

**MALDON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT
COMMISSIONERS**

ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

14 June 2012

INTRODUCTION

Trust Ports such as Maldon are required to produce accurate and pertinent reports for stakeholders and the public at large on certain aspects of their activities (Modernising Trust Ports – Second Edition – Department for Transport 2009).

Reports should be produced alongside the annual accounts and be provided to public bodies, the local library, the media and made available to the public.

There is some exemption, i.e. on the detailed aspects, for small Trust Ports like Maldon, whilst still ensuring that information on the Port's operations and future plans, progress against targets (if any), and their continuing compliance and improvement is included.

This Report covers the period June 2011 to May 2012, and in accordance with Department for Transport guidance, was presented to the Commissioners with the Annual Accounts for 2011/12 at their Annual Meeting on 14 June 2012.

1 2011/12

(i) Constitution

In February 2012, Commissioners appointed two new Commissioners to ensure the full complement of 12 Commissioners was in place.

(ii) Port Marine Safety Code

The review of the Port Marine Safety Code, originally put in place in 2002, has been concluded. The revised draft which was consulted on in 2011 was approved by the Commissioners in December 2011 and has been published in accordance with the Department for Transport's guidance.

(iii) Liaison with Maldon District Council

Commissioners acknowledge the necessity to maintain close working arrangements with the local authority. A Member of Maldon District Council is nominated and is appointed as a Commissioner. In addition to regular liaison between the Clerk and the River Bailiff, a formal liaison meeting was held in January 2012 at which issues such as the Marine Management Organisation's licensing proposals, river safety, and the Visitor's Pontoon were discussed.

(iv) Annual Public Meeting

It is a requirement for Trust Ports to hold annual meetings with stakeholders. The third Annual Public Meeting was held on 12 April 2012.

The meeting was regarded as successful and covered a full range of river related issues and there is a continued commitment on the part of the Commissioners to ensure that future meetings are held as required.

(v) River Safety Meeting

Several years ago, a meeting was organised to bring together a full range of river users to discuss concerns of safety on the river. The meeting was regarded as very successful and was repeated in May 2011.

As a result of discussions between the Commissioners and the Maldon Barge Operators' Group in January 2012, a joint approach was agreed for future meetings and the first of these meetings was held on in March 2012. The meeting was hosted by the Blackwater Sailing Club and chaired by an Officer of Maldon District Council. It was attended by a range of stakeholders including the local authority, the Marine Coastguard Agency and representatives of several local sailing clubs. Again, the meeting was felt to have been very useful and there was support for the meetings to continue on an annual basis.

The main outcome was a commitment to ensure young sailing club members were educated on the main safety issues they faced when sailing on a river used by various types of vessels.

(vi) Consultation Issues

Commissioners are consulted on a range of issues with riverside implications such as planning applications, licensing applications, and various other issues as they arise on which representations are sought by various bodies. Commissioners have established the criteria by which these issues would be considered to ensure only riverside interests affecting the role of the Commissioners were taken into account.

In 2011/2012, Commissioners were consulted on several planning applications, most notably the Sadd's Wharf development, a licensing application, the Balanced Seas Project, Essex Shoreline Management Plan, the Marine Management Organisations' licensing proposals, and was represented at the Essex Coastal Conference organised by the Essex County Council.

(vii) Finance

The Annual Accounts for 2011/12 showed an increased in the balances of approximately £1,750 mainly due to an increase in dues and a lower insurance premium and lower buoy maintenance costs. In recognition of this and the on-going economic situation, Commissioners again agreed a 10% discount on harbour dues for 2012 subject to prompt submission of Passenger Returns and prompt payment of invoices.

Discussions with the local authority on future financial issues were not able to be concluded and Commissioners continue to be aware of the need to re-visit the issue of extending the scope of harbour during 2012/13.

(viii) Publication of Documents

In order to show more transparency of Commissioners' activities, a range of documents continue to be lodged in Maldon Library and therefore available to the public. The documents lodged include Agendas and Minutes, Annual Accounts, the Register of Public Interests, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Commissioners' names and contact details for the Clerk and various consultation documents as they arise.

In April 2012, a new website was put in place which will assist in increasing the transparency of the Commissioners' work as it is developed.

(ix) Port Aids to Navigation Availability Reporting (PANAR)

The software for the above database, which relates to the recording and reporting (to Trinity House) of the local aids to navigation, was re-loaded during 2010 and the data relating to the eleven buoys (lit and unlit) entered so that 'availability' details are recorded and reported as required on a quarterly basis to Trinity House.

Commissioners are set a target for Category 3 Aids to Navigation (into which category the aids fall) of 97% availability over a three year rolling period. For the year ending 31 March 2012, the availability was just under 100%.

A buoy condition report is commissioned each year allowing Commissioners to plan ahead for financing replacement/repair/maintenance in a timely and cost effective manner.

(x) Determination of the Fairway

In December 2010, it was agreed that it was necessary to determine the extent of the fairway in order to ensure its position was properly and accurately surveyed and plotted for the benefit of all river users.

That work was commenced by a small group of Commissioners undertaking the necessary initial survey work required to determine the fairway and by June 2011 the length of river from approximately Heybridge Creek to just up-river of The Queen's Head PH had been surveyed and an approximate width determined. Fixed points on both the north and south shore have been marked.

2 FUTURE ISSUES AND /PLANS 2012/13

In looking forward to 2012/13, Commissioners have identified the following issues as on-going and scheduled for completion during the year.

(i) Determination of the Fairway

Following the initial survey work and marking the first length of the fairway from Heybridge Creek/Sadds Wharf to a point in line with the Queens Head PH/Taylor's Sail Loft, the next stage will be commenced during the year.

(ii) Consultation with Stakeholders

The important work of consulting with local stakeholders will be continued. This will include holding the next Annual Public Meeting and participation in the Joint River Safety Meeting, both in early 2013, and continued liaison meetings with the local authority.

(iii) Publication of Information

Work to expand the new website will continue with further documentation being published as and when it becomes available (as well as being made available in the local Library).

Following notification that harbour authorities are now subject to the Freedom of Information Act, a Publication Scheme, based on the Model Scheme published by Information Commissioner, will be put in place in 2013.

(iv) Document Recording and Preservation

During the year, the large volume of documents held, mainly of historical interest, will be catalogued and offered to the Essex Records Office for retention.

NANCY HARRISSON

CHAIRMAN

MALDON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS