

Minutes of the meeting of the OCHDA Management Committee

August 12th 2021 15:00 – 17:00 via Zoom

Present: Alison Rennie, Ross Wilson, Andy Spence, Robert Kincaid, Phil Hamerton, Tony Bennett, Duncan Martin, Peter Tosh, David Vass.

Apologies: John MacAlister, Keith Miller, Tony Hammock.

Ross Wilson welcomed everybody to the meeting

1. **AOCB request:** Andy Spence advised the group that there have recently been meetings involving Brendan O'Hara (MP) and Jim Lynch (OLI AC), among others where the subject of the trust port was discussed.
2. **Minutes of the meeting of 6th July**
 - 2.1. The minutes of the meeting of 6th July were approved, subject to 3 minor amendments (date of meeting, minute 6.2 add ferries having right of way, minute 9.1 delete "over 20 ms". Proposed by Andy Spence, seconded Peter Tosh.
3. **Matters arising**
 - 3.1. None not covered elsewhere
4. **Feedback following recent meetings**
 - 4.1. RW express thanks for all the hard work undertaken by Tony Bennett in preparing for recent meetings. He reported that relationships between OCHDA and Elected Members seem to be increasingly positive and supportive though information provided to Members by Council Officers appears not always complete and accurate.
 - 4.2. Concern was expressed regarding an incomplete A&BC record of the 3rd August meeting and discussions with Council Officers and Members regarding this were reported.
 - 4.3. TB reported that, subsequent to the meeting, Council Officers have agreed with his analysis of financial material relating to the North pier and pontoons. Information relating to vessel movements remains slightly incomplete but nonetheless demonstrates clearly that ferry movements do not constitute the greatest source of risk within the Bay since these are predictable and constitute approximately one third of the traffic. The majority of traffic in the Bay is associated with the North pier and pontoons and, by definition, these passages are largely unpredictable and not timetabled.
 - 4.4. The combination of financial analysis, vessel movement analysis and general preparatory work undertaken by OCHDA clearly demonstrates that the Trust Port proposal is the safest option for the Bay and offers the best income opportunity for the Council.
 - 4.5. AS expressed concern that, despite the clear evidence, the Council decision may

not be favourable for the development of the Trust Port on 2nd September. Consideration should be given to alternative methods of ensuring that Council Members are fully informed before 2 September, for example in relation to the statement at the Harbour Board and OLI Members meeting regarding the existence, or not, of a dangerous situation in Oban Bay. It was suggested that an appropriate statement might be sought from the MCA to clarify this point. **No action agreed.**

- 4.6. Consideration of potential conservancy charges includes an expectation of a significant discount for Cal Mac vessels. For other vessels visiting the harbour, particularly cruise ships, it is necessary to demonstrate to them the benefit in terms of improved service (welcome, safe passage etc) that will result.
- 4.7. TB sought permission to speak to a number of professional advisers regarding details of insurance, oil spill procedures and Designated Person services for the Trust Port. The Committee agreed that TB should be free to discuss matters in principle and seek advice from any organisation who could provide us with useful information at this stage. **Action: TB**
- 4.8. Consideration will need to be given to appropriate staffing levels in the future in order to ensure that North pier and North pier pontoon visitors consistently experience the best possible welcome and shore-side resources. Some concern was expressed regarding the adequacy of current staffing levels and maintenance of toilet/shower facilities for pontoon visitors
- 4.9. Regarding the Council's options under consideration, TB made clear that the "Wet Port" proposal should not become the preferred option since it fails to provide a single point of contact for the majority of visitors to the Bay, it will be financially vulnerable as it will have much more limited potential income, it will fail to provide an overall group for promoting development in Oban Bay and it will not be able to provide the financial benefits for the town and for the Council that the North pier Trust Port offers.

5. Workplan for the remainder of 2021

- 5.1. Our primary concern now is preparing for the Harbour Board and the Oban Bay Management Group at the end of the month. If the Trust Port is the Council's preferred solution, we will need to move swiftly into the implementation stage. The Committee meeting confirmed that the Trust Port Board would need to be recruited first, followed by the Board's appointment of a Chief Executive. This process could take a significant length of time, many months.
- 5.2. RK reminded the meeting that a Harbour Order can be approved by Scottish Government with an implementation date set in the future. This would allow the formal statutory processes to be completed and a timetable to be set.

6. Forthcoming meetings

- 6.1. In addition to the meetings highlighted with the agenda, the next scheduled meeting between the Council Officers and OCHDA representatives is 14th September.
- 6.2. In addition to confirming the next meeting of this Committee on 9th September, a further meeting was agreed for 7th October. **Note no decision was made about**

whether these meetings should continue to be virtual.

- 6.3. Discussion regarding convening a general meeting of OCHDA members will be held over until 9th September. Any meeting of OCHDA members will, therefore, be able to consider the outcome of the Harbour Board meeting and any possible need for further public meetings.
- 6.4. Consideration of a meeting with MSPs led to a decision that we will wait until the Council's paper for the Harbour Board is published (expected to be by 26th August).

7. Media strategy

- 7.1. After detailed consideration, the Committee decided not to release any information specifically to the media at this point. A press release will be drafted following the Council's paper for the Harbour Board. In the event of enquiries from the media we will attempt to provide appropriate, accurate information. **Action: PH**

Dates of future meetings:

Thursdays at 15:00 September 9th, October 7th (venue tbc)