
THE SENTINEL



Newsletter of the Bembridge and St Helens Harbour Association

No. 40 October 2009

Chairman's Letter

Dear Member,

Welcome to the 40th issue of the Sentinel in BASHHA's 20th Anniversary year. Noel Stimson was our first Editor, followed by Janet Shuter and then Marjorie Trimmer. Latterly I have been filling the role, but I hope to announce a new Editor shortly. The title of our Newsletter was chosen as a result of a members' competition. The Sentinel was the apt winning title as the Redshank is known as the Sentinel of the Marshes and also reflects BASHHA's continuing role in monitoring activities in and around Bembridge Harbour.

Breaking News! After years of frustration and delay the Eastern Yar Strategy, jointly undertaken by the Environment Agency and IWC, have decided on their preferred Option for Bembridge Harbour and will be starting the Public Consultation process. The first meeting and exhibition will take place in Bembridge Village Hall on 9th December, 2-8pm (details elsewhere). Please make every effort to attend!

Our AGM was held on 7th March and members voted to raise the level of subscriptions in 2010. The Hon. Treasurer reported that annual income was falling as we now have a high proportion of Life Members. I was asked to send letters to Life members who joined in the first 10 years. Life Membership remains for life, but any donations from such members would be much appreciated. We are most grateful to all the members who generously responded to the Appeal.

Members were shocked when Maritime and Leisure Investments applied to build a 5 storey Hotel on the Bembridge Marina car park in August 2007. BASHHA submitted a robust and comprehensive objection. We received outstanding assistance from one of our members who is a Solicitor with particular expertise on the Environment. He studied the flawed environmental assessment and wrote a detailed rebuttal. Over 300 objections were submitted. Negotiations and contact

with statutory bodies dragged on interminably before the decision date was set for 24 March 2009.

Mike Samuelson of BHUG and I had 90 seconds each to present the case on behalf of the Objectors. By agreement these included National Trust, RSPB, CPRE, BHT, BSC and BHYC. We were brilliantly supported by about 60 local residents. The Planning Committee accepted the force of our arguments and unanimously proposed Refusal on 4 major grounds. We sincerely thank all who wrote or sent email objections or helped in any way to achieve this splendid result. Sadly, a revised application is expected again, but, as ever, we will have to remain vigilant and respond.

BHUG has continued to address many harbour concerns (details overleaf). At last the DfT will hold a Public Inquiry to determine the level of Harbour Dues..

Our website www.bashha.org was finally launched in June. We hope many of you have browsed through it and will encourage potential new members to do so. There are links to many other interesting organisations.

We are now looking forward to celebrating BASHHA's 20th Anniversary with a retrospective Exhibition and Forum on 14th November in The Cloisters. The Bembridge Heritage Society have offered to support and complement our event by opening the Centre from 11.30am to 2 pm, while our own Exhibition will be in the smaller room in The Cloisters. Coffee and tea will be available.

The Forum will start at 2.30pm with several well known members contributing short addresses on various aspects of our activities. We will also be looking to the future and will welcome your suggestions. We conclude with a celebratory drink and cake. We look forward to seeing you on this auspicious occasion.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Clough, Chairman

Eastern Yar Flood and Erosion Risk Management Strategy

This is the full title of the draft Options document presented to the IW Cabinet on 13 October for decision on which preferred Management Option would be selected and to approve the proposed public consultation process.

The Eastern Yar Strategy (EYS), undertaken jointly by the Environment Agency (EA) and IWC and financed by the government, started in January 2006. Since April 2008 EA was tasked with overseeing the management of all coastal flood and erosion risk in England. On the Island this responsibility is shared with the IWC.

Since its formation in 2001, the St Helens and Bembridge Coastal and Harbour Working Group (WG) representing our communities, has been stressing to the authorities the importance of maintaining the Duver Wall as a protection for the Harbour and Embankment Road. In the draft document from EA the following 4 Options were presented:

- A. Do Nothing.
- B. Carry out proactive maintenance of the sea wall only.
- C. Carry out proactive maintenance of the sea wall and maintain the beach in front of the wall.

