



St Helier Boat Owners Association Newsletter - 2017



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Review of Current Events

When I agreed to take on the chairmanship of the Association we were not expecting to find ourselves in the middle of such an "interesting" year, so my learning curve has been anything but dull. The first issue that arose was the location of the recycling bins on South Pier just outside the yacht club entrance, a subject that ultimately involved discussions between the Association, the Yacht Club, and the Ports of Jersey Marina team. The servicing of the bins (in common with all such facilities) had recently been outsourced so they were being emptied less frequently than hitherto, as well as being misused by the public & this, combined with the tendency of the bin lids to blow away in strong wind, resulted in a very messy situation. The view of SHBOA was that while we had no objection to a relocation of the facility away from the Yacht Club, we thought that refuse facilities elsewhere on the pier were necessary for boat owners. In the event, the main facility has indeed been moved, to be replaced by litter bins, and we think this may in practice turn out to be an inadequate solution. In any event it is a topic that we are keeping under review.

Shortly after this came a renewed proposal to put a cycle track beside English Harbour and a boardwalk above the slipway at French Harbour - in other words a different approach to previous plans & one which would inflict very little permanent change to the existing slipways. We attended a meeting at the Dept. of Infrastructure, and on the whole we are quite supportive of what is being suggested. We have also attended meetings hosted by Ports of Jersey seeking input on the development of the long term plan for the future of St Helier Harbour, and look forward later in the year to seeing the initial draft proposals. I anticipate that some of these will attract the undivided attention of the Association membership, and we will look forward to sharing them with you as soon as is appropriate.

I have maintained the habit of sitting down routinely with Mike Tait, Group Leisure Manager at Jersey Marinas, to review current topics both great and small affecting our respective spheres of activity, and I think it is fair to say that the more we do this, the

more we seem to find ways of resolving many of the issues. We aim to cooperate with the Marinas team as much as possible, and once again this year committee members turned out on a Sunday morning to join the harbour professionals in sorting out the dinghy pontoons. This is becoming a regular annual event, and it is good to be able to report that the incidence of rogue dinghies seems to be reducing with every year.

At the time of writing, the topic of most concern to your Association is the fact that St Helier is suddenly without a lifeboat manned by a full-time experienced local crew. In common with others, SHBOA is not privy to the underlying circumstances that have brought about the removal of the cox, the resignation of the rest of the crew and its replacement with a temporary team from RNLi in the mainland, and we certainly are not currently in a position to opine on the rights and wrongs of this sad situation. One cannot make judgements based on speculation, which is certainly not in short supply, and must await the facts. At this stage, therefore, the only point of view we can express is that it is deeply unsatisfactory if the local lifeboat is manned other than in the very short term by personnel who, regardless of their skills & dedication, do not have detailed local knowledge of our notorious home waters. The longer this situation persists, the more our concern seems likely to deepen. No one will be more delighted than your committee if, by the time you read this, this last paragraph is out of date and irrelevant!

The Future Development of the Association

One of the first things that I sought, as the incoming chairman, was the opportunity to explore with the committee how the Association currently operates and what, if anything, we think it should be doing differently in the future. Broadly, our conclusion was that the Association has operated at its best in the past when there have been topics of great importance to the boating community to be resolved. In these situations the Association has been able to canvas the views of its membership and then make representations on behalf of the St Helier boating community. Past examples have included the debate about marine fuel duty, and the proposed redevelopment of the old harbour.

The key to success lies, of course, in the Association's ability to effectively canvas the views of its membership in a timely manner. The ways in which this can be done have changed quite radically in recent times and perhaps your association has failed to keep up! Currently our ability to reach out to you, the members, is restricted to an annual newsletter, an annual general meeting, and a somewhat ad hoc system of traditional mail, email and other social media outlets such as Facebook. The AGM has always been a useful forum for airing current topics, and its main shortcoming is that it only happens once a year. The newsletter has also been a useful medium, but it tends to be limited to the reporting of past events. The use of the traditional mailed letter has become prohibitively expensive at almost 50p a go (and that's just for the stamp)! As for the use of email and social media, this is currently significantly restricted in its usefulness by the fact that many of the Association membership have so far not provided us with an email address. In fact, this very point – the fact that the Association only has an incomplete list of email addresses of its members – is, in the view of your committee, the single biggest impediment to establishing fluid, timely communications between you, the membership, and your Association. **In short, your committee regards it as a high priority to obtain email addresses from as many of you as we possibly can, as we regard this as the most effective tool for putting ideas to you and getting your feedback.**

Now, I fully recognise that some of the membership will, understandably, regard it as a sad day when their Association is seen to be heading down the same path as almost every other organisation, and of course not all our members will want (or are even able) to access email or social media – but I believe that this is a rapidly shrinking proportion of the total. Meanwhile, looking more to the future, it is clear to me that any Association that does not seek to communicate with today's mainstream audience (by which I mean almost everyone from late middle age down) in a modern way is asking for early extinction, and will certainly fail to attract the youth and beauty to its ranks going forward. In short, if the Association does not adapt to the needs of the future, it might find that it does not have one.

We recently tried this approach – on a rather 'Heath Robinson' basis due to our incomplete email address list – when the issue about the refuse recycling facility on South Pier arose. We wanted to know who thought this facility was important, and who did not and we sent out emails to some 140 members who use that part of the harbour. Not many of you replied, and most of those who did had no particular objection if the facility was moved, but it was generally felt that some alternative refuse solution

elsewhere on the pier would be necessary for boat owners. These responses were extremely helpful in developing our view – and the level of non responses was also helpful, as it told us that this issue was not a really red hot potato. Going forward, one can imagine much more pertinent issues generating a much higher quality of response – for example, the marine fuel duty argument is bound to resurface at some future time, as will the plans to redevelop the harbour, – and the ability of the Association to quickly get feed back from its membership will greatly enhance its effectiveness.

At the forthcoming Association AGM this winter, we therefore intend to promote this new approach and to encourage as many members as possible to share with us their email addresses. Thereafter, we propose that the vast majority of future communications to and from your Association should be by email. In these circumstances, it seems likely that the annual newsletter will become naturally redundant, because of its inability to address important topics as they are occurring, and so we plan to put it to the meeting that in future the annual newsletter might be discontinued. We intend to continue to use other social media such as Facebook, and if there are members who genuinely do not wish to provide us with an email address, they will of course be perfectly at liberty to do so. They would, however, need to recognise that in so doing, they would be restricting the Association's ability to interact with them and to keep them abreast of developments.

That AGM is a little way off, and first there is the 2017 boating season to look forward to. I wish you all a safe and thoroughly enjoyable time boating!

**Will Simpson
Chairman**

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**PLEASE REMEMBER TO UPDATE
YOUR STANDING ORDERS IN TIME
FOR THE 2017 SUBSCRIPTIONS –
See Treasurer's Report**
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**VISIT TO THE JERSEY  
COASTGUARD STATION AT  
MARITIME HOUSE**

The committee of the Saint Helier Boat Owners Association received an invitation from Jersey Coastguard ("JC") to visit their new offices earlier this spring, and so one evening in March we gathered at Maritime House to take a look.

The first thing you notice when you walk into the new coastguard station is the array of TV and computer screen, keyboards etc. which immediately evidences that this is a 21<sup>st</sup> century operation! The office is split into two halves, one of which is operated by Jersey Coastguard to monitor the large area over which they have search & rescue responsibility, and the other by Saint Helier VTS to enable them to control the VTS area & the Port itself. The Coast Guard station is manned 24/7 but often during night hours only one operator may be present to maintain watch both for the coastguard and for Saint Helier VTS. However, additional staff can be summoned at short notice, and this often happens when they are dealing with a non-routine incident.

The new station has windows which afford a view over the harbour approaches, but actually it is much more effective to watch the relevant TV screens (quite a few of which have night vision capability, so you can anyway see a lot more in the dark). There are cameras located all over the harbour, some with the ability to rotate the view and zoom in/out, so the overall view from the operator's desk is actually more comprehensive than any window.

This being a computerised environment, Jersey's maritime world is not only controlled here, but everything is also recorded for future reference. All VHF radio transmissions are logged & recorded. All radar and AIS returns are similarly retained. And pictures recorded by the various TV cameras located around the harbour are kept in video format. In short JC is able to access the detailed history of most things that have moved in the area under their control, and while there might appear at first glance to be a slightly undesirable "Big Brother" element to this, the safety benefits speak for themselves.. For example, suppose a boat is reported missing one evening after setting out in the morning. JC have the ability to access their VHF, radar & AIS records, to ascertain where and when the vessel was last located and using dedicated software (see below) would also be able to predict the current likely location of a boat drifting without power. Of course, the retrieval of all this data is time consuming and costly and is only likely to be actioned in a genuine emergency, but if the data were not available in the first place, the option would not exist. (However, one point to note is that JC's coverage of the East coast of the island is more limited than elsewhere).

