NPP are looking at what has been achieved, what has not been achieved, what has changed and where we are going in the next 20 years. Publication of the final product should be in September.

Statutory/Competent/Security Authority

DCW gave his standard 6 monthly reminder that Newhaven Port & Properties Ltd are the Statutory Harbour Authority under various legislation primarily responsible for managing the safe movement of vessels and for conserving the harbour fit for use. Any comments or suggestions for improving the safe running of the harbour were always welcome. There is a lot of information available on the NPP website and DCW encouraged all to take a look at www.newhavenport.com

NPP are also the Competent Harbour Authority under the Pilotage Act of 1987, which means NPP set the rules for vessels requiring a Pilot. The Pilotage Committee meet in February each year unless a meeting is called for in-between. The PV Pelorus, Workboat Magnus Musson and Survey vessel Triton are all running well and fully certificated. All Pilot boat crew qualifications and medicals are fully up to date and training is always ongoing. The newbuild pilot boat from Goodchild Marine in Great Yarmouth (the ORC 121 Pilot vessel) will be ready for delivery at the end of this year.

DR joined NPP as Assistant HM & Trainee Pilot on 1st June 2023 and he completed his Pilotage training and passed examination on 1st March. He was promoted to Deputy Harbour Master & Pilot. ST was then promoted to Harbour Master & Pilot, meaning that DCW is now just the Port Manager!

DCW expressed his congratulations to both Steve and Dwain. DCW said that this was therefore his last PUG meeting as Chair and Steve will be taking over.

The Pilots continue to visit the Warsash Ship Simulator suite at Solent Uni in Southampton. NPP have Newhaven harbour set up in a ship simulator and have been using it for the last 8 years for training purposes. Its benefits are that the Pilots are able to train and practice in a safe but realistic environment and it is very useful for incident investigations, simulating new types of vessels and experimenting in varying weather and tidal conditions without the risk.

The Newhaven Port Security Authority Committee is a statutory body under Port Security Regs, and it meets six monthly. Members of the committee are NPP, LCT, DFDS, Conways and EMR, with Sussex Police and Border Force as advisors. Representatives from DFT Maritime Security & Resilience Division and Police Counter Terrorism also attend.

NPP are also the Local Lighthouse Authority on behalf of the General Lighthouse Authority (Trinity House). This means NPP install and maintain all navigation lights and marks with the permission of and regular auditing of Trinity House.

Marine Safety Management System/Port Marine Safety Code

The Marine SMS is a living document based on the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code. The Designated Person under the Code is David Foster (DF) from Marico Marine, who continually assesses that NPP complies with the Code and reports that to the Board of Directors, who are collectively, The Duty Holder.

ST and DF have monthly meetings during which ST updates on all operational aspects. DF then provides 2 monthly reports to the Board (The Duty Holder). PMSC audits are now conducted annually, in April. The last one was on the 16th April 2024, which went very well and once again showed that Newhaven Port is compliant with the PMSC.

The Navigational Risk Assessments and Marine H&S risk assessments are regularly reviewed and managed by ST and DR using the Marico Marine HAZMAN IT based program. These are no longer available on the website, but anyone is welcome to view them on request.

Port Control visits are ongoing for the PEC holders and as always, DCW said there was an open invite for any member of the group to make a visit to Port Control and see what goes on. We just ask for a couple of days' notice and to limit each group to a maximum of 6 persons. We have had a few welcome visitors since the last meeting, especially noting the visits from the Gig Clubs.

DCW said he had been sending any relevant safety or industry information that he received from the MCA, MAIB or other organisations out to some or all members of the group as appropriate and added other useful info on the website. ST would now be taking over this role.

The 2023 revised version of the "Newhaven Code of Practice for Recreational Users" is available to download from the NPP website and hard copies were available at the meeting. The intention, as always, is to make sure we have a safe harbour for all users. There were also supplies of the Traffic Signal cards available.

DCW reminded the group that when planning an event within the Harbour Limits, an event registration form had to be completed at least 21 days beforehand, together with a risk assessment. The registration form and a risk assessment template are on the website and in the Code of Practice booklet. The next Gig regatta will be held on the 29th June.

