

Newport Harbour Commissioners

ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 March 2016

1. Introduction

This is the first annual report of the Newport Harbour Commissioners. It highlights the key issues arising in the year ended 31 March 2016, together with actions taken. These matters have been reported to the Advisory Body to the Commissioners.

The Newport Harbour Commissioners is a body created by Statute and covered by various Newport (South Wales) Harbour Acts and Orders 1836 to 2003. Its area of jurisdiction remains unchanged and is described in detail on our website.

A summary of the responsibilities of the Commissioners is as follows:

A) Safety and navigation

- Regulation of navigation within statutory Harbour limits
- Provision of a pilotage service
- Local lighthouse authority establishing and maintaining lights and marks
- Removal of wrecks
- Hydrographic surveying of Harbour area

B) Enforcement

- To make and enforce byelaws relating to the conduct of vessels
- To act upon observations of contracted Marine staff and stakeholders to ensure compliance with byelaws

C) Pollution

- Development of Harbour oil spill contingency plans
- Environmental issues
- Management Duties under Habitats Directive to review consents

D) Other

- Prepare Ports Contingency Plans
- Comply with Guide for Good Governance for Trust Ports

2. Financial Position

In the first half of 15/16 the anticipated rise in gross tonnage traversing the Port. To ensure a level of dues designed to ensure a break even position (with a moderate amount for future capital costs) the Commissioners increased the rate from 5.5p/GT to 6.25p/GT from 1st January 2016. This is still below the rate set eight years ago and will be reconsidered in 16/17 should there be a marked change in tonnages.

3. Navigation and safety

- The dredged Channel has remained in a good condition throughout the year. Four short dredging campaigns have been carried out and the current approach to routine dredging and monthly sluicing is proving effective.
- Work has been carried out on the East Usk Lighthouse in response to the report from Trinity House in January 2015. A problem with excess water around the base of the lighthouse has been investigated to ascertain the source of the flooding (rain water and /or ground water) and remedial work on the leading light at Julian's Pill involving structure and electrical workings has been satisfactorily completed.
- Trinity House carried out an inspection of the local aids to navigation at Newport on 11th August 2015 and all were found to be in good working and efficient order except for three extinguished lighted lanterns. This was immediately rectified.
- The programme by ABP to update the lock gates in South Wales will continue and two of the gates in Newport will be updated early in 2017.
- Work required to eliminate algae build up and flooding around the base of the East Usk lighthouse has been approved. This will take place during 2016 on a timescale agreed with the Newport Wetlands Centre.
- No significant issues have occurred with the channel buoys or shore lights and beacons although one buoy may need replacing in 2017 and two more in 2018.
- The Commissioners have recognised the need to update the present Service Level Agreement between Associated British Ports and the Newport Harbour Commissioners that covers the provision of Pilotage Services and Harbour Master Duties. ABP wishes to continue the working relationship with Newport Harbour Commissioners and provide the Harbour Master functions and services currently provided on the Usk. The level of compliance should be at a level commensurate with that applied in ABP ports. We should also be seen to control the pilotage services as the competent Harbour Authority, as set out in the Pilotage Act.

4. M4 Relief Road

Newport Harbour Commissioners have confirmed their objections to the proposed scheme and will support the variation to the Black Route to be proposed by ABP in their objections. ABP have kept the Commissioners fully informed on this position and their formal objections. We have added the following comments to support our objections - We believe that constructing a motorway across a major infrastructure asset would have a serious impact on the local economy. The costs of administering the Commissioners, which is a non-profit making organisation, would also have to be covered by the remaining stakeholders through increased dues. Any restrictions on foreign trade will not help Newport and indeed South Wales to prosper. The Commissioners also remain concerned over the likely environmental impact on the River due to the Bridge Structure and also to its height with respect to vessel traffic in the river.

5. River Berth Operators

Considerable time and effort has been invested over recent months dealing with issues arising from increased traffic at the Liberty Steel and Bird Port berths on the River. The Newport Harbour Commissioners are the Statutory Harbour Authority with the responsibility for safe navigation. Siltation and berthing issues had led to refusing permissions to berth vessels at the NAABSA berth at Liberty Steel over 150m LOA. Liberty Steel has commenced operating a steel mill adjacent to their berth and requires large vessels to traverse our area of jurisdiction and berth at their jetty. The Commissioners sought improvements in areas of risk assessment, tug requirements, mooring plans, training and information supplied to vessels approaching Newport. Surveys had confirmed that dredging was needed in order for us to remove restrictions on the length of vessels that can safely dock and the Commissioners supported action needed to fast track Marine Licencing procedures to secure the viability of the Liberty Steel Enterprise at Newport. Larger vessels are now safely unloading at this berth.

6. Tidal Lagoon

- A Hazard Observation Workshop on the proposed lagoon at Cardiff was held on 24th June 2015 by ABP Marine Environmental research Group. The meeting covered a large number of topics including hazard identification and risk assessments.
- A meeting of Tidal Lagoon Power and statutory Harbour Authorities took place on 4th August 2015. This covered Cardiff and Newport Tidal Lagoons including proposed structures for energy construction, methodologies and phasing of works. It was pleasing to note that Tidal Lagoon Power were now considering Newport with Cardiff and not separate proposals given the proximity and similar issues relating to commercial and recreational traffic in the Severn Estuary, search and rescue, turbine/slucice house locations and the design and location of lock gates. Dredging and navigation aids were also key factors.

The Board of the Newport Harbour Commissioners

August 2016