

Minutes of the Meeting of the **BOAT PARK COMMITTEE** held at the **Town Hall** on **Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2005** at **9.30 a.m.**

Present: -  
Councillor A H Miller – Chairman

Councillor Mr C Bright  
Councillor Mrs J Farrow  
Councillor M Pratt  
Councillor M Tyrer

Also in attendance: -

Mr G Brookes	Operations Manager (until 11.35 a.m.)
Mr M Leach	Boat Park Attendant (until 11.35 a.m.)
Mr S Titt	Boat Park Users Group Representative (until 11.50 a.m.)

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor Suttle and Mr A. Lander, representative of Swanage Fishermen's Association.

2) **Review of Minutes of Meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

The minutes of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2005 were noted as agreed.

Further to Minute 2, Councillor Tyrer enquired whether the boat had been moved from the slipway. The Operations Manager gave assurance that this had been done.

3) **Maintenance and Improvement Matters**

The Council's Operations Manager introduced the proposed changes to the Boat Park layout that were before the Committee for consideration. These had been designed taking into consideration the views of the Town Council's staff and feedback from users. The Chairman stated that, in principle, Option 2 was his preferred scheme as it would resolve all existing problems, but this would have serious implications for the Boat Park's financial situation. If implemented this would require a further 10 per cent increase in grid fees, in addition to that agreed in November 2003.

Mr Titt, the representative of the Boat Park Users Group, stated that there would be resistance to an increase in fees, especially given that the alterations to the layout suggested two years ago had not been implemented.

The Chairman explained that the Council was attempting to be cost neutral in its actions and, therefore, any loss of income from a reduction in grid spaces would have to result in an increase in fees.

Mr Titt stated that there were many users who would be unaffected by the change in layout and would not see why they should fund the changed layout.

The Chairman noted that one of the main concerns to be addressed was the overhanging boats, which would be resolved by the increase in provision of 22 foot boat spaces. An alternative was that the owners of overhanging boats could be requested to cover their engines and a notice could be put up warning of the dangers of overhanging boats. Mr Titt, however, felt that this would not adequately address the problem and that the key issue was access to rows B and D/E.

The Chairman summarised the financial position of the boat park, noting that there was a loss of £4,700 in 2004/05, and projected losses of £10,345 in 2005/06 and of £11,785 in 2006/07. A further potential loss of £9,000 due to the reorganisation of spaces could not, therefore, be contemplated without an increase in grid fees.

The Operations Manager noted that one solution to the problems of access in the Boat Park would be to reduce the maximum permitted size of boats to 22 feet. The Chairman, however, noted that because a large proportion of the Boat Park's income derives from the grid fees of the largest boats this was not an option. Mr Titt felt that the issue around access for 29 foot boats would be solved by the proposed angling of grids in Row B.

The Chairman noted that if Option 2 was to be implemented grid fees could either rise by 10% in 2006/07 or by 5% in each of the next two years. Mr Titt argued that if the Council was going to increase grid fees it ought to be implemented openly and in full.

Councillor Farrow enquired whether boat owners were aware of the proposed re-arrangement of grid spaces. Mr Titt stated that they were not. It was explained that boat owners had not been written to because of the unresolved issue of where to house boats whilst re-surfacing took place.

The Chairman highlighted certain aspects of the Boat Park's finances, and drew particular attention to the fact that a substantial proportion of income is spent on business rates. Mr Titt argued that if users were better informed of the costs to the Town Council of running the Boat Park, they might appreciate why their grid fees were being increased.

Councillor Bright urged caution over implementing a plan that would cut the Town Council's income at the present time. However, as a previous user of the Boat Park, he also believed that many users would find it difficult to accept a further increase in grid fees, especially as this would be purely for the rearrangement of the Boat Park, not its refurbishment.

Mr Titt stated that he believed that there were two groups of boat park users who would be affected differently by a proposed increase in fees. Firstly, there were non-resident boat owners who would be more accustomed to paying for a fully refurbished facility, with security barriers and lighting. Secondly, there are local owners, many with older boats, who only required a basic storage facility.

Councillor Pratt raised the possibility of offering a discount to resident boat owners. The Chairman stated that this was a possibility that could be implemented in future years, but there would be some difficulty in determining who is or is not resident.

If the changes in Option 2 were to be implemented Councillor Pratt stressed the need to give boat users all the background information. Mr Titt stated that if this was done he felt that boat owners would reluctantly accept the increase in fees.

After further discussion it was PROPOSED by Councillor Mrs Farrow and SECONDED by Councillor Tyrer:

That the re-alignment of grids proposed in Option 2 be adopted, and that a 10 per cent increase in fees be implemented to counter the potential loss of income, with the proviso that these changes be fully explained to all boat users in a letter, and that a discount rate for residents be discussed within twelve months.

