

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Yarmouth (Isle of Wight) Harbour Commissioners
Minutes of a Special Meeting of
The Yarmouth Harbour Advisory Committee
held at the Harbour Office,
on 12th January 2010 at 0900 hours

PRESENT	Sylvia Mence, Chairman Ron Goodridge Richard Heming Bill Attree Malcolm Thorpe Valerie Cooke Jon Matthews Craig Nutter Veronica Workman Stuart Dyer Adrian Harris	Royal Yachting Association Yarmouth Town Council Yarmouth Sailing Club Commercial Fishermen's Association Royal Solent Yacht Club Totland Parish Council Wightlink British Marine Federation Yarmouth Business Association IWC Representative Freshwater Parish Council
IN ATTENDANCE	Chris Lisher	Chief Executive/Harbour Master
Members of the Public	2	
APOLOGIES	Julia Bridgeman (YBA) Marigold Morphy (YSC) Mike Hayles (CFA) Gill Kennett (FPC)	

ADVICE TO COMMISSIONERS Inner Harbour Reconfiguration Proposals 2009

Brief Summary of response page 2

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESPONSE

All members are opposed to the Proposals as they stand with the exception of 3 abstentions (the Estuaries Officer and the representatives of IWC and Wightlink).

YHAC RECOMMENDS (page 3)

- YHAC's over-riding recommendation is that an overall long term strategic plan for the future harbour as a whole (including the SW Corner) be prepared and that some YHAC members are invited to take part in such planning.
- YHAC is concerned that the present Proposals would destroy the present traditional appearance of the harbour which is what makes it unique in the Solent. A more sensitive approach is recommended.
- There is a need to retain a better balance of types of moorings in the inner harbour: the variety of craft enhances the harbour. The proposals would change the culture of the harbour, bringing in a predominance of more affluent boats and so giving a very mundane experience for harbour users and the local community.
- A detailed criticism of the proposals is given below.

CONSULTATION

YHAC has listed 5 reservations about the consultation on pages 3 & 4.

POINTS IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSALS page 4.

- The recognition that there are navigational problems needing attention.
- The recognition that there are a few areas of potential congestion needing attention: the fuel berth and approaches, and the approaches to the Yar Bridge.
- The separation of commercial/fishing from recreational craft removes potential conflict.
- Income from more walk ashore moorings should reduce the need for greater increased charges for residential moorings elsewhere in the harbour.
- There are some individuals, locals and visitors, who would like more walk ashore.

POINTS AGAINST THE PROPOSALS

1. **Navigational Safety.** See page 5 & 6 for concerns: main navigation channel, new fuel berth, North West Area, Fairway width between pontoons, waiting area for the Bridge, north/south configuration.
2. **Loss of Amenities.** See pages 6 & 7: removal of the crane and of the west slipway, loss of load/unload area on South Quay, decrease in space for tenders.
3. **Commercial Aspect:** See page 7
4. **Fuel Berth** concerns: see page 8
5. **Loss in number of low cost moorings** see page 8
6. **Stakeholder Benefit:** see page 8
7. **The Breakwater:** see page 8
8. **Greater Security Risk:** see page 8
9. **Only one access ashore from the eastern pontoon area:** page 8

YHAC Recommendation : page 9

Although this paper may appear critical, the Committee is genuinely concerned to be more positive and would welcome the chance to join the Commissioners in devising an integrated plan for the whole harbour and estuary which addresses the current problems and opportunities within an arrangement more sympathetic to the present unique character of the harbour.

DETAILED RESPONSE TO THE COMMISSIONERS

All members are opposed to the Proposals as they stand with the exception of 3 abstentions (the Estuaries Officer and the representatives of IWC and Wightlink). The Commissioners have established, by survey, support for more walk ashore from some residential mooring holders and some visitors, but there is also much opposition to the proposals so that the Commissioners will need to judge which stakeholder interests are paramount.

