



St Helier Boat Owners Association

Minutes of the 30th Annual General Meeting held at St Helier Yacht Club on 26th November 2019 at 1930 hours.

Present	The Officers, Committee members and approximately 50 members.
In Attendance	Representing Ports of Jersey: Bill Sadler, Harbourmaster (BS).
Introduction	The Chairman, Will Simpson (WS), opened the meeting by welcoming members and BS who would answer questions directed through the chair during the open forum. He thanked the Yacht Club for their generosity in allowing the use the Club for the AGM & committee meetings throughout the year. He also pointed out the clubroom's emergency exits.
1. Apologies	Apologies had been received from Peter & Vicky Warren, Christine & Hugh Gill, Tony Olsen, David & Jan Ballingall, Laurence Carter, Kevin Hennelly, John Constantine, Nick Wood & Mike Stevens.
2. Minutes	WS said the minutes of the last AGM held on 20 th November 2018 had been available on the website, he proposed they be taken as read and they were approved on a proposition by A Manning, seconded by N Bailhache.
3. Matters Arising	There were no matters arising.
4. Chairman's Report	The Chairman read his report covering the main issues and activities dealt with during the year. His report is attached to & forms a part of these minutes. The Chairman's Report was accepted on a proposition by C Fairbain seconded by T Butcher.
5. Hon Treasurer/ Membership Secretary's Report	MP said he had been unable to give an accurate number for the membership last year, due to complications arising from the increase in subscriptions & there still remained some uncertainty. Despite sending a number of reminders, 39 were still paying at the old rate, 35 had not paid, 12 had resigned but still paid, 4 had paid twice & he was still receiving standing order payments for 2 deceased members. He said the only significant change in the accounts for year to 30 Sept 2019 was that 3 donations had been made, compared to only one in 2018, due to the concerns about lifeboat provision & he asked if there were any questions on the accounts, which were available on the website & copies had been placed on the chairs. WS said that the approximate number of members was 350 & he thanked MP for his work on the difficult task. The accounts were approved on a proposition by Nick Bailhache, seconded by P Hatter
6. Election of Officers	PDD took the chair & thanked WS for his hard work as Chairman, highlighting his emailed newsletters following each committee meeting, which had been well received. There being no further nominations, he declared WS re-elected to applause. WS then read the nominations for the remaining officers & committee members as follows:

	<p>Vice Chairman – N Wood Hon. Secretary – P Donne Davis Hon. Treasurer – Mark Peters.</p> <p>Committee Members: P Carter M Clarke G Gaudin K Hennelly P Rose V Walker</p> <p>There being no further nominations, WS declared that the above-mentioned were duly elected, to applause.</p>
7. Election of Independent Examiner.	WS said Penny Hatter had been proposed by Peter Donne Davis & seconded by P Rose & declared her elected.
8. Subscriptions	WS said the Committee's recommendation was that subscriptions for the year commencing 1/12/20 remain unchanged & this was agreed by a show of hands.
9. Donations	<p>WS said that following the JLA licencing, donations of £500 had been made to RNLI, JLA & CIAS this year, and the Committee recommendation to the meeting was that this be increased to £560 each to account for cost of living rise since the last increase.</p> <p>He asked if there were any alternative proposals & there being none, the recommendation was approved unanimously.</p>
10. Changes to Constitution and Rules	PDD said that no proposals had been received.
11. Open Meeting	<p>WS invited BS to come forward to answer questions. (responses in italics).</p> <p>Noting that a tax on red diesel was being raised again in the States, did anyone recall that mooring fees had been increased as an alternative some years ago? <i>WS said we could check the archives, but the committee would certainly be monitoring any States development. BS advised that for various reasons a fuel tax would not be good for Ports.</i></p> <p>Will the well used drying pad in St Helier marina be lost? Has the facility at Plouer been looked at? Would the loss affect the 5 star rating? Noted that the pad in Elizabeth was unsafe, due to the tidal flow. <i>BS: allowing contaminants to wash into the mud is no longer acceptable on ecological grounds. He had seen pictures of the Plouer pad, but the solution is more complex than it appears, requiring drainage to a holding tank under the pad, and pumping out and safe disposal arrangements, making it very costly. He added that the boat park could be used, but this was rejected due to the lift cost. WS promoted a suggested site at the north end of the old harbour, put forward by George Gaudin.</i></p> <p>Is there a solution to disposing of unused old fibreglass boats? <i>BS: Ports endeavour to find the owners. There dispose of some 10 a year, but it involves tricky work and can cost up to £2,000 a boat.</i></p> <p>Why has free short stay parking at Elizabeth terminal, New North Quay & La Folie slip been lost? The latter 2 being useful for delivering heavy items to boats in the old harbours. Also removal of 6 hour spaces south of Normans, which had been used by drying berth owners. This all appeared to be "a drip drip removal of service". <i>BS: this a</i></p>