- D. Carry out proactive maintenance of the sea wall for 50 years only then "Do nothing" thereafter.

Regrettably, none would attract government funding.

The Council has a legal obligation to maintain the sea wall at the Duver resulting from a legal covenant with the owners of Bembridge Harbour. The Cabinet decision was to select Option D and this will be stated in the draft Consultation document to be produced by EA. Natural England would have preferred the Do nothing option and may require compensatory habitat provision.

The Consultation process will last 3 months. The EA have announced that it hopes the draft Consultation Document will be ready by the end of November. A Public Meeting and Exhibition will take place in Bembridge Village Hall on Wednesday 9th December from 2 -8pm. It will be vital that residents turn out in force to demonstrate the depth of local concern, to ask questions, to make their views known and endorse Option D.

The future wellbeing of our communities is dependent on Bembridge Harbour!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

BASHHA 20th Anniversary Celebration. Saturday 14th November 2009

Retrospective Exhibition in The Cloisters 11.30am - 2.15pm Coffee/tea available
Heritage Centre open to members 11.30am - 2pm
Forum with various speakers 2.30pm

The Eastern Yar Strategy

Presentation by Arthur Robinson and Martin Pay
The Way forward ~ Celebratory drink and cake

Eastern Yar Strategy Consultation & Exhibition

Wednesday 9 December 2pm - 8pm

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 13 March 2010 2.30pm at St Helens Community Centre



Farewell to Max Aitken III - photograph by Peter Hunt

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Opinions expressed in The Sentinel are those of the
authors and not necessarily those of the Association.

BEMBRIDGE HARBOUR USERS GROUP - Extract from October 2009 Update

1. Harbour Dues. Although we still await formal confirmation, DfT have now decided to convene a Public Inquiry to consider the 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 Appeals. We expect it to be held locally probably starting the week of 12 January 2010.

2. Houseboats. We are waiting to hear when the Planning Committee will consider the revised Application submitted in June. In addition to submissions from NE, EA, RSPB, BHUG, & BHT, all recommending refusal, a number of strong objections were made by houseboat owners and individual users.

3. Fore and Aft Moorings. The number of moorings let was probably about the same as last year (i.e., no more than about 30 out of 100+). The anchors and chain weights remain a danger to navigation at marginal states of the tide. It is assumed that the orange buoys will be removed over the winter period (1st December - 31st March).

4. Fisherman's Pontoon. The long awaited refurbishment of Fisherman's Pontoon has been delayed yet further and is now unlikely to be until after Easter 2010.

5. Channel Buoys. Despite assurances that the current buoys would be replaced by the end of August with new light weight buoys with speed limit signs and lights, the order was cancelled in early September because of funding shortages. The Trinity House Inspector of Seamarks who visited Bembridge on 8th September is understood to have recommended that urgent maintenance is

undertaken on the existing buoys and that enforcement action could be taken if they have not improved in 12 months time. The buoyage opposite St Helens Church was adjusted in early September to mark the better route. A Local Notice to Mariners has yet to be issued!

6. Harbour Liaison Group. Regular meetings apparently continue, but there is little news. The last set of Minutes on the Liaison Group Website (www.bembridgeharour.com) is 6th August 2008! Chris Turvey (Harbour Master) became a Director of BHIC in June as did James Whitehead an accountant from Thorness.

7. Bembridge Harbour Trust, BHT's new brochure has been widely acclaimed and a recruiting drive to increase the number of founder member is underway. Dormant funding to cover the purchase of the interests of BHIC (should it be offered for sale at a realistic price) is in place.

8. Bembridge Lifeboat Station. The temporary facility on Silver Beach is working well. Work on the new Lifeboat Station is progressing to schedule. The main slab is now complete. A planning application (revised scheme) for the Inshore Lifeboat Station rebuild was submitted in September.

