

Newhaven Port West Quay User Group Meeting Minutes – 1430hrs Thursday 21st November 2024

Venue: - Newhaven Lifeboat Station

Attendees:-

Steve Tindale, Harbour Master & Pilot, NPP. (ST).
Dave Collins-Williams, Port Manager, NPP. (DCW).
Dave Downey, Fisherman (DD)
Neil Witney, Fisherman
Lucy Bennet, Sussex Police
Alex Harley, Sussex Police
Sarah, Border Force
Ben, Border Force
Mick Scott, Chairman – Newhaven Fish & Flake Ice Society
Daneil Huff, Fishermens Mission

1a. Apologies:-

Robert Pearson, IFCA
David Guy (DG) - Secretary, Newhaven Fish & Flake Ice Society & LUF Consultant.
Ian Bickerstaff – Bickerstaff Fishing
Kyle Liggett – Bickerstaff Fishing

1b. Introduction

ST chaired the meeting and declared it open at 1430hrs, thanking Newhaven Lifeboat Station for once again hosting the meeting.

2a. Minutes of last meeting held 9th May 2024

These were accepted as being a true record and approved.

2b. Actions Arising

DCW had asked for stages 10 and 11 to be cleared of all gear and boats by June 24. He noted that the stages were almost clear but there was still an amount of gear and debris left to remove by TD and DV. Stage 11 is now cleared of everything and access has been removed to avoid unsafe access onto the stage, a few items remained on stage 10.

3. Matters Arising not covered on this agenda

Nothing arising.

4. Berth & Boatowner Updates, Security, H&S, Housekeeping

Some insurance was still required and had been chased individually. ST asked that owner details are kept up to date by emailing admin@newhavenport.com or notifying Dave Guy, as appropriate, when changes in ownership, contact details and insurance occur.

ST asked that all keep gates locked and reporting any missing/damaged signage, ladders, decking, etc. ST reported that he is looking to get signage made up to help identify the individual fishing

stages from West Quay. Any damage to NPP stages to be reported immediately to Port Control. Likewise, any damage to Fish & Flake Ice stage to be reported to DG or MS. Any damage – anywhere - that's likely to be a hazard to navigation then report it immediately to Port Control.

ST stressed the importance of keeping stages as clean and tidy as possible and not to store any oil or other pollutant on the stages. The disposal of old nets and waste oil products is each fishermen's own responsibility. ST said that small amounts of waste oil could be disposed of in the NPP waste oil tank at East Quay, but only with the knowledge and permission of Kris James and empty drums are to be taken away, not dumped on NPP.

Net recycling – The Sutton Workboats/Sussex Wildlife project was going well.

With regards to the Fishers ML5 medicals, DD said there was ongoing pressure to give exemptions for those spending less than 72 hours at sea.

ST had included in the meeting papers some of the latest safety information of relevance to fishermen, namely - some relevant cases from the MAIB Safety Digest No.1 of 2024, the Yellow Safety Buoys warning from LDC, The MAIB Fishing Section from Safety Digest No.2 of 2024 and MAIB safety Flyers on Argos Georgia & Kingisher as well as the Synopsis of the reports for Ocean Maid, Guiding Light + Guiding Star, Angelena and Piedras.

ST reminded the group that the website www.newhavenport.com provides a lot of information.

5. Port Operations, Communications and Dredging

ST said that 17 Notice to Mariners had been issued so far this year. All on the website at www.newhavenport.com. DG was exhibiting the relevant notices on the Society NB and texting notifications - when relevant. Anybody else who wished to be placed on the email distribution list should notify ST.

The Ferry summer schedule finished end of September and we have reverted to the winter schedule of 1 ferry doing 2 sailings a day. Ferry figures are generally looking good, up about 5% this year, although that is mainly on tourist numbers rather than freight.

The checks on animal and plant products commenced on 30th April after a 3 year delay. Our BCP started slowly, however it seems that it has now started now in earnest with several trucks per week now coming to the BCP.

The Port Control team is still:-

Dave Strong, Mark Embleton and Elliot Paskins.

Billy Bickerstaff, Brad Hill and Sam Bennett.

We also have Laura Kennedy, our Finance and Admin assistant, covering shifts in Port Control and doing well.

Our Harbour Management Team are still myself as Harbour Master/Pilot, Dwain Deputy Harbour Master / Pilot and Paul Senior Pilot.

Pilot boat crews are still on a 4 on – 4 off shift system. Nick Stanyard, Lee Blacknell, Karl Davenport and Mike Avenell. The part-timers still regularly provide additional cover if required. They are also still included in the Ports Oil Spill Response Plan.