YHAC RECOMMENDS

1. YHAC's over-riding recommendation is that the interest generated by the Proposals indicates that there is genuine concern and affection for the harbour among many people so that there is now the opportunity and public will to make an overall long term strategic plan for the future harbour as a whole (including the SW Corner). All aspects need to be considered: commercial and recreational moorings, shore facilities, Wightlink ferry service, the breakwater and other sea defences, the estuary and its important environmental designations, and the interaction of harbour and town. The Commissioners are asked to consider inviting some YHAC members to take part in such planning over a reasonable period of time.
2. YHAC and many other people/groups are concerned that the present Proposals would destroy the present traditional appearance of the harbour which is what makes it unique in the Solent. Part of its attraction to visitors as well as to locals is this uniqueness. The proposals would turn the unique visual appearance into that of an ordinary marina. A more sensitive approach is recommended.
3. There is a need to retain a better balance of types of moorings in the inner harbour than the Proposals would give, so that the present variety of boats and crews, both local and visiting, is retained, from the more affluent larger boats to the small family craft. The variety of craft enhances the harbour: the public like to see the different craft. The proposals would change the culture of the harbour, bringing in a predominance of more affluent boats and so giving a very mundane experience for harbour users and the local community.
4. A detailed criticism of the proposals is given below.

CONSULTATION

1. YHAC welcomes the opportunity of public consultation over proposals that would change the image of Yarmouth and its Harbour if implemented.
2. YHAC considers that the period of consultation has been too short for such significant proposals, particularly as the festive season distracts most people for 2 – 3 weeks in the period 26 October to 15 January. The organisations represented in YHAC have had difficulty in rearranging management meetings to fit into the scheduled consultation period. (Although an extension to 31 January was offered to YHAC, it is important that YHAC views are considered at the same time as others taking part, and there has been no announced change from 25 January for the Commissioners' first review of responses).

Most importantly, changes such as those in the Proposals are of such significance for all concerned that the consultation period has been disproportionate and we have not been informed of any pressing need to decide fundamental changes within a few months.

3. YHAC is disappointed not to have been involved with the Resident and Visitor Surveys before they were printed and used, and also not to have seen the actual figures of those who took part and of the numbers for and against the Proposals. This could have avoided the prevalent scepticism about these surveys.

4. The local community is described as an important stakeholder in *Modernising Trust Ports 2009*, so that it would have been preferable for an evening public exhibition of the proposals to have been included in the printed “Project Timetable” and held in the Town Hall or School. It was obvious in the recent Yarmouth & Thorley Community Plan surveys that many non-sailing locals have a great affection for “our” harbour and a more “neutral” venue for an exhibition with staffing would have been appreciated. The Town Council took action by inviting the CE/HM to speak briefly (due to a long Council Agenda) at its meeting on 1st December but this did not make up for the oversight.

5. It would appear that the majority of commercial mooring holders have not been consulted. Other stakeholders seem to have been given attention: the 10 fishermen in the harbour were consulted over the SW Corner proposals; YHAC has been involved but does not have a commercial representative (and this was requested at the Advisory Review early in 2009); but there are some 18 commercial operators with mooring licences (passenger boat operators, angling boats, diving boats and general commercial operators). There is no mention of commercial (non fishing) berths on the plan and their skippers do not appear to have been consulted. (See the section “Commercial Aspect” below).

6. YHAC is not able to comment on the financial aspects of the proposals as detailed figures and projections are not available.

POINTS IN FAVOUR OF THE PROPOSALS

1. The recognition that there are navigational problems needing attention.
2. The recognition that there are a few areas of potential congestion needing attention: the fuel berth and approaches, and the approaches to the Yar Bridge.
3. The separation of commercial/fishing from recreational craft removes potential conflict.
4. Income from more walk ashore moorings should reduce the need for greater increased charges for residential moorings elsewhere in the harbour if the recession continues and if the Wightlink contribution continues to be down.
5. There are some individuals, both locals and visitors who would like more walk ashore berths.

POINTS AGAINST THE PROPOSALS

1. NAVIGATIONAL SAFETY

YHAC is aware that, in small harbours, there is a conflict between providing manoeuvring space for craft and space for berths for ever bigger vessels. Finding a balance is difficult. The Commissioners are recommended to follow the *Code of Practice for the Design, Construction and Operation of Coastal and Inland Marinas and Yacht Harbours* by the Yacht Harbour Association in 2007 (British Marine Federation) and referred to below as *COP* (+chapter & paragraph). www.yachtharbourassociation.com
The assumptions of distance given below are based on the drawings available in this public consultation.