Our discussions with JC personnel brought out some interesting points which are covered below, in no particular order: -

- JC have access to software which calculates the drift by current tide & wind of a boat, life raft or crew in the water from last known position and creates a search box for each for the Search And Rescue ("SAR") team. All of this information is displayed onscreen in a format very similar to a chart plotter. The system can be very successful in predicting the location of a casualty, but areas with difficult coastlines and currents can reduce its effectiveness .
- JC enjoy excellent cooperation with French SAR, but limited to some extent by language problems

- JC are very happy to receive transit reports from leisure boat owners sailing to/from the island. However it was interesting to learn that JC do not routinely follow up on transit reports that have not been closed. In other words if you forget to tell them that you have arrived in, say, Carteret they will not take any action unless there is some other input, such as a phone call from a shore-based relative saying that something is amiss. This underlines the importance for boat owners of always ensuring that there is someone ashore who knows about your plans and can raise the alarm as necessary.
- JC highlighted an oversight that is serially repeated by boat owners in difficulties when they call for help on VHF. Most GPS displays show a position in latitude & longitude on the live screen, but frequently this position is not the position of the boat but instead the position of the cursor on the screen. Nevertheless this is the vessel position often reported to JC. Obviously there is not much merit in sending the lifeboat to the cursor position!

All in all, this was a very interesting evening which all the committee enjoyed while at the same time learning a great deal, and we are grateful to JC for making the time to explain how their new station operates.

WHKS

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NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

Members who attended the AGM in November, or who read the updates on the Website, will know that it was agreed that the annual subscription would be increased, to £10.00 single and £16.00 joint membership, the first increase since the Association was formed 25 years ago. In fact, the subscription barely covers the price of the buffet provided at the AGM, and the cost of postage for those members who do not use email. Consequently, the Association runs at a deficit, which is not a satisfactory situation to be in.

To that end, the next few months will be spent encouraging members to change their standing orders, prior to 1st December 2017. **For those of you who already manage your banking on-line, it would be greatly appreciated if you would amend your standing order any time soon**, and advise the Treasurer when you have done so. Alternatively, a Standing Order renewal form is enclosed with this Newsletter for those who prefer traditional methods. This year, Membership Cards will not be sent out automatically, but only when members have made the change. For those paying cash, reminders will be sent as usual with the AGM notice in November.

The membership stands at 450, which is a drop of 12 since this time last year - 19 new members, and 31 resignations, the latter partly through people who no longer keep a boat, and also, unfortunately, those who never pay up or reply to communications and so are deleted after several months of silence. We

would also like to send our condolences to the families of two long-standing members who passed away during the year; Mr. Alan Bougeard and Mr Bob Viney.

The database shows the following numbers of members' boats in individual harbours:
Elizabeth Marina 53; Town Marina 40; La Collette 16:
The old harbours and cradles: 48.

One of the reasons for keeping such records is to be able to communicate with boat owners in the event of anything happening which may affect one of the harbours. **We would therefore once again ask those members who have not yet returned the "Members Update Form" (enclosed with this Newsletter) to send it back**, and also anyone whose boat, mooring or email address may have

changed in the last couple of years. I currently hold email addresses for 243 members (82 joint and 79 single) so there are still another 200 members out there who have not supplied an email address. Please note that your email address is never divulged to anyone, and all communications are sent as Blind Copy, in order to conform to Data Protection Rules.

Some of you may have noticed that the Treasurer's email address has changed - we now have one that is linked to the website address. It is admin@sthboa.co.uk
House flags and boat/car stickers are available at £10.00 and £0.50, respectively.

Christine Gill



YOUR COMMITTEE FOR 2017

 <p>Will Simpson, Chairman Tel: 07797 749250 "Flying Flynn" La Collette Marina</p>	 <p>Nick Wood, Vice Chairman Tel: 07797 786877 "Coriolis" St Helier Harbour</p>
 <p>Peter Donne Davis, Secretary Tel: 863765 "Midnight Blue" St Helier Marina</p>	 <p>Christine Gill, Treasurer/Members Tel: 720882 Between Boats</p>
 <p>Phil Carter Tel: 629916 "April Rose" La Collette Marina</p>	 <p>Matthew Clarke Tel: 07797 722754 "Lionheart" La Collette Marina</p>
 <p>Kevin Hennelly Tel: 853179 "Indybar" St Helier Harbour</p>	 <p>Peter Rose Tel: 07797 749522 "La Rose Sauvage" Elizabeth Marina</p>
 <p>Vic Walker Tel: 509943 "Natasha Alexandra" French Harbour</p>	

If you have any harbour or marina related issues, please do let us know. Contact one of the officers, or any committee member, or use the 'Contact Us' page on the website. We try to monitor the facilities regularly, but we can't be everywhere, so your feedback is important.

Also, don't forget, if you spot something untoward happening, do call Jersey Coastguard Boat Watch on 01534 447705, which is manned twenty-four hours every day, including weekends.

Members' Discounts

Make the most of your membership by taking advantage of the discounts kindly offered by these local firms on showing your membership card: -

Allied Traders Catering & Swimming Pool Division no longer offer a 10% discounts to members but instead you may qualify for their 'Allied Traders Privilege Card' which gives a 10% discount.

South Pier Marine offers a discount of 10% on all purchases above £10

These are valuable benefits of membership of the Association, so always carry your card – and tell your friends.