9. BSC Dredging. A FEPA licence for a stand alone maintenance dredge of BSC's pool/pontoons has been applied for. Dredging, possibly in early November (with the fallback of April 2010) is currently being processed by the Marine and Fisheries Agency.



One hour before HW – flood water v the flood tide – interesting!

Photograph by Mike Samuelson February 2009

Annual General Meeting 2009

The 20th AGM, attended by 43 members took place on 7th March in Bembridge Village Hall. The Chairman welcomed all present including several new members and warmly thanked the Committee and members for their continued support.

Treasurer's Report

Rod Bowman presented the Annual Accounts. He indicated that funds are slowly eroding as income is lower than expenditure as we have so many Life members.

The Chairman explained that retired members who joined in 1989 only paid £1, £2 or £3 annually or £10 for Life membership. This was increased to £2, £3, £4 in 2003. Any further donations would be most helpful. The Committee recommended an increase of £2 in each category in 2010. After discussion, a proposal was made and it was agreed unanimously with 2 abstentions. The accounts were approved and Rod Bowman and Roger Sims, scrutinizer, were thanked for all their work on our behalf.

Chairman's Report

We were very sorry to lose our valued Committee member and former Vice Chairman Perry Kuhns in December 2008. His family have kindly donated his materials and display boards to BASHHA.

We are grateful to our sub committee, the Bembridge Harbour Users Group (BHUG) who keep constant watch on activities in the harbour, respond when necessary and update us in the Sentinel – while BASHHA concentrates on land-based and other issues. Planning applications continue relentlessly and decisions are often delayed, e.g., the Hotel Plan which received over 300 objections in 2007. The Harbour Dues appeal has still not been resolved.

The Harbour Company produced a Bembridge Harbour Management Plan which BASHHA and Mike Samuelson of BSC were invited to comment upon. We submitted detailed comment but little change was made. Our Beach Cleans and Bembridge Street Fair stall were well supported. The BASHHA website would be launched soon.

The Eastern Yar Strategy is still not complete, but the Working Group has managed to persuade the project team of the importance of the Duver Wall in protecting Embankment Road and the Harbour.

Ken Hicks thanked Barbara Clough for her work as Chairman for 14 years, also Rod Bowman for his detailed accounts and Helen Hunt for excellent Minute taking.

Election of Officers and Committee Members

All were willing to stand again and were duly elected as follows: Chairman Barbara Clough, Vice Chairman John Askham, Hon. Treasurer Rod Bowman, Secretary Mary Chappell, Minuting Secretary Helen Hunt. Committee members: Robert Barnes, Barbara Blackburn, Jim Elliott, Felix Hetherington, Ken Hicks, Robin Humphrey, Paul Traquair and BHUG reps. Robin Powell and Mike Samuelson.

After the break we were delighted to welcome local personality Arthur Robinson of Bembridge Outboards. Arthur began his working life in the Harbour and is a fund of information on what goes on there. He entertained us royally with fascinating reminiscences of his early experiences and the madcap activities indulged in by fellow apprentices. No Health and Safety regulations in force then! The audience responded enthusiastically and Arthur was warmly thanked for his captivating talk.

Bembridge & St Helens Harbour Association 2009 Membership Application/Renewal

I/We wish to apply/reapply for membership of the Association and enclose a remittance as follows:

ORDINARY MEMBERSHIP	Annual	£3	Life	£30
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP		£4		£40
REDUCED MEMBERSHIP (unwaged, retired)		£2		£20
DONATIONS		£		

Names

Address

..... Telephone No.

Signature Date

Subs may be paid direct to your Sentinel deliverer or to the Hon Treasurer, Rod Bowman, 1 The Brambles, Bembridge. PO35 5QH
Please ensure that subscriptions are in an envelope clearly marked with your name and address. Thank you.