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CARDIFF BAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting held on 22nd March, 2023.

Present: Councillor M.R. Wilson (Chair); A. Parker (Vice-Chair); F. Hourahine (Natural Resources Wales), S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.), C. Kingston (Waterfront Partners), P. Stone (Canoe Wales), Councillor N.C. Thomas (Penarth Town Council) 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), A. Michael (Penarth Headland Link Charity) and A. Vye-Parminter (Cardiff Harbour Authority).

(a) Apology for Absence –

This was received from C. Michael (RSPB).

(b) Minutes of the Meeting Held on 4th January, 2023 –

AGREED – T H A T the minutes of the meeting held on 4th January, 2023 be approved as a correct record.

(c) Verbal Update on Location / Timetable of Future Meetings –

The update was presented to the Committee by the Clerk / Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer, who informed them of the following:

- Firstly, with regard to the location of future meetings, a number of potential venues such as Penarth Town Council Offices and the Norwegian Church had been looked at and costings provided. The Clerk had also reached out to other potential venues but had no response at this time from them. However, following further discussions with A. Vye-Parminter, he confirmed that Cardiff Harbour Authority (CHA) had looked into potential venues as well and confirmed that the Cardiff International White Water Centre could be used again as a venue for any future face to face meetings of the Committee. The Chair stated that the use of the White Water Centre would be the logical option for the next meeting of the Committee with a free car park, access to refreshments etc. as well as proximity to the Barrage and the Bay overall. The Chair queried the feasibility of using the White Water Centre as a means of holding a hybrid meeting. The CHA Officer replied that this would not be possible at this time. The Chair also asked about the availability of the CHA buildings, to which the response was that this would not be possible at this time due to changes in use of office space in recent years. A.M. Ernest (Penarth Tourism and Visitor Association) added that

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by its nature and remit, meetings of the Committee should be held within the proximity of the Bay. S. Jones (Boatfolk Marinas Ltd.) added there was also an option to use the Deck Restaurant Conference Room at the Marina and there would be some parking available there. The Chair received approval from the Committee to hold the next meeting of the Committee in May at the White Water Centre with consideration for the Deck Restaurant to be used as a potential venue for future meetings which were held face to face.

- Secondly, regarding the proposed boat trip/site visit to Cardiff Bay and the Barrage, the Clerk had spoken to A. Vye-Parminter at CHA in order to look at the possibility of chartering a boat from a commercial provider in order for this fact-finding trip to take place. The Clerk was currently waiting on costings for this from A. Vye-Parminter. Unfortunately, as was raised at the last meeting, the Associated British Ports did not have vessels that could enter the relevant areas of the Bay and the CHA boats could only accommodate 5 passengers at a time, so a commercial vessel was the only viable option at this time. A. Vye-Parminter added that there were also time implications with holding a boat trip which ideally should be approximately 2 – 3 hours or more in order for Members to have the full view of the Barrage and Bay area. The cost for hiring a boat would be confirmed. C. Kingston (Waterfront Partners) asked about potential commercial providers for this and it was explained that there were two suitable commercial operators that CHA licence, who would be approached about it. The Clerk / Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer stated that a possible alternative would be to have a walk around certain parts of the Barrage in order for Members to have a guided tour and look at the workings of the Barrage. The Vice-Chair asked if the café on the Barrage was still open in order for Members to access refreshments during a potential site visit. It was explained that this would be looked into. The Chair asked the Committee to delegate authority to the Chair, A. Vye-Parminter and the Clerk to look into sourcing a hire boat for the site visit / trip or to organise a walk around for 4.00 p.m. for the next meeting in May. The Clerk added that he had approached the Executive Leader for the Vale of Glamorgan Council and unfortunately, they were not able to attend the date in question and possible alternative dates would be looked at with Members informed in due course. The Executive Leader for Cardiff Council would also be approached. The Chair also suggested a possible extra date to be put in for the summer period in order for the Committee to meet.

It was subsequently

AGREED –

- (1) T H A T the White Water Centre would be used to hold the next meeting of the Committee, currently scheduled for May 2023.
- (2) T H A T authority be given to the Chair, in conjunction with Cardiff Harbour Authority and the Clerk / Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer to organise either a boat trip or walk-around as part of the next meeting in May 2023.

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

A. Vye-Parminter, representing Cardiff Harbour Authority (CHA), updated the Committee on the navigational safety and general progress reports, including details on the Barrage.

With regards to navigation, the Committee were informed that the bi-annual dredging of the outer harbour had commenced.

