

# Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners

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**Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Commissioners held at the Maldon Little Ship Club on Tuesday, 10 October 2023 at 7.00 pm.**

**PRESENT:** G Courtney (Chairperson) D Patient (Vice Chairperson)  
N Cardy M Chapman  
Jim Dines John Dines  
P Ellum A Fluker  
N Harrisson C Swann  
A Wiseman

## **23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from M Gibson.

## **24 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST**

There were none, other than those declared during the meeting.

## **25 MINUTES – MEETING 15 August 2023**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15 August 2023 were formally received. It was **AGREED** that the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15 August 2023 be confirmed as a correct record, with a minor amendment.

## **26 MATTERS ARISING**

The advertisement for Post of Commissioner had been published. G Courtney, D Patient, P Ellum and John Dines would be the team from which an interview panel would be drawn.

A meeting with Topsail had been hampered due to Covid. They had offered to communicate by email. G Courtney had established that they would rather have a meeting. Their intention was to establish the cheapest option (net registered tonnage or passenger numbers). Commissioners agreed that there should be a meeting.

## **27 CLERK'S REPORT**

Item 1. Advertisement for new Commissioner. This had been advertised on the Contacts List, website and noticeboards from Monday, 2 October 2023 with a closing date of Monday, 23 October 2023. There had already been several responses. Shortlisting would take place week commencing 23 October 2023 with interviews to take place at the start of November 2023.

Item 2. Triathlon 2024. Mike Jubb of Active Training had emailed (29 September 2023) "For the Maldon Tri, I'm looking at Sunday 4th August. We would start at 12:20pm (1hr10mins before the high tide) using the new swim course.

All other aspects would be the same as this year."

The Clerk had responded that the Commissioners would check the time and tide and get back to him.

Item 3. List and calendar of meetings dates for 2024. A list of dates and a calendar display would be available at the meeting and would also be put on the website.

The dates had been checked against meetings at MDC (no clashes showing) and the room booking had been confirmed by MLSC.

Item 4. Meetings in the Bar at MLSC. MLSC had asked if MHIC meetings on 28 November 2023 and 16 January 2024 could be held downstairs in the Bar. This had been workable on the rare occasions MHIC had been asked to do this, so it was agreed. (Post meeting note – MLSC adjusted this, no change needed.)

Item 5 Maldon Act of Remembrance Wreath Laying. G Courtney would represent the Commissioners.

## **28 TREASURER'S REPORT**

M Gibson had emailed to report a balance of £12,856.18 of which £12,016.50 was on the Business Premium Account with interest. Over the past six months £23.23 of interest was earned. There was an expenditure of £2,032.80 of which Clerk's salary and tax £900, buoy maintenance expenditure £1,071.80 and mobile telephone £61.00.

## **29 HARBOUR DUES FOR NON-COMMERCIAL VESSELS CONSULTATION, THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2023 - FEEDBACK**

The Notes of this Consultation were circulated to Commissioners (attached) and discussed. D Patient queried Item 5 "Houseboats paying Council Tax will be exempt".

The Draft Harbour Order was discussed. £20 pa was considered a suitable amount. The length of vessels needed to be formally decided. 18' fitted many vessels. A Fluker liked the Crouch Harbour Authority's 15' 6" which included dinghies. All Commissioners concurred that 18' was suitable. The appropriate duration of visit was discussed. All Commissioners concurred that 14 days was suitable.

Commissioners needed time to consider the details. The Clerk would send out an email in 14 days asking for agreement or not.

## **30 MDC LIAISON MEETING, WEDNESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2023 – FEEDBACK**

G Courtney reviewed the Liaison meeting. There had been particular discussion of wreck ownership and removal (MHIC/MDC Liaison meeting Note 82). N Cardy stated that mud washing was needed every February/March. The Free Hard was limited in use by dinghies and mud. N Cardy commented that the Prom slip needed to be deeper.

## **31 HARBOUR MAINTENANCE AND BUOY REPORT**

H Swann had inspected all buoys and an updated Buoy Report was on the website. All buoys and equipment had been removed from I Hiner's property. G Courtney stated that the lights should be checked. C Swann stated that this should be done at 5 am to ensure they were running through the night.

## **32 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

Item a) A Fluker stated that the MDC Local Development Plan was under discussion, including review of the Houseboat Policy. There would be a public consultation and A Fluker would notify the Clerk of the details in due course.

The Chairperson closed the meeting at 8.50 pm

G Courtney, Chairperson

The date and time of the next meeting would be Tuesday, 28 November 2023, 7 pm at Maldon Little Ship Club. (Post meeting note – subsequently changed to an Extraordinary Meeting Tuesday, 14 November 2023 at Salt Acre, Downs Road, Maldon, John Dines.)