1.1. YHAC is concerned about the proposed **main navigational channel in the north** as it appears to be a substantial width reduction on the current channel and a significant reduction in depth. *COP* recommends that the width of an entrance channel should be 30 metres and a **minimum** width of 20 metres for main channels in marinas. (*COP* 2.3.2.1-4 and 2.4.1-2)

- The main fairway channel in the Proposals is less than 15 metres wide in several places and over much of its length is shown as bounded by the Low Water mark, so that the actual width of deep water at LW could be less than 10 metres.
- The Commissioners will be aware that this main channel must be capable of serving those boats using the visitor and residential walk ashore berths and Sandhard area, all commercial craft, boats in transit to/from the Bridge and the boatyards, and space for craft turning round.

1.2. **New fuel berth** – congestion is likely in the only fairway, especially at low water and when used by beamier or rafted boats waiting their turn.

1.3. **North West area.** This is an area of strong cross tides with exposure to wind from all quarters.

- The Proposals would locate visitor berths in this area of tricky, and potentially dangerous, manoeuvring space. Visiting skippers may lack both the experience and the local knowledge to cope.
- If the 3 vessels of Needles Pleasure Cruises Ltd continue to moor at the far end of the green piles, the Proposals will present considerable congestion and manoeuvring problems, especially with the strong cross flow of tide. The installation of additional visitor berths on the west side of the training groyne, the additional traffic of fishing vessels following the SW Corner Development, the traffic using Hayles Boatyard, and Bridge traffic will all make both manoeuvring/turning of the lengthy Needles boats (50ft) and the passage of other boats very difficult in a channel of approximately 16m wide in what could become the busiest area of the harbour.

1.4 Fairway widths between pontoons

The *COP* (2.5) recommends a fairway width of 1.5 x the length of the largest boat accommodated on either side of the fairway, and width is defined as the clear measurement between the extremities of the berthed vessels. This recommended width is

increased to 2.1 or even 2.5 if there is a substantial tidal flow and/or exposed wind conditions, which are true of Yarmouth.

The widths between the proposed licence holders' finger berths appear to be merely the length of a finger pontoon, despite the normal practice of berthing boats up to 25% longer than the finger pontoon. The *COP* recommendations should be heeded.

1.5. **The waiting area for the Bridge** as recommended by Marine Enforcement's Risk Assessment of June 2009 is not shown. If more licence holder boats are moved into the river, the need for a convenient waiting area will increase.

1.6. The change from predominantly **east/west configuration to north/south** will present mooring difficulties because of the tide effect. Steering a course between 2 rows of pontoons in a cross tide will be difficult and possibly impossible in a strong ebb with the prevailing south west wind of force 4 or above. The present north/south walk ashore does not present the same difficulty because there is more room to east and west, not being restricted between 2 rows of pontoon berths as in the proposed arrangement.

1.7. The potential impact the proposals may have on the **safety of navigation** within the Harbour is the RYA's primary concern from a national perspective.

2. LOSS OF AMENITIES

2.1 **Removal of the Crane** – YHAC believes the crane to be fundamental in this small harbour for small boats and heavy equipment handling.

- The Commissioners are recommended to provide the services needed by their stakeholders, as in *Modernising Trust Ports 2009*. For example, paragraph 1.2.8 argues for a comparison of performance of in-house services with external options, and for consulting with users of services. In Yarmouth there is no external option for the crane, the boatyards having no berth in deep water with a crane on an adjacent quay, and a large number of stakeholders would be seriously affected by the loss of the crane. The drying out berth was removed previously.
- The crane suits the harbour well: it is simple, slow and has a fixed jib.
- The crane enables new sailors and those on low spending power to keep costs down by DIY work and such people should be encouraged.
- Equally important, the crane is also needed for loading/offloading heavy equipment.
- Health & Safety issues should be addressed by providing training for regular users and a charge for harbour staff time for others.
- To meet environmental concerns of pollution from hull scrubbing, a channel with a separator could be provided in the quay surrounding the crane.

2.2 **Removal of the West Slipway**. It is very important to retain public access to the sea, especially as future needs cannot be predicted.

- Such access is in the spirit of modern thinking, e.g. The Crow Report 2000, and Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.
- The slipway could be improved so that it provided a real alternative to use of the emergency slipway.
- It is used by others besides mooring holders.

