

December 2007

Dear Mooring Holder/Harbour User

What has dominated this last year has been about how we have addressed the Municipal Ports Review. In last years newsletter I reported that the review had been completed and that the four key findings related to:

- Accountability and decision making
- Strategy and Business Planning
- Management and Performance Review
- Municipal Port Finances

As a result of this we have altered the committee structure and we now have a new fit for purpose bespoke Harbours Board. The Board is, in essence, a Committee of the Council which has full resolving powers provided any decision made is within the Councils overall policy and budget. This Board is made up of 5 councillors and 5 Independent members, the latter being appointed following a skills audit, advertising, short listing, interview and selection.

The Board meets every two months but can also have informal meetings to discuss issues. The old sub-committee that we used to have has now become the stakeholders group called the Harbours Forum and they also meet six times a year.

Along the way we have considered and approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Council and the Board, undertaken a Business Plan for the ports, updated the Sustainable Strategy and considered a Port Masterplan. We are also in the process of finalising our Financial Management Plan.

Laid up Shipping

Another disastrous year with very little income from this facility as, quite simply, the ships are out there working and there is no requirement as yet to lay them up. Truro only really benefits when there is a slump in world trade and whilst things are doing well there is unlikely to be any change in the situation.

The draft Port Masterplan has considered this, and other problems which have financial implications, and identifies a need to replace some or even perhaps eventually all the laid up shipping berths with pontoons to provide deep water berths for small craft.

Commercial Shipping

Four silos have now been built on Lighterage Quay, each one holding approximately 750 tonnes of bulk cement. The scrap continues to be exported and we have had some activity during the year with timber framed buildings and other building materials to Tresco on the Scillies and waste glass exported to Portugal.

A new weighbridge facility has now been built on the quay for use by the port customers and the old one will be taken away at some point next year.

Again the port masterplan has looked at this and proposes to safeguard Lighterage Quay for freight use until keeping the site in this becomes uneconomic. Uneconomic in this sense means that the financial revenues and the transport benefits of 'miles off roads' are no longer sufficient to justify the costs of maintaining freight activity.

Leisure Moorings

Demand for moorings continues to outstrip supply, even with the 300 berth marina scheduled for the Docks in Falmouth. Visiting craft were down this year which seemed to be due to the poor weather that we experienced in the summer.

Some of the visitors pontoons have been craned out, grit blasted and repainted and more will be done next year.

Please be aware that the Carrick concessionary rate was due to be phased out in four years time. With Local Government Reform coming in during 2009 it may be that this is brought forward. In addition, our Moorings Policy currently restricts the allocation of moorings to those locals living in Carrick, Penwith, Kerrier and Restormel and this again may well have to change in the future.

Oyster Fishery & Aquaculture

A major study into the problems caused by slipper limpets, a pest on the Fishery, was undertaken during the year and more work is being done to see how to tackle the problem during 2008. The number of licences taken out by the fishermen has increased this year which is a good sign. The size and quality of the oysters caught has also improved.

One problem that we are experiencing at the moment in the King Harry Reach is the drop in water quality in the area which has led to concerns from one of the company's seeking a new site in the Carrick Roads so that the mussels may be located in clean water for a two month period before being harvested.

Plans and Policies

There has been a flurry of activity here with the following plans and policies being addressed:

Waste Management Plan	-	Reviewed
Environmental Management System	-	Reviewed
Sustainable Strategy for the Ports	-	Updated
Oil Spill Contingency Plan	-	Reviewed and Updated
Port Facility Security Plan	-	Reviewed and Updated
Safety Management System	-	Reviewed and Updated
Marine Emergency Plan	-	Reviewed and Updated
Port Marine Safety Code	-	Reviewed and Audited

Prince of Wales Pier, Falmouth

This is the 'home' to most of the pleasure craft operating around the estuary and includes the all year ferry links to Flushing and St.Mawes together with a seasonal link to Truro from Falmouth in the summer. There are 14 pleasure craft operating from the Pier ranging from small RIB's offering environmental cruises to large pleasure craft taking up to 128 people on pleasure cruises around the Fal and Helford estuaries.

Owing to the age of the structure there is a constant need to spend money on the maintenance particularly under the suspended section where the concrete cells have been cut back, the reinforcing bars cleaned up and then the whole section patched up. In addition we have had a major crack and settlement in the north east edge of the solid structure, probably caused by movement at the base. This is likely to involve closing the area off, digging up the ground to find any voids and then putting it all back together again.

Harbours Forum & Carrick Harbours Board

As mentioned earlier in this letter the last year has been dominated by the Municipal Ports review and the transition from an advisory stakeholder group (Harbours Forum) to a bespoke fit for purpose full committee of the Council, with resolving powers (Carrick Harbours Board).

Some of the reports that have gone to the above during the year include:

- Draft Business Plan for the Ports
- Local Transport Plan – Freight Strategy
- Revised Port Facility Security Instructions
- The Smaller Ports Agenda
- Municipal Ports Review
- Municipal Ports Review – Memorandum of Understanding
- Carrick Harbours Board – Establishment Plan

- Municipal Ports Review – Adoption of Business Plan
- Port Marine Safety Code – Review of the Operation and Effectiveness of the Authority's Safety Management System
- Fees and Charges – Ports of Truro and Penryn

The Harbours Forum is the stakeholder group that the Board recognises and is made up of 9 members representing fishing, environmental, leisure, commercial, aquaculture and the wider community in Truro and Penryn harbours. Please contact the Chairman, Mr John Pedler on 01872 270955 for any information regarding this group.

Summary

I hope that I haven't painted too bad a picture of what's been going on in the last year there are some good stories as well! One of our port customers has invested £500,000 in infrastructure to store his product of imported bulk cement. We continue to have enquires for marine related businesses to move onto the quay and we expect this interest to continue in 2008.

Visitor's moorings continue to be well used and mooring waiting lists are high at the moment.

The Municipal Ports Review has led to some administrative and operational changes and the Council have been awarded 'Leading Lights' status being one of only five council authorities to get this achievement to date. The award was made in recognition of the successful implementation of the Municipal Ports Review and its recommendations for best practice in decision making and accountability, strategy and business planning, and review of performance and finance.

Finally, we are also involved in Local Government Reform where all the District Councils and County Councils will be abolished in favour of a single unitary authority. The local authority ports that will be part of this will include Bude, Newquay, St.Ives, Penzance, Truro, Penryn, Prince of Wales Pier, Portscatho, Downderry and Portwrinkle. Other maritime interests would include the seasonal patrols on the Helford, Caffa Mill and other slipways, dinghy parks, landing stages and pontoons found at Cawsand, Saltash, Looe and Lerryn.

That's all for now – have a safe and prosperous New Year

Best Wishes

Andy Brigden