

## Weymouth Harbour Board

### Annual Report 2009/2010

#### Chairman's Review

The 2009/10 year has been one of continued evolution of the governance arrangements introduced to comply with the requirements of the Municipal Ports Review. Five Board meetings, open to the public, have been held to process key harbour issues. In addition an objective for the year has been to enable Board members to gain a better overview of the main financial and strategic issues facing the Harbour. Monthly working meetings have been adopted to assist in familiarisation with specific issues, to discuss working matters and to provide direction where necessary.

All Board members attended an informative presentation to ensure that responsibilities under the Port Marine Safety Code were understood and this will be repeated for new Board members, members liable to substitute on the Board and other members and officers.

During the year Commander J A Holt RN was appointed as the second independent member of the Board. I am grateful for the professional and sage counsel provided by my 4 elected and 2 independent Board member colleagues during the year. I would also like to thank the harbour staff and other authority officers for their dedication and hard work.

Councillor Roger Allen  
Chair

#### Finance and Trading

Despite the impact of the recession the harbour achieved its budgeted contribution target of £943k from overall turnover of £1960k. It should be noted that this requirement leaves very little money for maintenance and investing in replacement or improved infrastructure or facilities and in particular the condition of harbour walls will require some further investigation and remedial activity in the coming year.

The difficult economic environment manifested itself in a couple of areas:

Income from Inner Harbour pontoons constitutes roughly one third of overall income. These berths have been full in recent years with a substantial apparent waiting list. It is common with a number of marinas on the South Coast the year ended with just over 10% of berths vacant. Efforts, including extra advertising, are being made to fill these berths which are comparatively short in length and the range of facilities provided in Weymouth is less extensive than competing harbours. Take up from the waiting list has been less than expected.

Visiting vessels reduced to 6,436 visitor nights a fall of 14% on the previous year a trend which reflects that experienced in other south coast ports. The reduction was more pronounced in powered craft than sailing vessels which is thought to be largely due to the increase in duty chargeable on diesel fuel.

On a positive note the harbour benefitted from marginally more income from Condor Ferry operations which the operator attributes partly to increased marketing activities. Year end figures were up 2.7% for passengers and 1.2% for vehicles with Channel Island traffic up but traffic to France reduced.

Other activities were not significantly out of line with previous years. Various commercial and military vessels visited the port although a reduction in the number of larger vessels contributed to a reduced number of pilotage acts. Slipway receipts increased by approximately 20% and bridge lifts were down 5%.

## **Harbour Projects and Developments**

With the prevailing financial climate a cautious approach was adopted with only essential and high priority maintenance and infrastructure work being undertaken. Work which was done included:

- Redecking fingerettes on Westway Road Marina.
- Improved facilities on North Quay Marina with better bicycle parking and trolley storage.
- Planning for revised layout of Harbour Office and showers.
- Specification and ordering of replacement pontoons for berths adjacent to Customs House Quay.
- In house survey of harbour walls and related structures.
- Specification and ordering of WC facilities for installation on Westway Road pontoons

The eventual abandonment of redevelopment plans for the Peninsula area was a major disappointment as this included the intention to replace the ferry terminal buildings.

### **Navigation Conservancy, Safety, Pollution and Security**

No significant incidents occurred during the year in relation to the safety of navigation. All navigation marks and lights were maintained to a high standard and a hydrographic survey indicated very little change in water depths with no subsequent dredging requirement. Six monthly statements of compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code were submitted to the Harbour Board.

Representatives of the Department for Transport Security branch (Transec) have made scheduled and surprise inspections of compliance with the ISPS Code with positive feedback and no significant non compliances.

Members of staff have maintained appropriate oil pollution response training and one desktop exercise has taken place. Additional oil pollution advice has been provided to DCC.

Swine Flu contingency plans were prepared.

### **Stakeholder Involvement**

A key aim of the Municipal Ports Review is to improve stakeholder involvement in the activities of the harbour which is warmly supported by the Harbour Board and harbour staff. All Board meetings are held in public where any individual may raise relevant issues of interest. The Harbour Consultative Group, consisting of representatives of major harbour users, meets quarterly and is attended by the Harbour Master.

All Inner Harbour Berth holders were sent a satisfaction questionnaire at the end of the financial year and a number of visiting yachts also completed questionnaires or comment forms. In addition consultation meetings with representatives of local charter and fishing organisations have taken place while a more structured account management process is being developed with Condor Ferries, the harbour's largest customer.

It is recognised that communication with harbour users and potential users needs to be further improved and an up to date website and potential newsletter are being worked on.

## **Olympic Sailing Event 2012**

Harbour representatives have attended a variety of planning meetings related to the Olympic Sailing Events. These include safety and security, radio spectrum management, cctv, and event management. It is intended to proceed jointly with Portland Port and LOCOG in promoting a Harbour Revision Order applicable to control of the waters of Weymouth Bay during the key 67 days (only) around the sailing events for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is very clear that the underlying philosophy of Dorset Police is to endeavour to achieve “business as usual” during the Games. We have sought to represent the interests of harbour users where proper and possible to do so. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Harbour Board responded to concerns from Harbour users and met with LOCOG officials regarding the procurement of support craft for the games.

## **Future Plans and Developments**

In setting budgets for the 2010/11 financial year the long term need to increase maintenance of the harbour walls has been recognised and will be used to undertake specialist surveys and initial repair work.

Significant financial policy decisions will be made by the Harbour Board regarding the annual financial contribution to the General Fund as the initial policy lapses at the end of March 2011. The pricing comparator link to Dean and Redyhoff Marina pricing changes also expires at the end of the financial year and this will be part of the deliberations regarding future fees and charges.

Responses to customer feedback will be evaluated as efforts are made to improve facilities and consideration will be given to emerging issues such as car parking.

It is hoped that the long awaited plans for 13 Custom House Quay to be modified during the autumn of 2010 to improve disabled access, showers and customer reception facilities will come to fruition.

Discussions will take place with Condor Ferries regarding their long term ferry operating requirements both in terms of facilities at the Peninsula and also with regard to traffic access from the new relief road.

## **In Conclusion**

On a personal note I would like to sincerely thank the wide range of people who work “for and in” the harbour and generally contribute to making Weymouth Harbour what it is today. We are fortunate in having a diverse community who feel strongly about this unique harbour and are concerned about ensuring a positive and sensible future.

Peter Mole  
Harbour Master