# MALDON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS

## HARBOUR DUES FOR NON-COMMERCIAL VESSELS

### NOTES OF CONSULTATION

**Thursday, 5 October 2023, 7.30 pm, Maldon Little Ship Club,  
Hythe Quay, Maldon**

#### **Attendance:**

G Courtney, MHIC Chairperson

D Patient, MHIC Vice Chair

P Ellum, Commissioner

M Harwood-White, Maldon District Council

N Harmer, MDC River Bailiff

6 representatives of boatyards/mooring/boat owners (referred to as C, D, F, H, J, K)

Apologies: from 1 boatyard who had stated they would be happy to contribute to non-commercial Harbour Dues.

#### **1. Welcome and introductions**

G Courtney welcomed the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

#### **2. Background to Non-Commercial Vessels Harbour Dues**

G Courtney gave the background to the need to consider Harbour Dues for non-commercial vessels. This included:-

- an overview of the work undertaken by the Commissioners,
- the Commissioners no longer having a boat to maintain the buoys, hence having to contract out this work (which was previously done voluntarily, free of charge, by Commissioners),
- non-commercial vessels benefit from navigation in the Harbour but do not contribute,
- it was noted that commercial vessels do pay.

The financial situation was reviewed:-

- MHIC income pre-Covid over two years £5,500,
- fixed costs of £3,649 excluding new equipment, boat, labour,
- depending on the state of the buoys, Commissioners worked 50 – 100 hours pa on maintenance, all free of charge,
- a contractor would charge approx £65/hr, so estimated cost would be upwards of £1,400 minimum to £4,600 maximum. Fixed costs plus minimum maintenance excluding new buoys would be £5049 approx,
- with an average income of £5,500, MHIC could only just cover costs providing no new equipment was required.

There was a need for more contribution to maintenance of buoyage.

Other harbours' charges were cited for comparison eg Burnham on Crouch where charges started at 15' 6" length, £49 and increased to £75.50 for over 26' 6".

### **3. Outline of proposals**

Various proposals had been considered and a flat rate seemed most appropriate. With approx 200 leisure vessels in the Harbour, a flat rate of £20 - £25 could be considered. MHIC needed assistance in collection of the dues and were seeking assistance from boatyards/moorings owners. Eventually an increased income might enable a Harbour Master to be employed.

### **4. Views of Harbour Stakeholders/Yard Owners**

For confidentiality owners identified by alphabetic letter.

Feedback from this meeting would be brought to the MHIC meeting on 10 October 2023. G Courtney addressed each stakeholder in turn.

**H** – had discussed with owners and was happy to collect dues with a 10% retainer for collection service. The bills go out in February. It would only apply to those afloat. A flat fee would be favoured because it was straightforward on number of vessels. Would like extra licences for those who arrive in the summer, houseboats included. Suggested a minimum length of 15'.

**River Bailiff** – MDC has a small number of moorings. This proposal had been put to Members some time ago and they were happy to help. An MHIC Invoice could be included with MDC invoice. However, they could not enforce it. Need for an ID sticker to show who had paid. For GDP confidentiality MHIC could liaise with MDC who would retain the identities of their customers.

**J** – has about 9 residential, non-moving boats with no engine, which pay Council Tax and therefore should be exempt. For the remainder, would collect MHIC dues when the organisation issued their bills. Stickers were a reasonable idea.

**F** – happy to pay per vessel/berth in the yard. Situation is complicated by the irregular flow of customers in and out of the yard. The meeting clarified that dues must be collected for vessels not berths. The yard would pay a set total amount for vessels.

**C** – would not administrate the scheme and would prefer a voluntary contribution. Happy to pay commercial dues.

With respect to non-commercial dues D Patient reiterated that it was a simple scheme and suggested it could be tried for a year.

**F** asked what fee is proposed per vessel. G Courtney stated £20 - £25. **C** suggested a minimum length of 20'.

River Bailiff asked if sailing clubs had been approached. **K** - Blackwater Sailing Club were happy to make a voluntary contribution. **G** Courtney – gigs use the buoyage and should contribute. River Bailiff has some moorings at the Yacht Club and would ask them for a voluntary contribution. **K** – possibly voluntary contributions from yards as well as clubs. **D** Patient – identification of those that have paid is essential.

**D** Patient considered exemptions, eg a houseboat without an engine, but what if they also had a yacht? The meeting considered immobile vessels, including if Council Tax was paid. Some vessels were a grey area, ie could move but didn't. In summary – exemptions limited to houseboats paying Council Tax.

River Bailiff reiterated the suggestion to try the scheme for a year and then meet again.

Flexibility of arrangements was raised.

**G** Courtney emphasised the need for a legal basis that could stand up to scrutiny. What if boatyard changed ownership?

**P** Ellum – in view of the stakeholders' willingness to assist, he would draft a Harbour Order that covered the suggestions, classifying in various ways.

## **5. Plan of action to feed back to the Harbour Commissioners' Meeting on 10 October 2023**

**P** Ellum would draft an Order.

**H** – most owners will pay but what if some refuse? **P** Ellum responded that the Order will contain a penalty.

Houseboats paying Council Tax will be exempt.

Recommendation for minimum vessel length including bowsprit – 18' was agreed.

## **6. Meeting close**

**G** Courtney thanked the meeting for their contributions and patience.

Meeting closed at 8.35 pm