- The emergency slipway may become less available for small boats: emergency use by ferry and commercials, the access through busy ferry queuing lanes, and very little area for preparing to launch when ferry traffic is dense.
- The slipway south of the Bridge is only suitable for small dinghies and increases movement through and around the Bridge.
- The Commissioners are advised that there is strong feeling about the loss of the slipway and there is a serious risk of a challenge by an individual or group applying to register it as a public slipway. If local users are of the view that it is (and essentially always has been) a public slipway then it is possible to seek to register it as a public right of way.
- The RYA, whose task is to promote recreational boating, does not accept the premise that the conversion of most berths to walk ashore pontoons negates the need to maintain this slipway, particularly as the proposals will also reduce significantly the length of the quay along which tenders and other small craft may be moored.

2.3. Loss of load/unload area on South Quay

An accessible quay space is vitally important in a harbour.

- All boats need this facility for heavy equipment, both commercials and recreational.
- Passenger boats need easy and safe landing for the numbers involved.
- The Proposals make no provision for any vessel of any type to access directly onto a quay to load/unload with vehicle access alongside. (The SW Corner Development, as it stands, would only be used by fishing boats).
- Town Quay is unsuitable: no adjacent vehicular access, as this is obstructed by guard rails and a pedestrian walkway with benches along the quay.

2.4. Further decrease in space for tenders

The proposals indicate a low interest in providing space for tenders. The idea that people with moorings, of any type, do not need tenders for access is incorrect.

The proposed tender pontoon in the SW Corner Development will add to the congestion of the Bridge area.

3. COMMERCIAL ASPECT

- Facilities for our residential and visiting commercials seem to have been omitted, despite the commercial craft being significant in giving the Harbour its mixed character. There is no mention of commercial berths on the plan.
- The proposals make the harbour less useful to commercial craft, with advantages envisaged for fishermen and recreational craft, but not for other commercials.
- The proposals would prevent the harbour having more commercial craft in the future. In terms of Eco Island there may come a development for more cross - Solent cargo boats to replace the dominance of lorries. We understand there is a national movement to increase coastal cargo vessels.

4. FUEL BERTH

- There will be an added cost of providing extra staffing instead of dual service for fuel and in Reception.
- Reference has been made above to potential congestion especially at Low Water in the sole fairway when beamy boats are refuelling.
- The proposed new fuel berth will be open to the swell and full force of strong north easterlies.

5. LOSS IN NUMBER OF LOW COST MOORINGS

- YHAC believes it important that young people and families are encouraged to begin to sail, and the cost of moorings is a crucial factor for those on low incomes.
- Current boats may get some protection against a rise in mooring charges, but there can be no guarantee for the future.
- Many current licensees of pile moorings in the harbour will be forced to change to a river mooring, no matter what their preference or increase in cost.

6. STAKEHOLDER BENEFIT 1.4.3 *Modernising Trust Ports 2009*

This section on justifiable employment of surpluses includes “undertaking activities that have a lower commercial return than might be acceptable to a company port, but which have other benefits for stakeholders – e.g. for the local community”. For example:

- The interaction of the harbour and town at times such as the Old Gaffers Festival and the Carnival’s Harbour Sports will be affected by the loss of South Quay and the adjacent water area, both being local stakeholder benefits.
- The crane may not make a commercial return but it benefits the whole harbour indirectly.

7. THE BREAKWATER

Is it wise to make the breakwater area a crucial part of future development? The breakwater is in poor condition and will probably be rebuilt for coastal defence against the predicted rise in sea level. Can it be ideal to have the only fairway so close to a sea defence?

8. GREATER SECURITY RISK

- There is a much greater risk to property on boats as thieves can more easily hide their tenders in rows of finger pontoons. Moreover, the pickings will be richer from the more affluent boats on walk ashore.
- Damage to boats in bad weather would not be as noticeable as it is now in the more open aspect of moorings.

9. ONLY ONE ACCESS ASHORE FROM THE EASTERN PONTOON AREA

The plan only seems to give one pedestrian access, i.e. by the harbour office. This will be very congested with crews and those trying to carry large amounts of gear to/from boats.

YHAC Recommendation

Although this paper may appear critical, the Committee is genuinely concerned to be more positive and would welcome the chance to join the Commissioners in devising an integrated plan for the whole harbour and estuary which addresses the current problems and opportunities within an arrangement more sympathetic to the present unique character of the harbour.

The meeting ended at 0950.