The Committee were then given the general update, which included:

- Environment – over the course of December 2022 and January 2023 approximately 200 tonnes of debris had been removed from the Bay, as a result of the high river flows experienced at that time. The debris clean up from both land and water was continuing around the Bay, in particular due to the recent rainfall which meant the boom had refilled.
- Barrage – regarding Lock 1, the hydraulic cylinder repair was now complete. Concerning Lock 2, the annual scheduled maintenance was now underway. Lock 2 was currently closed but should be back in action during the Easter period.
- Fish Pass Maintenance – the fish pass maintenance campaign was near to completion. Dive teams had been on site assisting the repairs to the inlet gates and had removed over 30 tonnes of silt from the fish pass in the gate chamber. Also, several large tree trunks which were underwater had been removed using chain saws.
- On Wednesday, 8th February, 2023 one of the safety gates on Pont y Werin was attacked by vandals, which had resulted in the drive gear box, safety interlocks and cabling being smashed and broken. The engineering team had worked all day on 9th February in order to resolve the issue. By Friday morning (10th February) the safety gates were fully operational.

A.M. Ernest asked about the vandalism at Pont y Werin and whether the CCTV in the area covered the safety gates. It was explained that the CCTV was for operational purposes only.

It was subsequently

AGREED – T H A T the reports be noted.

(e) Natural Resources Wales Update –

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

- Dissolved Oxygen (DO) Levels – there were no recent notifications from CHA nor any other issues in relation to low DO levels within the Bay.

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- Pollution Incident Investigations – As reported previously, intermittent pollution had been discharging into Cardiff Bay from an outfall located near the Watermark Building, Ferry Road. Analysis of the discharge found that it contained leachate, very likely coming from the former Ferry Road landfill. Cardiff Council (CCC), the owners of the landfill, continued to enact measures to address the source and pathway of the leachate, as set out in an action plan agreed with NRW. NRW provided pre-application advice to CCC in October 2022 for an operator-initiated change to add modern permit conditions and to reflect that the landfill was no longer accepting waste for disposal and was in closure and aftercare. NRW were yet to receive their application. CCC submitted a revised Hydro-geological Risk Assessment (HRA), which was reviewed by the NRW Geoscience team who then provided comments. NRW currently awaited CCC's response. NRW carried out a site visit on 2nd February, 2023 and found that:
 - The site leachate collection system was in working order;
 - Pumping stations, including pumping station D, were observed to be receiving leachate as designed;
 - The Aldi chamber, where the leachate collection system was previously (wrongly) connected to the Ferry Road surface water drainage, was fully disconnected and there was no sign of leakage;
 - The outfall next to the Watermark building was inspected and no pollution was observed.On 8th December, 2022 oil was seen spilling into the River Ely from the Llandough Trading Estate surface water outfall. Over following days the oil moved downstream and dissipated. Unfortunately, it was not possible to trace the exact source and therefore the polluter was not identified and no enforcement action taken. This was a repeated incident that had been investigated several times over the last few years and, as reported previously, pollution prevention campaigns had been undertaken at the trading estate during which businesses were visited, their activities were discussed and advice was given where required. NRW officers would periodically return to the site to find evidence for the source of the oil. Another pollution incident was reported on the lower River Ely in late December 2022. However, due to ongoing investigations and Police involvement, it would not be appropriate to include further details on this briefing note at this time.
- Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station – there were no substantive updates regarding this at this time. NRW continued to engage in consenting matters relating to the development, providing advice on consultations from the Marine Management Organisation (the Licensing Authority in England) and the Environment Agency, as well as engaging with EDF relating to the forthcoming application for variation of the Development Consent Order.
- The Barrage Fish Pass – there was currently work being undertaken on the fish pass as part of its annual maintenance, but this should be up and running again from the week commencing 27th March, 2023, in time for the fish migration season. NRW also had a new Fisheries Officer who would potentially come along to the next meeting of the Committee and also reach out to colleagues in CHA.

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Regarding the Chair's query on more data concerning trends of salmon stocks at the fish pass, it was stated that further data would be provided to the Committee on this although national and global trends had seen a decline in the numbers of salmon stocks.

The Vice-Chair noted that in the previous century the salmon population had been far higher, however, freshwater fish within Cardiff Bay were still doing well. The NRW officer would look to provide additional data on freshwater fish and water quality as well, although it was noted by D. Hall from CHA that the water quality was constantly checked at 9 sites around the Bay and the Barrage.

It was subsequently

AGREED – T H A T the report be noted and the further data requested by the Committee would be provided in due course.

(f) Any Other Business –

The Vice-Chair referred to the accommodation pods at Penarth Marina. It was explained that these did not fall within the remit of the Committee due to the Penarth Marina not falling within the Harbour limits and any issues would be addressed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. For those pods that were put into the water on the River Ely, these were not being used for their intended purpose at that site and were awaiting transportation out of the Harbour limits into Penarth Marina.

(g) Date of Next Meeting –

The Clerk would contact all Members regarding the arrangements for the next meeting once a date had been confirmed as well as its location and whether the Committee would be undertaking either a boat site visit or walk-around the Barrage.