

Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners

Notes of the ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING of the Commissioners held at the Blackwater Sailing Club, Heybridge Basin, on Thursday, 25 September 2019 at 7.30 pm

IN THE CHAIR: Ian Hiner, Vice Chairman, Commissioners

ATTENDANCE: The meeting was attended by representatives from:

Blackwater Sailing Club
Brent Trust
CRS Marine
Essex Police
Goldhanger Sailing Club
Heybridge Basin SA
Heybridge Lock Keeper/Essex Waterways
Maldon District Council
Maldon Gig Rowing Club
Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners
Maldon Little Ship Club
Maldon Riverside Association
Maldon Town Council
Maldon Yacht Club
Royal Yacht Association East/BACASA
Thames Sailing Barge Trust

with Apologies from MDC Councillors, MDC River Bailiff.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Vice Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked the Blackwater Sailing Club for the use of their premises, both for this meeting and for the Joint River Safety Meeting.

The members of the meeting introduced themselves. The Chairman gave the names of the twelve Commissioners

2. OPENING STATEMENT BY THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSIONERS

The Vice Chairman reviewed the work of the MHIC

a) Buoy Maintenance

During the year, the Commissioners had carried out 60 hours of voluntary work in the Harbour including inspections, maintenance, exchanges and preparation of replacement buoys. This was usually carried out by two Commissioners. There had been damage, inversion and light failures which had been rectified. The Vice Chairman pointed out that unreported damage to buoys was an offence and asked that Commissioners be informed of any damage.

The costs were reviewed: complete buoys £500 excluding delivery; lights £222 inc VAT; light bases £25. These figures do not include identification numbers, fitting or mooring tackle.

Stock buoys ready for use: one port, one starboard, one yellow special marker.

The programme for next year included ground tackle maintenance and the replacement of old style lights, as well as the usual regular inspections and maintenances

Trinity House carried out an inspection of Aids to Navigation in May 2019 and all were found in good efficient order.

In November 2018 Trinity House carried out an Audit of MHIC records and these were found in good order with no matters arising.

b) Maldon Port Marine Safety Code

The Maldon Port Marine Safety Code had undergone an External Review. It had been circulated and made available on the MHIC website. It contains a template Incident Report form.

A representative of the RYA raised a question about jet-ski speeding and who would stop speeders. A Fluker (Leader of MDC and Commissioner) explained that MDC have new jet-skis for the use of the Community Protection Team in enforcing speed limits. As a result of the re-organisation at MDC, there had been adjustments to the role of River Bailiff. There was discussion and a number of participants raised concerns on jet-ski speeding. A representative from Heybridge Basin Sailing Association suggested that photos could be taken for referral to the enforcement team. Prevention of speeding was discussed and the need for a higher profile for jet-ski patrols was identified.

c) Liaison with MDC

MHIC and MDC held regular Liaison meetings. There was on-going investigation of foul discharge at a number of locations in the Harbour. MDC would keep Commissioners informed of findings.

Charges for events on the Quay had been discussed. Commissioners had emphasised its importance to the community and established that there were waiver mechanisms for charity events.

The abandoned yacht at Northey Island had been removed and disposed of.

The Vice Chairman asked the meeting to let the Commissioners know of any issues in the Harbour and they would raise these at the MHIC/MDC Liaison meetings.

d) Visitors' Pontoon

There was still no funding for the Visitors' Pontoon project. However, MDC had dredged the area effectively and more yachts were now moored on the Pontoon.

e) Webcams

Siting had now been established. The Vice Chairman thanked MLSC for their help. Installation would be going ahead shortly and the video would be streamed to the MHIC, MDC and MLSC websites.

f) Maldon Port Guide

Commissioner Courtney reviewed the Port Guide leaflet. Printed copies were available and it the Guide was also available on the MHIC website.

3. JOINT RIVER SAFETY MEETING

This had been held in March 2019. It was well attended. Representatives from the Marine Police, Coastguard Agency, Maldon District Council, National Trust, Heybridge Lock and the Barge Operators Group gave updates with further bulletins provided by Natural England regarding the Coastal Path, Essex and Suffolk Water, and Anglian Water. The meeting was also pleased to welcome inputs from the gig rowers, paddleboarders and open water swimmers who gave their perspective on health and safety issues for sports users of the Harbour.

The Vice Chairman asked the meeting to let the Clerk know if they had any suggestions for next year's Agenda. The meeting was planned for March 2020, date to be confirmed. Post-meeting note – date will be Tuesday, 17 March 2020 at the BSC.

4. RISK ASSESSMENTS AND INCIDENT REPORTING

MHIC have a template available on their website.

5. CONDITION OF THE RIVER, ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

a) Dredging

Commissioner Cardy reviewed the dredging programme. From January the dredge material would go onto Northey island. There had been some changes in licensing. The Marine Management Organisation permission to dump onto Northey Island was £18,000. The Vice Chairman expressed concern at the erosion at Northey Island and additional silt entering the river.

b) Bradwell B

Cllr Fluker provided an update on the development of Bradwell B which was moving forward quickly. According to the Nuclear Regulator, the project could be ahead of schedule. Ground surveys were completed and the Port of London Authority had just finished the water survey identifying locations for water extraction and return in the Thames Estuary. It is expected to break ground within five years and there has been an investment of £45M already.

Cllr Fluker emphasised the need for the local community to participate in the forthcoming transportation consultation. There would be considerable movement of materials, some possibly by river or sea.

Bradwell B website <https://bradwellb.co.uk/>

There was discussion of possible implications including effect of rising sea levels on the site and the effect of warm water in the estuary.

c) Report from Essex and Suffolk Water

Commissioner Courtney read out a report from Essex and Suffolk Water giving an update on the on-going successful joint effort between Essex and Suffolk Water, Chelmer Canal Trust, contractor Native Landscapes, Essex Waterways and the Environment Agency. There has been success in clearing the blockages caused by floating pennywort along the River Chelmer and Blackwater. It has been almost entirely eradicated. Next year's programme will target the source at Springfield Meadows.

6. FINANCE

The Vice Chairman reviewed the Annual Statement. MHIC had a balance of £17,000+ at the end of the financial year, which allowed a "buffer" for emergencies.

7. HARBOUR DUES

Harbour Dues – Remained the same as the previous year.

8. QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

A representative from Heybridge Sailing Association asked about contact for moorings and Cllr Fluker advised that enquiries should continue to be sent to the River Bailiff for the time being. The title was expected to be amended to Emergency Planning Officer and Harbour Master. Enquiries should be directed to the Coast and Countryside Team. There was discussion of the need to clarify functions and contacts. MDC changes would be finalised on 1 November 2019.

Essex Marine Police would liaise with MDC over jet-ski speeding enforcement.

The Vice Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for their contributions. The meeting was closed at 8.30 pm.