
THE SENTINEL



Newsletter of the Bembridge and St Helens Harbour Association

No. 45 March 2012

Chairman's Letter

Dear Member,

After a long period of uncertainty, the new owner of Bembridge Harbour was announced in December 2011. Bembridge Harbour Trust who had spent years of hard work, planning and fund raising were disappointed not to be the preferred bidder and we thank them for their efforts to acquire the Harbour for the benefit of our communities.

We welcome **Malcolm and Fiona Thorpe** as the new owners, facing the challenge of bringing Bembridge Harbour into a fit state, able to function well after years of neglect. Malcolm Thorpe immediately set about meeting stakeholders and local people, and set up **Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG)**. See full account overleaf.

The Know your Harbour meeting took place on 1 November at BHYC and attracted considerable interest. Sue Wells, Project Manager, gave a detailed presentation on the **Balanced Seas Project** and brought reassurance to many who were concerned about possible adverse or limiting effects the Marine Conservation Zones and special Reference areas might have on fishing and boating activities in particular. A panel of representatives from the Local (IW and Hants) Stakeholder group also contributed. During the previous week I was privileged to join a site meeting to the **rRA Tyne Ledges** and with assistance from Mike Samuelson have responded to a detailed questionnaire as part of the Impact Assessment (see p.4).

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (IW) presented BASHHA with another Award and Cheque for £100 for

Litter clearance, which we were then pleased to present to the Bembridge Community Library at their festive Open Morning to assist with essential maintenance fund raising. Our next **Spring Beach Clean** will take place on 14th April.

There is good news regarding the repair and reconstruction of the **Duver Wall**. The chosen contractors are Island firm Imphouse (see report elsewhere)

The financial year began on 1 Jan 2012 so the Treasurer would be glad to receive any **Annual subs** now due. A few members have paid in advance and new members who joined us in Autumn have their membership extended to 2012. Subs can be paid at the AGM or by post to Treasurer Christine Grant.

We received a good response to our request to receive the Sentinel by email which will help us considerably. Hard copies will still be delivered to members if required.

The AGM will be held at St Helens Community Centre on Sat..17 March at 2.30 pm. Volunteers for the Committee are warmly welcomed. I am delighted to announce that Malcolm Thorpe has kindly agreed to address us after the tea break on "Getting under way" in Bembridge Harbour, a topic of keen interest to us all. We look forward to seeing you there.

*Yours sincerely,
Barbara Clough, Chairman*

NOTICE OF AGM 2012

The AGM will be held at St Helens Community Centre on Sat..17 March at 2.30 pm.
Volunteers for the Committee are warmly welcomed.

Get your Sentinel by email!!! Help us by signing up to receive future issues as pdfs by email. Just send an email headed "sentinel by email", to bassha_sentinel@btinternet.com

New Owners Make Excellent Beginning

Malcolm and Fiona Thorpe have bought the assets of Maritime Leisure Investment, i.e. Bembridge Harbour Improvements Company Limited and the land-based leases and properties. The Thorpes own a number of property development/ management companies, and Malcolm Thorpe is a non-executive director of Cowes Yacht Haven Marina as well as sitting on Yarmouth Harbour Advisory Committee. The Thorpes immediately began to meet with Harbour stakeholders and interest groups, and convened a public meeting in Bembridge on 31 January to report progress already made and future plans. Improved communication, transparency and user involvement was promised, and is already happening. Plans for immediate harbour maintenance work to reverse the previous regime's neglect are well advanced, and future development plans outlined.

This article combines information from the 21 January meeting with further detail discussed at the first Advisory Group meeting on 21 February when MT and Harbour Master Chris Turvey reviewed activities and progress.

Immediate Projects

1. Port Marine Safety Code

BASHHA has in the past criticised BHIC's Harbour Management plan for failing to implement the Department for Transport Port Marine Safety Code. We were assured that BHIC was implementing it. However, this seems not to have happened, for MT commissioned a professional report which exposed potential liabilities and risk areas. Recommendations to be implemented as soon as possible.