The following vessels are now licenced for commercial activities within Harbour Limits –

Lady Maverick 3 - Paul Burns - Maverick Boat Adventures
Maverick Jet Skis - Paul Burns - Maverick Boat Adventures
Illuminate - John Simcock - Sussex Boat Trips
Kestrel Warrior 7 - Anthony Collins - Kestrel Warrior Fishing Trips
Froya - Mike Clift - Seahaven Maritime Academy
No Excuses - Seb Rouse - Lagoon Watersports
Excalibur - Trevor Cutler - Cutts Marine
Buccaneer - Trevor Cutler - Cutts Marine
CM1 - Trevor Cutler - Cutts Marine

That means that any other vessel operating in or from Newhaven and taking money for their services are acting illegally and may not be safe. They should be reported to ST. The cooperation of all is requested to help manage this.

DCW hoped that there will be better control over the Jet skis this summer, as last year was particularly fraught, resulting in discussions about banning them from launching at Simpsons or reinstating the jetski club scheme that worked quite well a number of years ago. Simpsons did make a commitment to implement a club scheme prior to this season. That would mean only club members can launch into the harbour and any misdemeanours can be dealt with. This needs to be carried forwards very soon and DCW hoped for cooperation from Simpsons Marine.

DCW asked if there were any further comments on that agenda item before moving on.

Incidents, Training and Exercises

DCW had distributed the list of marine incidents for the last 4 years. There were 53 incidents reported in 2023 spread across all the categories. The number of miscellaneous anti-social behaviour incidents were down on 2022 due to the poor weather during the school summer holidays and the presence of security guards on the East Pier. The trend of anglers deliberately casting at and/or over passing boats on both the East Pier and at West Pier/The Hope Inn areas continued, although there were fewer incidents. DCW hoped the signage and the leaflet distribution helped in some way to control this, but it is nevertheless worrying and dangerous behaviour and it will continue to be monitored. We do need port users to call the incident in to Port Control immediately and then we can hopefully identify the offenders by zooming in on CCTV and the Police will take action. We need the evidence. People can also call 999 as it is a danger to life. The more times it is reported, the more action can be taken to apprehend the culprits. ST is in the process of updating the signage and the leaflets for this season and we have been liaising with the Police.

DCW said that he continued to encourage the Marina, Simpsons and others to educate their customers to behave responsibly and follow the rules.

Anybody with feedback on the subject of incidents to contact DCW.

(R = recreational & angling boats, F = commercial fishing boats, C = commercial cargo, ferries & workboats, M = miscellaneous).

2023: 53 incidents. (R = 17, F = 3, C = 12, M = 21).
2022: 59 incidents. (R = 26, F = 2, C = 4, M = 27).
2021: 30 incidents. (R = 7, F = 4, C = 7, M = 12).
2020: 25 incidents. (R = 11, F = 1, C = 8, M = 5).
2019: 29 incidents. (R = 8, F = 1, C = 9, M = 11).
2018: 24 incidents. (R = 10, F = 4, C = 2, M = 8).
2017: 23 incidents. (R = 9, F = 4, C = 7, M = 3).
2016: 15 incidents. (R = 9, F = 0, C = 6, M = 0).

2015: 20 incidents. (R = 9, F = 0, C = 6, M = 5).

2014: 13 incidents. (R = 2, F = 1, C = 5, M = 5).

2013: 10 incidents. (R = 7, F = 1, C = 0, M = 2).

2012: 15 incidents. (R = 7, F = 1, C = 2, M = 5).

Anybody with feedback on the subject of incidents to contact DCW.

ST updated the group on the new Marine Incident Reporting system that has been implemented on the NPP website and also accessed via a QR code within the Recreational Users COP booklets. All Port users can now report incidents easily.

Training and exercising of NPP staff is always ongoing and Seahaven Maritime Academy are used when appropriate. The 6 monthly oil spill exercises were continuing, with the last one in April and the next in September.

The latest versions of the Newhaven Harbour Emergency Plan and Oil Spill Plan are available on the website, and both were recently updated. Full reviews of the plans occur annually. None of these plans absolve any other port business, operation or user of having their own emergency contingency plans.

DCW asked if there were any further comments before moving on.

Local Notice to Mariners (NTM)

These are available from the website or upon request to ST or Port Control. Copies are forwarded to all on the distribution list. Anybody not on the email distribution list and wishing to be, please let ST know. There were 11 issued last year and there have been 7 issued so far this year, with No.1 being the list of notices still in force from previous years.

