

No.

CARDIFF BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 28th February, 2024.

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chair); Councillor N.C. Thomas (Vice-Chair); F. Hourahine (Natural Resources Wales), S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.), C. Kingston (Waterfront Partners), C. Michael (RSPB), C. Pooley (Natural Resources Wales), P. Stone (Canoe Wales), and M. Thomas (Clerk – Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, Vale of Glamorgan Council).

Also present: A.M. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association), D. Hall (Cardiff Harbour Authority) and A. Vye-Parminter (Cardiff Harbour Authority).

(a) Apologies for Absence –

These were received from Councillor J. Burke-Davies (Cardiff Council), Councillor M. Lewis (Cardiff Council) and A. Michael (Penarth Headland Link Charity)

(b) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 29th November, 2023 –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 29th November, 2023 be approved as a correct record.

(c)&(d) Navigational Safety Update and General Progress Reports – Cardiff Harbour Authority (CHA) –

A. Vye-Parminter, in conjunction with D. Hall, representing Cardiff Harbour Authority (CHA), updated the Committee on the navigational safety and general progress reports:

Navigation

The latest Barrage Outer harbour and approach channel dredging campaign started from 24th February.

With the heavy rain and subsequent high rivers and water flows, there had been a large amount of rubbish deposited by the trees and bank adjacent to the rivers and water flows, approximately 200 tonnes worth.

The Vice-Chair asked whether the rubbish and waste reclaimed from dredging was sorted for recycling. It was explained that due to the waste largely consisting of broken trees and similar, as well as Japanese Knotweed, there was no requirement for sorting and recycling. This was not classed as the CHA's waste, and it was taken to a local biomass facility or disposed of appropriately instead. Also, it was not practicable or safe to sort and process any waste that was

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recyclable, such as very small pieces of plastic. The Vice-Chair suggested that the CHA take another look at the applicability and necessity of recycling such waste, due to its role as a custodian of the water around the Bay and Barrage.

S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.) stated that the question of recycling for CHA and other bodies around Cardiff Bay and Barrage was 'tricky and which sometimes depended on which expert you asked about this topic. He cited the use of black bags by the Marina's customers, in order to contain and dispose of their waste. He also confirmed that the Marina did not use the Vale of Glamorgan Council services for waste disposal but used a private contractor instead. The Marina did encourage customers to recycle their waste.

A.M. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association), stated that it would be more challenging or a different challenge for the Marina to recycle its business and customer waste, as opposed to the CHA, a public body. The Vice-Chair added that everyone, both private and public bodies, as well as individuals, had a duty to recycle.

General

Environment

As discussed above, approximately 200 tonnes of rubbish removed from the Bay so far since start of the year.

CHA have developed a new education resource for Primary schools. This involved going into the schools to talk about rivers, seas and the impacts of pollution. At a later date, the schools will come to Cardiff Bay and carry out a litter pick on the Barrage, so they can see the importance of looking after the water environment. This school trip was in addition to the two already offered by CHA - Wetland Explorer and History of Cardiff Bay.

Barrage

Locks

Lock 3 annual maintenance had commenced. Work had started inspecting the Lock gates and associated hydraulics now that the Lock had been drained down.

Fish Pass

Stop beams were installed into the Fish Pass as part of the agreed maintenance window with Natural Resources Wales. Clearance of the inlet chambers and inlet gates would be carried out. The routine repair work and maintenance would be undertaken on the fish pass during this period.

Following this, P. Stone (Canoe Wales) referred to the litter picking scheme undertaken via the 'Big Paddle Clean-up' for 2024, which was a regular event which helped to clear up waterways and was undertaken by volunteers (including canoe clubs), in conjunction with Canoe Wales and British Canoeing (Paddle UK).

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It was explained that the CHA was awaiting the appropriate paperwork in order to allow volunteers to undertake this scheme.

S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.) asked if the litter picking volunteer scheme which CHA was undertaking with local schools and alluded to earlier, was also open to schools based in the Vale of Glamorgan as well. It was explained that schools in Penarth as well those based in Cardiff had also been involved in this litter picking scheme and any cooperation with the Marina would also be considered.

It was subsequently

AGREED – T H A T the reports be noted.