2. Dredging

A dredging licence application has been submitted for *internal dredging* to cover all areas of the Harbour at present in use, but may take months to be granted. The hope is to begin in March with channel remedial work and dredging both sides of the Duver pontoons, and do the other areas in the autumn. It will be back hoe dredging with collected silt deposited beyond the Nab Tower. Graham Hall is to take charge of the project. Bennetts will remain on Bembridge Point and continue *external channel dredging*.

3. Pontoons, Marina, Groynes etc.

There are plans to extend the Duver pontoon towards the Anglers' moorings; refurbish the Fishermen's pontoon now; and reconfigure the Bembridge Marina area in due course. St Helens and Bembridge Point groynes will also need attention. The tide gauge ladder & light to be replaced asap.

4. Mooring Fees and Harbour Dues

Harbour Dues will be charged at the 2010/11 rate, but the income from them will be properly and transparently allocated only for the services which may be paid for out of such income. MT said that under PMSC the Harbour Authority was required to keep a register of all boats in the Harbour with contact details in case of emergencies, and he was pressing for details on all non-BHA moorings.

It was confirmed that the small number of 'cheap' moorings for St Helens and Bembridge residents will continue.

5. Shoreside facilities

MT is aware that these need upgrading, but this year he will concentrate on washing facilities and urgent repairs. The marina car park toilet block has been refurbished.

6. Palmer Memorial

MT is in negotiation with Bembridge Parish Council over the leased land on which it stands.

Communication and Consultation

MT is anxious to be open and informative, and to work with users and community on mutually beneficial issues.

- **Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG)** has been set up on similar lines to the Yarmouth Harbour Advisory Committee (consulted by Yarmouth Harbour Commission) to meet bi-monthly and consist of representatives of various local and other stakeholder interests. Terms of Reference are not yet available.

Present at the first meeting on 21 February were: Alan Deeming (*Angling Club*), Christine Elliott (*BHYC*), Denise Grannum (*BPC*), Michael MacInnes (*BHT*), Robin Powell (*BHUG/BASHHA*), Christer Johansson (*BSC* [for Mike Samuelson]), Malcolm Thorpe (*BHA*), Chris Turvey (*BHA*), Sue McClagan (*BBA*), Will Squibb (*BMF*). Nigel Bennet (*Bennets*) is also a nominated member.

- A **Houseboat users meeting** was convened for 22 February to discuss issues including car parking and the effluent problem.
- Two **publications**: a short monthly e-newsletter "On the wind" for Harbour news; plus a more substantial production twice a year to act more as a marketing tool. This will come out in the spring for the summer season and in the autumn to fit in with the Southampton boat show. Local contributors and advertisers will be sought for both.
- Regular **open door surgeries** are now being held at the Duver office.
- an **annual finance meeting** at which the accounts of the Harbour business will be discussed. The first one will be after the first year end, around May 2013.
- next year would be the 50th anniversary of the privatisation of the Harbour. A party is planned to recognise this event.
- BHIC's previous Harbour Liaison Group (to which BASHHA and BHUG were not admitted) is not to be revived.

Long Term Prospects

MT said at the 31 January meeting that his plan was to be around for some 15 years. He said that he had made a huge

investment which was permanent. It would take time to sort everything out and there was no quick fix. He was treating it as a regeneration project. His time scale for making a reasonable return on investment was 5 years.

- He wanted a good increase in visitors. Last year there had been 4,600 visitors to Bembridge, whereas Yarmouth had 22,000. Whilst they presented quite different harbour profiles, there should be a lot of room for improvement.
- He wanted to make sure that all the old pontoons were

replaced by modern ones with decent facilities.

- He would like to see joint ventures with local organisations such as sailing clubs; perhaps in the training area.
- Some of the existing Embankment Road properties are very shabby. He sees an opportunity to add small commercial units in various places to create jobs and encourage business activity. The old hotel planning application will definitely not be revived.

St Helens Duver Sea Wall

The Duver Sea Wall repair contract has been awarded to the Island firm **Imphouse**. They will be putting information boards up on the Duver so that users of the Duver and the wall can see what is planned.