Our new build Pilot Boat an ORC 121 has been delayed until February. She will be called “Seaxe”. The Pelorus’s certificate has been extended until December, after that we shall see if we can get another extension or will be relying on the Magnus Musson. She continues to go strong and be a backup pilot boat and a Workboat.

We have launched our refurbished pilot boat pontoon which is positioned off No. 2. This is to allow the storage of the three port vessels and the start of plans to remove No. 2 RoRo and the bailey bridge.

Just to remind you that we operate under a Marine Safety Management System, which is a living document based on the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code. Our Navigational Risk Assessments and Marine H&S risk assessments are continually reviewed by ST and DR.

Dredging – since May, we had the dredger Sospan Dau here for 6 days in June and 3 days in October, the Causeway for nearly 2 days beginning of November, We have also had the Acamar for a total of 14 tides for bed levelling and removal of sediment from RoRo2 berth.

Bretts are doing well and the number of ships continues to increase. The Britannia Beaver is the regular vessel, but we do get some of the others from time to time including the new Cemex Go Innovation.

Bretts haven’t managed to secure any more freight train slots on the railway network, so its still about 60% of material going out by road and 40% by rail.

Ripleys scrap is now completely off the quayside. 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.

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. The trial run should be in December, although it has been pushed back a few times.

For the North Quay, FM Conway are continuing to operate well and the throughput of ships has been steady. They recently said they are looking to increase throughput.

EMR have resumed the export of scrap metal from North Quay, with 2 ships since September.

It was requested that further dredging could be undertaken close to the fishing stages when the Sauspan Dau returns. Depending upon the schedule and the availability this will be undertaken.

6. Windfarm Update

Rampion 2 – No real updates. Awaiting planning which should be early next year and then off take agreements in Autumn next year. It is likely but not yet confirmed that RWE will lease about 5000m² of the LDA (south of the NPP offices) for O&M warehousing and office space for the lifetime of the windfarm. Rampion 1 - The O&M side of things - no updates to pass on. Operations continue with 2 CTV's here throughout the year, with an occasional extra vessel when the maintenance requires it.

There have been reports that rock armour will be used around the windfarm to protect the area from scour, however there is a belief by the Fishers that this will soon be spread further to the east by tidal streams.

7. Port Development/Projects update

Railway Quay

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.

The ferry turning plate works have been completed and all went well.

East Quay Areas

The new port access road has now been open into Dock Gate 4 for over 2 years and is working well. The traffic through South Gate entrance is pretty much limited to cars, vans and pedestrians. The only trucks still using South Gate on a regular basis are Brightwells as they have a depot in Beach Road and within the East Quay site.

There has still been no requirement to construct the southern link road through Gate 5, so this remains on hold for now.

Area E1 is the 4 hectare site between the Port Access Road and the Nature Reserve that is earmarked for Port expansion. We have already submitted a pre-planning application and received positive feedback from Council officers. We are now undertaking all the surveys we need to do to submit a planning application early next year. Nothing is set in stone, but it is likely that 1 hectare will be used for landscaping and buffer areas, 1 hectare for the renewables and energy storage, 1 hectare for new freight drivers facilities and parking and the remaining 1 hectare for warehousing and industrial units.

The project to stop the cut-out at the south end of the East Quay eroding away has been completed. Beckett Rankine were the civil engineers, and the contract was awarded to Jacksons. The project went well and appears to be working.

West Side

Planned Breakwater maintenance is ongoing each year and this hasn't stopped.

The West Riverbank revetment repairs were completed last year.

The process for funding for the new fishing stage at West Quay (called Stage 21) via the Levelling Up Fund continues. We submitted a revised scheme to LDC back 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 this has now been signed. The MMO have issued the Marine Licence for the works and the dredging, and we will go out to tender in the new year.

The current timeline is:

January 25 – Go to Tender

March 25 – Appoint Contractor

April 25 – Commence Works

November 25 – Complete Works

The Pontoon remains at 50m, in the footprint of fishing stage 10 & 11. When the works go ahead, dredging of the Fish & Flake berths will be considered. This prompted further round table discussion around the project.

Russ Levett from the Marina sent the following update for the Port User Group which I share here:

The plan is to complete this phase in Spring 2025 (Subject to weather and all the other associated possible issues!). Phase 2 would commence in autumn 2025 and cover the remaining pontoons at the southern end of the site.

All marine works are separate from the landside development but will complement the development as it moves forward.

Access to new pontoon will be from the former A pontoon access area. This remains until completion of land reclamation in the area of the gravel car park on West Quay. The final access and new marina office building will be to the right of new E pontoon on the diagram.