Vessel Traffic Figures

A sheet with a breakdown of figures up to end of 2023 was included in the meeting papers. North Quay stone imports were down a little. North Quay scrap exports were zero. East Quay scrap exports were down to 6 in 2023 and have now ceased. East Quay aggregates imports continue strongly.

Visiting fishing vessels have continued, although the numbers were significantly down on 2022. These are using the Fish & Flake Ice Society berth on West Quay. Post Brexit, all visiting fishing vessels must be UK registered. We can no longer accept non-UK fishing vessels in Newhaven.

The summer ferry schedule started on 1st May and the 2 sailings per day with 1 vessel has increased to 3 sailings per day with 2 vessels. For the 2nd year running, DFDS will be operating 4 sailings per day during the summer school holiday weekends.

In 2022, the ferry freight import traffic was back to pre-covid levels, but unfortunately it was down 8% in 2023 from the previous year. Exports continue to decline. Down 11% on 2022 and 43% down compared with 2019. On a positive note, 2023 was extremely good for tourist traffic and March 2024 was the busiest March on record for passenger numbers.

The new EES (European Entry/Exit System) comes into force in October, which is an unknown quantity, but it may benefit the Newhaven-Dieppe route due to the anticipated delays in Dover. Tourist traffic bookings for 2024 are looking very good with foot passenger and bicycle bookings on the up. Coach bookings are also up, including an increase in school trips.

DCW showed the group a ppt slide with the ferry traffic figures over the last 6 years.

Harbour Works and Dredging Updates

Planned Breakwater maintenance and repairs are ongoing each year. Ferry Terminal works, and solar panels already reported above. The West Riverbank revetment repairs are now complete. East side Cut-Out already reported on above. Substantial upgrades to the Ports electrical sub stations, feeder pillars and cabling are complete. The ferry turning plate is being replaced this summer by Mackleys Contractors. New fishing stage already covered above.

On dredging - since DCW's November report, the dredger Freeway was here for 3 days in November, the Causeway for 5 days in February, followed by the Acamar for 4 days to do bed levelling. The Sospan Dau was then here for 2 days in March. The Marina have not carried out any dredging since 2019.

Consultation Groups/Meetings

DCW described how, as always, the Port continued to be extremely active in attending (either virtually or in-person) on a national scale, the various working groups and meetings of the British Ports Association, UK Harbour Masters, Port Skills & Safety, Government departments and agencies; as well as internal/local meetings such as H&S, Security, Maintenance, Pilotage, Ferry, Rampion, Fishermen, Police, ESFRS, MCGA, RNLI, Border Force, etc. DCW had provided an indicative list of such meetings held over the last 12 months with the meeting papers.

Marine Planning / Environmental

The MMO South Marine Planner was unable to attend today to give the group an update and no written update had been provided. DCW had nothing further to add.

Member Organisations Updates

Newhaven & Seaford Sailing Club - IL updated the group on the clubhouse building. He said that it was still closed whilst undergoing essential repairs. They now have the funding to complete the works which should be fully completed in the Autumn. Sailing activities are still operating without disruption.

AOB

JS asked if there were any updates on the proposed kelp/mussel bed farm project south of Peacehaven. DCW said he had not heard anything for a couple of years.

ST took the opportunity to update the group on the DfT Port Marine Safety Code review that was presently out for consultation. It now specifically mentions the duties and responsibilities of harbour facilities which would include the Marina, Rampion and the North Quay berths.

IL asked about the Peter Leonard Marine slipway project on Denton Island east side. DCW said that there were funding and legal issues and so the project had been stalled. SM asked if the funds could be diverted towards the old Cantells slipway on Robinson Road. DCW passed on the LDC contact.

JSk enquired about the sale of the West Promenade. DCW confirmed that NPP were in negotiations with LDC to sell the promenade. He had hoped it would have gone through before the summer, but this was now unlikely. MR asked how the planning application for the restaurant and community facilities was progressing. DCW said it was going to committee soon and acknowledged that if LDC did not get planning permission then they would probably not proceed with the purchase.

Next meeting will be in November 2024 and will be chaired by ST. Venue and date TBC. There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1540hrs.

DCW
20/05/24