Work will start as soon as the migrating birds have gone.



**above: huge hole in walkway;
below: rusting/ disintegrating sea wall face**

All construction traffic will be along the wall via the Old Church entrance because the route over the Dunes at the southern end proved unsuitable. The concrete promenade surface will be broken up to facilitate filling the voids underneath and strengthened to carry the weight of heavy construction lorries etc.



The work is scheduled to take 16 weeks with the most disruptive work in the areas most used by the public being done first.

Firstly the crumbling wall at the southern end, the priority area, is to be replaced along its whole length. It has to be rebuilt to its same height, but as the current wall is not level to look right the new wall will be to the highest point of the old wall and 15cm higher in places.

At the base of the wall an apron will be made from steel sheet piling with a gently sloping concrete apron.

The wall itself will have some shape moulded into it to lessen the visual impact of a long smooth concrete face, and will be topped by an angled outward wave return lip. This will reduce the volume of water, seaweed and shingle coming over the top.

The concrete top will be replaced, and to make the area in front of the beach huts more attractive the surface will be moulded to look like wood planking and may have pigment in it.



Work will also be done on the wall right along and in front of the Baywatch and the houses, plus work on the apron in front of Old Church and the wall the other side.

Artists impressions of the new wall can be seen at www.imphouse.org.uk/st%20Helens%20Duver.htm

Arthur Robinson, Chairman, EYS Coastal and Harbour Working Group

**above: St Helens beach before existing wall
all photos © Arthur Robinson**

Balanced Seas Project update: risk assessment

The public consultation stage has been deferred by DEFRA until late 2012. Environment Minister Richard Benyon's written statement of 2011:12:15 announced the intention to commission "significant additional work to support MCZ designation including an in depth review of the evidence base ... and committing additional resources to carrying out seabed and habitat monitoring".

[www.defra.gov.uk/news/2011/11/15/wms-marine-conservation-zones/]

Meanwhile, the regional MCZ projects continue to work with JNCC and Natural England to deliver in July an **Impact Assessment (IA)** which will include a site-specific analysis of the estimated economic, environmental, and social costs and benefits of each RMZ and rRA.

BASHHA contributed to the **impact assessment for rRA15 Tyne Ledge**: Mike Samuelson and Barbara Clough compiled usage data, some of which is quite interesting:

dog walking: approximately 20 dog walkers per day, but up to 50 during school holidays. Around half do not pick up their faeces.

horse riding: tides permitting, weekday mornings, approx 10 rides, weekend mornings approx 15 daily.

walking: up to 50 on weekdays in winter; especially at weekends; double the number in summer.

rock poolers/ crab fishing: mainly at Colonel's Hard just outside the area.

Most of the standard impact assessment is concerned with activities that are more environmentally threatening, such

as diving, powerboating, jetskiing, anchorages, which fortunately do not take place in the area, or not to an extent that is considered important. Users of the area will be glad to know their activities can continue.

Balanced Seas project team has already produced some **amendments to their Final Report**: see www.balancedseas.org/page/RSG%20Resources.html

Spring Beach Clean 14 April

Meet Tollgate Café, Bembridge Point or Hovertravel Works, The Duver at 10 am.

Gloves and stout shoes essential. Bags provided. At your own risk please.

Annual General Meeting

The 2012 AGM will be held at St Helens Community Centre on Sat..17 March at 2.30 pm. Volunteers for the Committee are warmly welcomed.

New harbour owner **Malcolm Thorpe** will speak after the tea break on "Getting under way" in Bembridge Harbour.

Bembridge & St Helens Harbour Association 2012 Membership Application/ Renewal

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

Ordinary membership	Annual	£5	Life	£50
Family membership		£6		£60
Reduced membership		£4		£40
Donation				

Name(s).....

Address.....

..... telephone.....

Email.....

Signature..... date.....

I should like to receive the Sentinel by email..... YES..... NO.....

Please send cheques to Christine Grant, BASHHA Hon Treasurer, 3 King's Close, Bembridge PO35 5NX.

Personal information supplied by you will be treated in confidence and will not be supplied to any third party

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