Upon being put to the meeting, FOUR members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and ONE AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

The Committee then debated options for the storage of boats while the resurfacing and re-marking of grids was undertaken. The Operations Manager had provided a detailed scheme for storing boats at North Beach Car Park, but it was felt that the boats would be at too high a risk from vandalism and that costs of security fencing were too great.

Various options were discussed for storing boats within the Boat Park, but it was explained that there was a high occupancy rate of grids this winter and therefore this option was impractical. Councillor Pratt stated that boat owners should be requested to move their own boats, and only if they were unable to do this should we provide alternative accommodation. It was noted that owners might call for a refund if they had to remove their boat from the Boat Park and it was agreed that this should be given further consideration if and when refunds were requested.

The timescale for carrying out the work was then discussed. The need to dig a trench for the proposed new water supply before the re-surfacing of Grids D and E was highlighted. The work was currently scheduled for April 2006, but it was argued that it should not be carried out so close to Easter. Councillor Bright expressed some doubt that the work could be carried out prior to this. However, after further discussion it was agreed that the work could be undertaken in February and early March, provided the contractors were available. It was noted that if the work was carried out at this time it would coincide with the annual closure of the caravan park, and any remaining boats could be removed there.

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Pratt and SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Farrow:

That the owners of boats in Grids D and E be politely requested to move their boats while the resurfacing and remarking is carried out, from the second week in February. Furthermore, that those who are unable to move their boats be offered alternative storage at the Swanage Bay View Caravan Park, and, if necessary, boat owners be requested to leave their keys so that the Operations

Manager may remove any boats that are left on site.

Upon being put to the meeting, FOUR members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

The Chairman concluded by summarising the work that was to be carried out, incorporating the digging of a trench at the end of Rows D/E, the resurfacing and remarking of these rows, and the other re-marking set out in Option 2. All other elements in the refurbishment scheme, including security gates, would have to go to full Council for approval in 2006/07.

The difficulty of re-aligning the grids in Row B was raised, and the Operations Manager was requested to carry out the work as best he could without removing the boats from the Boat Park.

The Operations Manager and Boat Park Attendant left the meeting at 11.35 a.m.

**4) Allocation of Fisherman's Huts 2005/06**

Hut 15 – It was again noted that the tenant was in the process of changing occupation from boat operator to fisherman. Since the last meeting the Council had received a copy of the tenant's Safety Awareness Certificate, although the Committee noted that a fire fighting certificate was also outstanding. It was AGREED:

That the tenancy agreement be renewed until April 2006, the tenant being informed that all outstanding paperwork will be required for renewal in future years.

Hut 18 – It was reported that Mr Burbidge had sent in a copy of his Inland Revenue self assessment form and it was AGREED:

That the tenancy agreement be renewed until April 2006, the tenant being requested to supply full evidence of his compliance with the Council's criteria for renewal in future years.

Prior to the Committee going into Private Session, Mr Titt enquired about progress in relation to the refurbishment of the eastern jetty. The Chairman reported that Purbeck District Council would only permit Mr Goater to assist the Town Council on payment for his time and the Town Council was now awaiting a quotation. Councillor Tyrer stated that he had all the information in respect of grant applications.

**5) Proposed Legal Action - Update**

Before consideration of this matter, the Chairman asked Mr Titt, as representative of the Boat Park Users Group, his opinion about the behaviour of

an individual believed to be responsible for recent disturbances at the Boat Park. After some discussion it was agreed that the individual concerned should have the same right as every other fisherman to use the public slipway in stress of weather, but that at any other time he should pay for usage or utilise the fisherman's slipway.

Mr Titt left the meeting at 11.50 a.m.

It was then proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Farrow, and RESOLVED:-

That, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following matters.

Further to discussion at the Boat Park meetings of the 10<sup>th</sup> June and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2005, consideration was given to recent complaints by two local fishermen regarding the alleged poor conduct of a young man at the Boat Park. This was considered alongside favourable reports concerning his behaviour from his employer and the representative of the Boat Park Users Group.

Consideration was given to the action that should be taken by the Town Council's Boat Park Attendant and it was PROPOSED by Councillor Tyrer, SECONDED by Councillor Mrs J. Farrow and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That provided the individual concerned is going about his normal business of work, he should be treated as any other user of the Town Council's facilities.

**6) Any other matters**

A letter from Mr T. Dyke, tenant of Fisherman's Hut 10, was put before the meeting, requesting permission to install a security light on the hut. It was PROPOSED by Councillor Bright, SECONDED by Councillor Tyrer and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That permission be granted to Mr Dyke to erect a security light, provided that it is fitted with a PIR sensor.

The meeting closed at 12.05 p.m.

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