

NEWPORT HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS

REPORT TO THE ADVISORY BODY TO THE NEWPORT HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS

OCTOBER 2014

Five meetings of the Harbour Commissioners and two Channel Dredging Committees have been held since my last report to the Advisory Body and I set out below the significant issues which have arisen over the last five months.

1. Harbour Dues

- My previous report indicated overall trade in the Port was improving and this position has accelerated. There is now a high level of activity and there has been no need to review the level of Harbour dues set on 1st January 2014.
- At the June meeting the Auditor, Mrs M Lock, presented the annual financial statements of the Commissioners for the year ended 31st March 2014. A 5-year analysis showing trends of income and expenditure and other pertinent data was also presented. In the opinion of the independent auditor the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Authority's affairs as at 31st March 2014 and have been properly prepared in accordance with statutory Acts and Regulations.

2. Navigation and Safety

- A schedule detailing trends in the river since 1997 was presented to the Joint Committee on Channel Dredging. It was agreed that this clearly revealed how skilled and expert control over the requirements for work in the Dredged Channel had been maintained over a long period. The dredged channel remains in good condition following a campaign carried out during the summer. It had been noted that the channel was becoming somewhat pinched in certain areas and this would be closely monitored in order for any build up of material on these banks to be addressed. Currently the channel is contoured to 0.7m below the maintenance level.
- Discussions were held with Natural Resources Wales and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to undertake the upkeep of the East Usk Lighthouse. A high specification contract was also awarded to paint the lighthouse and palisade fencing and this was completed last month.
- Shore lights and beacons remain fully operational and notified faults rectified immediately by Trinity House under the service level agreement in place. Work is to be carried out on Number 4 channel buoy with badly worn and corroded mooring and lifting eyes to be replaced. A navigation aids inspection was carried out on 19th August 2014.

3. Stakeholders Training Trip

- The training trip on board the Dame Shirley for the Advisory Body and other stakeholders with links to the Port of Newport was held on 7th May. This was the second year for the event and there was an excellent turnout and many congratulations received regarding the organisation, the engagement with Board and Advisory Members and the value and experience gained by all those in attendance. The Chairman of the Advisory Body provided an in-depth commentary throughout. There is potential for enlarging this event in 2015. It was disappointing that the Welsh Assembly had not attended.

4. Byelaws

- I had anticipated reporting to the Advisory Body in October that the revised Newport Byelaws had been enacted. The updated draft byelaws were remitted to DfT in May and together with the draft advertisement had been referred to their legal department. One issue only now needs to be resolved namely the reimbursement of necessary costs incurred by the Commissioners in necessary emergency work in removal of moorings and buoys.

5. Tidal Lagoon Power

- Commissioners received a detailed presentation on proposals to construct lagoons and utilise turbines to generate electricity in the Severn Estuary. A Swansea Bay tidal lagoon proto-type if built would allow the company Tidal Lagoon Power to prove technology was viable and the projected levels of power generation achievable.
- Two other Welsh sites had been identified at Cardiff and Newport with a lagoon for Newport to be constructed immediately to the east of the entrance to the River Usk/Ebbw. Consultation and geographical surveys would now follow. Commissioners raised issues of dredging, flooding, impact on shipping, leisure opportunities, employment and environmental impacts.

6. Other Issues

- M4 update
- NATO Summit feedback
- SMS Audit
- MCA Port Liaison meeting
- South Wales Argus feature
- Merchant Navy Welfare Board
- Welsh Ports Association

Colin Crick

Chairman – Newport Harbour Commissioners
October 2014