(e) Natural Resources Wales Update –

The update was presented to the Committee by F. Hourahine, a representative from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), and who highlighted the following areas of interest:

Dissolved oxygen (DO) levels

The Cardiff Harbour Authority (CHA) had provided regular updates regarding DO levels, water quality, river flows and Bay levels.

During the winter period DO levels within the Bay remained above the 5 mg/L threshold.

No water quality issues had been reported since the last meeting.

Pollution incidents and investigations

Ferry Road Landfill site

There was an incident at the end of November, where leachate may have entered the lower Ely. Cardiff Council responded immediately and took samples. The cause was currently being investigated and there had not been any reported instances since.

The operator continued to ensure that compliance with safety requirements was maintained at the site.

Pollution incidents

An initial report of oil on the surface of the lower Ely, adjacent to Victoria Wharf Flats was received on 26th November. Several reports followed over the following weeks related to oil on the surface of the water along the same stretch. Initially the Llandough trading estate was suspected to be the source but after

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investigatory work including numerous site visits by NRW it was ruled out and the source was believed to have come from further upstream. Unfortunately, the source was not identified.

On 12th February, a report was received for oil pollution on the lower Ely near to the Llandough trading estate. NRW investigated the incident and successfully identified the source of the pollution. The activity responsible was immediately stopped and advice was provided to the company on how to prevent further incidents from occurring. Appropriate enforcement actions will be taken and the site will be monitored closely.

Due to ongoing police investigations, it was still not possible to provide an update regarding the pollution incident that was reported on the lower River Ely in late December 2022.

Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station

There were no further updates since the last meeting.

The Barrage fish pass

The pass was currently closed for its annual maintenance period and would reopen in late March.

Since the last meeting no more salmonids were recorded through the pass before it was closed on 12th January. The estimated total number of salmon and sea trout that entered the Bay during 2023 was 23. It was possible that more fish entered in September and October whilst the monitoring equipment was not operating, but this was still an extremely small number, even compared to last year's record. Fortunately, several spawning redds were recorded further upstream in the Taff and Ely in December, so despite the low numbers some of these fish appeared to have found each other and spawned.

A raw count of 3,113 non-target species (mullet and bass) was recorded, which was much lower than 6,750 in 2022. The aim for 2023 was to ensure that identifying salmon from the other species was still accurate and reliable. Optical cameras were used to help validate interpretation of the data and a new set of classification guidelines had been developed to help maintain consistency between operators. This would also be used for future training purposes.

In December CHA informed us that a problem had been identified with subsidence of a cable duct on the coastal side of the embankment. An inspection was conducted and revealed that the ground movement had crushed some cables connected to the fish gates, which was where the fish enter the pass from the sea. Work was conducted to prevent further damage from occurring and some of the cables would be replaced whilst the fish pass was closed.

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Eels

There had been discussions between NRW and CHA about replacing the original eel matting on the main fish pass. It was an appropriate time to do this, whilst the pass was closed, and CHA had started making enquiries with various companies. The operation of the Barrage lock gates during late winter and early spring was also discussed to explore the possibility of improving connectivity for glass eels migrating from the estuary into the Bay.

Blackweir docks feeder canal Abstraction Licence requirements

Progress had been made with Associated British Ports (ABP) meeting the conditions of the licence. The contractors, JBA Ltd. had provided evidence that there were no major barriers along the main route of the feeder canal to Roath Basin for migrating silver eels to access the sea. Therefore, NRW were happy for JBA to start exploring the use of a larger diameter screen size of 10mm at the abstraction point at Blackweir. They were currently exploring the different options available and would hopefully present these to NRW by late May.

Following the update, the Vice-Chair enquired about the Blackweir docks feeder canal, and if there were any debris or pollution impacts on this waterway due to it passing through heavy traffic. It was explained that NRW were in talks with ABP around such issues as part of the license requirements. Also, NRW relied upon members of the public to reports instances of pollution in the canal and had a 24-hour hotline and online contact form where this could be reported.

It was subsequently

AGREED – T H A T the update be noted.

(f) Any Other Business –

There were no other items of business or questions at this time.

(g) Date of Next Meeting –

Provisionally, Wednesday, 29th May, 2024 at 5.00 p.m. – venue and date to be confirmed.