

MALDON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

18 June 2015

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 2014 to May 2015, and in accordance with Department for Transport guidance, was presented to the Commissioners with the Annual Accounts for 2014/15 at their Annual Meeting on 18 June 2015.

1 2014/15

(i) Constitution

In January 2015, Commissioners appointed two new Commissioners to ensure the full complement of twelve Commissioners was in place. This followed the sad loss of David Lawton who died in September 2014 and the resignation of Clint Swann in June 2014.

(ii) Administration

The Commissioners continue to meet at the Maldon Little Ship Club. The meeting start will be moved from 8 pm to 7 pm commencing June 2015. The Commissioners acknowledge the on-going support of the Club.

(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. Following some new appointments in the Leisure, Countryside and Tourism department, Commissioners continue to liaise and maintain links with the River Bailiff and other Council staff.

(iv) 6th Joint River Safety Meeting

The sixth Joint River Safety Meeting, jointly organised in conjunction with the Maldon Barge Operators' Group, was held on 26 March 2015. The meeting was again hosted by the Blackwater Sailing Club and chaired by an Officer of Maldon District Council and was attended by 39 people representing a range of stakeholders including the local authority, the Essex Police Marine Unit, Marine Coastguard Agency and representatives from local sailing clubs and local marine businesses. The meeting provided an opportunity to pass on up to date information and served as a useful forum for discussion.

(v) 6th Annual Public Meeting

It is a requirement for Trust Ports to hold annual meetings with stakeholders. The sixth Annual Public Meeting was held on 9 April 2015 and was attended by 16 people, including 8 Commissioners.

The meeting was again hosted by the Blackwater Sailing Club and regarded as successful and covered a full range of river related issues such as the Port Marine Safety Code, incident reporting, possible environmental issues at Sadd's Wharf development and Bradwell Power Station, light pollution issues, and events and local strategy consultation to mark the 150th Anniversary year of MHIC.

There is a continued commitment on the part of the Commissioners to ensure that future meetings are held as required.

(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 comments are sought by various bodies. Commissioners have established the criteria by which these issues are considered to ensure only riverside interests affecting the role of Commissioners are taken into account.

The Commissioners participated in the Bradwell Power Station Legacy Partnership meetings, and this is on-going.

The Commissioners also participated in visioning workshops held by MDC contributing to the development of the Maldon and Heybridge Masterplan.

The Commissioners monitor planning applications adjacent to the Harbour for possible impact on Harbour safety, navigational and environmental issues. On this basis, in September 2014, they placed an objection to a planning application for apartments off Station Road. That application was subsequently withdrawn.

The Commissioners are also involved in monitoring and actively liaising with Maldon District Council and local businesses over issues including light pollution and potential contamination of the Harbour. As a result, during 2014/2015, issues of light pollution have been mitigated and bodies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England have become involved with Harbourside development proposals.

(vii) Finance

The Annual Accounts for 2014/15 showed a Balance brought forward from 2013/14 of approximately £13,875 and a Closing Balance at 31 March 2015 of approximately £12,720.

Commissioners agreed that Harbour Dues should remain the same including the 50% discount for vessels with charitable status and trips by other vessels predominantly for children under the age of 18 for the benefit of sailing training or youth development.

Commissioners again agreed a 10% discount on harbour dues for 2014/15, subject to prompt submission of Passenger Returns and prompt payment of invoices.

During the year, several of the Commissioners undertook various duties on the river totalling approximately 220 hours. This excludes work undertaken by Commissioners attending meetings, liaison and consultation with regulatory bodies and local authorities and general Harbour administration.

(viii) Publication of Documents

Continuing the policy of transparency of Commissioners' activities, a range of documents continued to be lodged on the website and in the Maldon Library and therefore available to the public. The documents lodged included Agendas and Minutes, Annual Accounts, the Register of Public Interests, and various other documents as they arose.

Website updates are posted regularly and are on-going. Documents include buoy condition reports, Notices to Mariners as they are published, the Port Guide leaflet, news and forthcoming events. It continues to increase the transparency of the Commissioners' work.

(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 maintained during the year to show the availability of the twelve buoys (lit and unlit) the Commissioners maintain. The 'availability' details are recorded and reported as required 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. The report of Trinity House following its buoy inspection in 2014 indicated that the buoys were found to be in good and efficient order. In November 2014 Trinity House carried out an audit of MHIC records of availability of local aids to navigation and everything was found to be in good order.

The condition of the twelve buoys for which the Commissioners are responsible is assessed each year allowing Commissioners to plan ahead for financing replacement/repair/maintenance in a timely and cost effective manner.

In April 2015 Commissioners agreed that according to needs, up to two new buoys per year could be purchased. A rolling programme of maintenance is in place and a new tracking system was introduced in November 2014. A yellow-painted danger-marker buoy will be available from 2015.

(x) Determination of the Fairway

This process was finalised in November 2014.

(xi) Incident Report

MHIC issued an Incident Report form in November 2014. This is available on the website and should be used to assist the public and Commissioners in reporting incidents within the Harbour.

(xii) 150th Anniversary

Following email publication in May 2014, the Maldon Port Guide leaflet was published in paper form in September 2014, copies are available from Maldon Tourist Office, the Clerk to the Commissioners, and it is also on the website.

2015 is the 150th Anniversary of the MHIC and in November 2014 Commissioners commenced plans to mark this occasion. In Spring 2015 Commissioners sent out a Strategy Consultation document to Harbour users including local businesses and sailing clubs. The purpose was to gather and collate views and suggestions on the future of the Harbour. Collated results were emailed to Harbour users in May 2015. A Consultation meeting for Harbour users is planned for 23 June 2015.

A schools' competition was held at the start of 2015 to design a logo marking the Anniversary, the prize being a river trip. 90 children and teachers from the winning school enjoyed the river trip onboard Viking Saga. The winning logo is being used in the planting scheme for a flower bed in the Park. Commissioners have compiled a history of MHIC and will be staging exhibitions and talks throughout 2015. Maldon Tourist Office have kindly assisted and ensured co-ordination with other Maldon events.

2 FUTURE ISSUES AND PLANS IN 2015/16

In looking forward to 2015/16, Commissioners have identified the following issues as on-going and scheduled for completion during the year.

(i) Consultation with Stakeholders

The important work of consulting with local stakeholders and regulatory organisations will be continued. On-going work includes holding the next Annual Public Meeting and the Joint River Safety Meeting, both in early 2016, and continued annual liaison and ad hoc meetings with the local authority.

The 150th Anniversary is being used as an opportunity to gather Harbour users' views and strengthen dialogue with MHIC.

(ii) Publication of Information

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

(iii) Finance

The Commissioners will continue to review its financial situation and explore the possibility of raising further income from sources other than the Harbour Dues.

**Nancy Harrisson
Chairman,
Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners**