

# **MALDON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS**

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## **HARBOUR DUES CONSULTATION MEETING, FRIDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Attendance – 38, including representatives from local businesses, sailing and sports clubs, Maldon District Council, Maldon Town Council.

### **1. Welcome and Intros**

G Courtney (MHIC Chairperson) welcomed participants and outlined the aims of evening. The meeting was addressed at the wider community of the river, not just boatyards. The focus was the funding the Harbour.

### **2. Background and Overview**

Patrick Ellum (MHIC) reviewed the history of the Harbour, its status as a trust port. As a statutory body it is a not for profit organisation and Commissioners were not paid.

G Courtney (MHIC) outlined the responsibilities and duties of the Commissioners including:-

maintenance of the Local Aids to Navigation reporting to Trinity House and achieving their availability target;

Department for Transport cargo returns and submission of MHIC Annual Report and Accounts;

consultee on Personal Water Craft draft legislation;

liaison with Marine and Coastguard Agency, UK Hydrographic Office, Office of National Statistics;

Marine Management Organisation consultee;

Incident reports, risk assessments, safety;

Liaise with Maldon District Council eg lighting at recycling plant;

Public awareness – website, Library;

In the past, pre-Covid, Commissioners have held the Annual Joint River Safety Meeting, and an Annual Public Meeting.

John Dines (MHIC) reviewed Local Aids to Navigation and harbour maintenance. The work of the Commissioners included inspection, maintenance, removal of obstructions. This was unpaid work and Commissioners used their own boats. The estimated costs per buoy, if using a contractor, would be £1200.

David Patient (Vice Chairperson, MHIC) gave an overview of dredging, history, inception of the Siltation Committee and pre-emptive dredging.

### **3. Sources of Harbour Dues**

#### Review of Accounts

2019 surplus, 2020 Harbour Dues waived leading to a deficit, currently in deficit and reserves dwindling.

Harbour Dues come from commercial passenger vessels with a small amount from cargo which was previously the source of income. Income is now not covering costs.

MHIC need to employ people for harbour and buoy maintenance. This will be put out to tender, likely minimum £65/hour. Will entail 50 – 100 hrs work = minimum of £3725 up to £6500.

MHIC needs about £4K to run everything except buoyage.

A minimum of £7250 is required to break even.

#### **Comments and suggestions from participants (non MHIC)**

Have we considered getting more cargo eg Carrs. MDC Planning now means that there is a lack of frontage despite MHIC representations.

We all use the buoys, we should not be shy of contributing.

Pays for moorings, not sure how much goes to MDC but they do not dredge. What do MDC do with the money? Doesn't mind paying contribution to buoyage.

BSC – foreshore lease approx £9.5K pa. Harbour dues – it is important to get all money to the Commissioners.

Has a mooring, money goes to MDC, no River Bailiff boat, no money comes out from MDC.

Will bring up at next meeting of MYC.

Canoe club does not use buoys, so why should they pay for them? They have to pay out to Brightlingsea and others.

Gig club – appropriate we make a contribution on a club basis. Difficulty otherwise to keep paperwork if it is based on number of club members.

Is Woodbridge in the same situation? (Response from G Courtney (MHIC) have looked at other harbours ie Crouch and Brightlingsea.)

Usually has a sailing boat. Recalls RYA campaigned not to pay dues to Trinity House for buoyage. Could boatyards put on a percentage? MHIC need a basic income. Different way of raising via clubs – perhaps a percentage?

About 220 boats at berths in Maldon Harbour authority. 80% are in yards including MDC.

£30/boat to cover dues.

Need to raise more. Importance of dredging to get to the moorings.

Question – who maintains buoys outside the Harbour? – Answer MDC.

BWS – could MHIC work in conjunction with MDC, ie share contractor?  
(G Courtney invited Nigel Cardy (MHIC) to respond. MDC buoys had not been checked for some time and had been going adrift. Required contractor.)

On a trip up the river the Mayor was amazed at the amount of sewage. Could sewage be a contributing factor so should Anglian Water contribute to dredging?

Frangipani SUP is a commercial organisation which does not use the Harbour but if paddleboard operators did use it then they should contribute. Personally stores her kit at Maldon and would consider a contribution.

Should the buoys be put back to MDC?

**5. Timescale for Action and**  
**6. Summing up**

G Courtney – everything mentioned here would be discussed by the Commissioners. When decisions were made, MHIC would consult marine lawyers.

When? Intend to implement for 2023 season.

MHIC were looking to improve the Harbour further in the future.

Contact would be via emails, posters and website. Maintaining contact was important.

G Courtney thanked participants for attending.

A vote of thanks to MHIC was raised from the floor.