

# **ADVISORY BODY TO THE NEWPORT HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS**

**11 March 2020**

A meeting of the Advisory Body to the Newport Harbour Commissioners was held at The Mission to Seafarers, Alexandra Dock, Newport, on Wednesday, 11th day of March 2020, at 10:45 hrs.

## **PRESENT**

Mr A Hemmings (in the Chair)  
Messrs M Beale (Liberty Steel), L Davey (Simec Ports UK Ltd), C.W Dowds and R Morgan (Natural Resources Wales)

## **IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr J.C Neale (Chairman - Newport Harbour Commissioners).  
Captain R Lewis (Harbour Master)

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Jones (Tarmac) and Ms A Kingston (Tata Steel).

The Chairman thanked the Mission to Seafarers for again providing the venue for the meeting.

## **MINUTES**

200. It was agreed unanimously that the minutes of the last meeting of the Advisory Body, held on 9 October 2019, (a copy of which had been sent to every Member), be taken as read, received and adopted.

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF NHC**

201. The report of the Chairman of NHC had been circulated to all members. Mr J.C Neale (Chairman - Newport Harbour Commissioners) referred to the following matters in particular:

- a) The financial position of the Commissioners is well controlled but revenues continue to under-perform budget despite the increase in Harbour Dues last November. There have been several slow payers of dues but this situation is now improving.
- b) The Designated Person undertook his annual audit in February. He concluded that the Commissioners were fully compliant with the Port Marine Safety Code – there were only minor administrative issues to deal with. The Commissioners were grateful for the comprehensive service given by ABP to ensure that this was the case. Newport compared very favourably with ports of a similar size across the UK.
- c) ABP's proposals for changes to CHA/ SHA status had been discussed in detail at the last Advisory Body meeting and matters raised had been taken into consideration. The Commissioners had written to ABP seeking confirmation of many issues discussed with ABP that were not in the initial agreement. A response was awaited whereupon Commissioners would meet again with interested stakeholders. The intention was the Commissioners would agree their formal response to ABP following the stakeholder meeting.
- d) The modifications at the East Usk Lighthouse (PEL) continue to work well but there was some remedial electrical work required on the Leading Lights. The Commissioners have asked Trinity House to do this work,
- e) It was noted that the Designated Person had praised the level of training undertaken by Commissioners. If a suitable vessel can be found another event for all stakeholders may be planned.

The Chairman thanked the Chairman of the Newport Harbour Commissioners for his report.

Mr A Hemmings (Chairman) asked about the Commissioner's preparation for the onset of the coronavirus. At present there are no specific regulations concerning shipping other than the Government

general guidelines. Agents though are taking steps to protect themselves and their clients. They are limiting contact as far as possible. Captain R Lewis noted that procedures had been put in place well in advance of Government announcements. He noted the use of Maritime Declarations of Health.

### **HARBOUR MASTER'S REPORT**

202. The Harbour Master's report on the period to 28 February 2020 had been circulated to all members. Captain R Lewis (Harbour Master) expanded upon the following matters in particular:

- a) During the period a vessel had "broken down" in the River. This could have been a serious incident, but engineers were able to remedy the problem quickly.
- b) Hanson intended to move their pontoon to the enclosed dock by flotation. Clearly this was a risky manoeuvre and NHC will need the appropriate assurances, insurances and sight of Risk Reviews prior to this occurring. The Harbour Master had not been informed of any forthcoming dredging work at the berth.
- c) There had been a serious accident in the Docks but the sailor had fortunately sustained only a dislocated hip. He was eventually able to be repatriated and travel home fit and well.

The Chairman thanked the Harbour Master for his report.

Mr C.W Dowds remarked that the pilotage roster looks well planned.

### **PRIVATE JETTIES ON RIVER USK**

203. The Chairman referred to a letter dated 9 March from Tarmac which had been received by the Advisory Body. The letter expressed concern over the control of jetties/ moorings adjacent to their wharf. Captain R Lewis explained that these moorings were on land held by Residual Land Holdings. From the land side they were reached using an old legal right of way through land now owned by ABP. Neither ABP nor NHC have any powers to licence these constructions. There have previously been actions taken to try and register owners etc but this has proved extremely difficult. The Harbour Master considered that NRW may have authority to deal with this matter. Mr R Morgan (NRW) referred to the powers of the Welsh Government (Fisheries Enforcement Department). Mr J Neale (Chairman – NHC) noted that the jetties were on land within ABP's auspices and that they were without the jurisdiction of the Commissioners. It would only be if they affected safe navigation that the Commissioners could become directly involved.

204. It was agreed to write to Tarmac asking them for specific details of incidents relating to the moorings etc that have affected/ could have affected them. The Commissioners could then consider what action could be taken and by whom.

### **DEBRIS IN THE RIVER**

205. The letter noted above also referred to a high level of debris in the River and enquiring what actions the Commissioners could take to alleviate the additional risks. It was agreed that these were exceptional times given the adverse weather conditions that had prevailed for some months. Rivers throughout the UK were suffering in the same way. It is not incumbent for the Commissioners to act on this matter, and they have no resources that could assist. It was agreed that a Notice to Mariners would be issued giving warning that there was considerable debris in the River, and this would happen again in the future should similar conditions arise.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Net Zero Growth in Carbon Emissions**

206. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the Advisory Body.

The next meeting is planned for Wednesday 14 October 2020 at 11:30am, at a venue to be agreed.

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_