In terms of schedule:

Demolition of old pontoons and infrastructure (October/November 24)

First 10 piles removed (by mid November 24)

Dredging equipment arrives on site (mid-November). Transportation subject to weather.

Dredging campaign (Start Mid/Late November 24 – finish January 25). 27,000 m3 in first phase.

Giving a maintained depth in this area of -1.0m below CD.

New pontoons/piles/services from February 25. All new pontoons apart from U basin walkway which will be refurbished and reused.

It was noted by those present that the new plans for the marina will remove access to a slipway, thereby there will be no drying out facilities in Newhaven. This prompted further discussion regarding the original construction of the facilities.

The Port Masterplan has been completed and I have brought copies for you to review and take away with you. The PMP goes into lots of detail about the port and our ambitions for the future. The future objectives are:

- Support further development of the Newhaven-Dieppe ferry route, increasing utilisation and continuing to focus on the customer experience;
- Continue investing in infrastructure to further increase the use of renewables throughout the port, both directly, in partnership with customers, and in partnership with renewable energy producers and local authorities to enable wider benefits beyond the port estate;
- Support the growth of trade through the port for: cargo by ship, tenancies within the port, and by attracting small cruise vessel calls;
- Support the continued development of the fishing and marine leisure sectors, and through partnership with operators ensure the highest standards are always maintained; and
- Bring further benefit to Newhaven by supporting cultural and leisure activity on the west bank of the river Ouse, the regional economy by increasing small cruise operators' awareness of local attractions, and over time, making the port more of a landmark for the town.

No further comments were made.

8. NFFI Society, CIC, Industry update

MS The Society is suffering from some damage on their stages. There is some damage in the roadway and has subsequently been addressed by NPP.

MS asked if there was a way that harbour dues could be removed from fishing boats coming to the society for fuel. Whilst it is understood why the society is requesting this, the harbour dues are payable for the running of the port services such as Port Control, navigation lights and dredging, therefore the relatively small charge made will not be removed.

MS raised the concern that the Marina has said they will be removing commercial fishing boats from the marina once the redevelopment works have been completed. Thereby, affecting fishing boats such as Girl Macy who stop over in Newhaven.

No further comments were made.

9. IFCA/HMCG/Police/Border Force updates

Robert Pearson from IFCA sent the following update, although this was only picked up after the meeting, therefore not discussed during:

If it's useful, probably the key updates people might be interested in are on our Minimum Sized Byelaw - we are still waiting for this to pass the final stage of being signed off by the Secretary of State to become 'live'. We were anticipating this being signed off this summer, but it is very much caught up in the ministerial machine after the election, with the new government heavily scrutinising what is being brought before it. A disappointing delay but out of our hands unfortunately.

Earlier this year we consulted on amendments to the proposed Net Permit Byelaw, this consultation closed earlier this year and we will be looking to share the results of the consultation with Stakeholders shortly.

Fishers will know there is a lot of focus on Defra's Fishery Management Plans at the moment. The Bass Management Group has been launched by Defra to consider actions from the Bass FMP, and myself and Neil Whitney are both on it, so we will have the opportunity to report to the group on Bass developments going forward. Defra launched an FMP blog earlier in the year which provides a good place to stay up to date on all FMP's, but for immediate interest there are consultations due on Sprats, and Skates & Rays, for fishers with an interest in those species.

Enforcement wise, in the Newhaven area we have recently focussed patrols, including out of hours (at night & weekends) on the Swingbridge area after intelligence suggesting undersized bass have been taken. We have also conducted inspections of recreational vessels at Brighton and Newhaven, whilst we haven't picked up direct fisheries infringements within our remit (yet!), we have passed on significant intelligence to the MCA about potential for vessels acting as unlicensed charters. We would of course welcome further/continued intelligence reports about these, or any other issues.

HMCG - No update

Police – Sussex Police gave a brief update of their operations within the port area. There has been lower incidents of anti-social behaviour with regards to anglers in the narrows.

Border Force (S/B) – Gave the group a useful update on their Sussex operations and areas/activities of concern, which was warmly received and prompted useful conversations.

The requirements for all commercial vessels operating out of Newhaven to be commercially licensed by Newhaven Port was discussed.

10. Fishermen's Mission updates (DH).

The memorial service on the 11th May 2024 was a success, there will be a further memorial in May 2025. There is a Defibrillator Project by the Seafarers Hospital Society through Seafit offering 200 defibrillators and first aid kits to fishers. The information has been circulated to the group. ST added that the BPA had released industry guidance on [Modern Slavery & Smuggling: A Practical Guide](#) which some may find of interest.

11. AOB

No further points were raised. The next meeting will be held in May 2025, date and venue to be advised.

ST

20/12/24