	<p><i>complicated matter, some areas were perceived as being abused by commercial vehicles. The on-road parking by Normans is States run & Ports have no control. He would take the comments on board & review the situation.</i></p> <p>Peter Mourant's request that BS pass appreciation to the staff at the marina office for their friendly help & support to owners was applauded.</p> <p>Having fallen in the water whilst attempting to reach his dinghy on the Sth Pier pontoon & found it very hard to get out, can safety be improved? Another incident was quoted & action needed before a fatality occurs. <i>BS: Such incidents should be reported to him & would be taken seriously. WS said the committee would be working with Ports staff on a dinghy cull in March & he proposed to email members with the details, inviting those concerned to come along & share ideas.</i></p> <p>With the boat park security gates closed, where can where can a car & trailer be parked on weekdays after launching at La Collette slip? <i>BS: No easy solution as the area has very limited space. WS added his solution of using La Haule slip & then parking his trailer along side.</i></p> <p>How has a gin distillery & tourist attraction been permitted in the old sail loft when premises on Sth Pier were supposed to be reserved for marine traders? <i>BS: The premises have been vacant for 5 years with no interested businesses. A visitor centre would require change of use from Planning & no application has been made so far.</i></p> <p>Despite previous warnings, electric cables are still in constant use by boats in the French harbour. <i>BS: will have this checked & report back.</i></p> <p>Mooring fees having doubled over the last few years, what improvements are planned around the old harbours such as as to rails, steps & a supply of fresh water, as it is often difficult to access water from the holding pontoon? <i>BS: will check possibilities and report back, but noted that fees had been frozen for 3 years.</i></p> <p>There being no further questions, WS thanked BS for his contribution & led a round of applause.</p>
Termination	WS thanked everyone for attending & invited them to partake of the buffet. The meeting closed at 2040.

Addendum:

Chairman's Report 2019

Good Evening everybody, it is my pleasure to Welcome all Members who are here tonight to the 30th Annual General Meeting of the St Helier Boat Owners Association

I would also like to extend a special welcome to our guest this evening from Ports of Jersey, namely Bill Sadler who is our harbourmaster

He will answer questions directed through the chair during the open forum.

Before we get going, I would like to record our thanks to St Helier Yacht Club for allowing us to use its facilities this evening to host this meeting. Of course, we have no premises of our own and the Club has always been generous and very accommodating towards us, not only for the AGM, but also for our Committee meetings throughout the year.

Speaking of which I consider myself lucky to be supported by such an excellent committee. All the Committee members make valuable contributions in their own particular ways and appropriate to their individual ranges of background experience, and the Association would not be able to operate without their ongoing support and input. Thank you all.

To single out two of them...

The fact that this meeting has been properly convened with invitations going out to you all, that there is seating for us all here this evening, multiple copies of agendas, accounts and so on, loudspeaker? that there will be drinks and food from a buffet after the meeting, is entirely down to the good offices of Peter Donne Davis, and indeed he also produces the minutes and other records of all our meetings. For all this I thank him. It is much appreciated.

And the fact that we have Association Accounts to put before the meeting, and membership records, is very much down to the hard work of Mark Peters, our treasurer. As I think he will mention later, keeping abreast of membership records, and trying to sort out those of you who have still not updated your subscriptions, not to mention those who have not paid them at all, is very time consuming and often enough to make grown men cry like babes. Thank you Mark.

This year we bid farewell to Tim Scott-Warren as Independent Examiner. I would like to record our indebtedness to Tim who once again has assisted the Treasurer in producing and reviewing our annual accounts in this role. Tim has undertaken this function for a great many years now, and 2019 was his last year in this position. On checking back into the archives, we found that he was originally voted into this role at the 1997 AGM, so that is 22 years of checking and preparing the final accounts. We really are very grateful for his good work & commitment over this time and I would like to record our appreciation WITH A ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

Penny Hatter has very kindly agreed to stand for election to this role, for which she is uniquely qualified by virtue of her long service until 2013 as Treasurer of the Association. Thank You Penny!

This has been a relatively quiet year for the association. The committee has met regularly (excluding High season when we all go boating) and ahead of these meetings, I almost always sit down with the Marine Leisure Manager, for an exchange of news & views on what is happening in the harbours. As you are almost certainly aware, Simon Porritt was appointed Marine Leisure Manager last year but sadly he is unable to join us this evening due to a prior commitment.

After each committee meeting we produce a newsletter for the members which is distributed by email.

I will now turn to my review of current events in and around our harbour. You will be pleased to hear that I have less to say than in previous years, as it has not been the busiest of years.

SEAPLANES

With the exception of an article in the JEP in July, we understand that little has been heard from the promoters of this idea during the summer, and Bill Sadler has confirmed to me that this is still the case. The official position is that proving test flights are earmarked to happen during the Spring but at the present time there does not seem to have been much evidence of movement. Watch this space!

ALBERT PIER PROJECT & RECONFIGURATION OF ST HELIER MARINA

I am going to take these two topics together as they are closely interrelated. As we understand it, by the end of the winter the Albert Pier will have acquired a new pontoon running along its length from approximately where the Pilot Boats & Jersey Lifeboat now reside, down to where the existing No 5

pontoon is located. In due course there are plans to add fingers to allow for optimal berthing capacity, and the intention is apparently to use this for smaller commercial vessels which will include charter ribs, and it is also here that seaplanes (if any) will operate from. In the shorter term, however, this has been identified as useful spare capacity providing “wriggle room” for the St Helier Marina refurbishment. In other words, when that project starts to get under way (currently anticipated next autumn/Winter) it will provide spare capacity to relocate vessels temporarily displaced from St Helier Marina.

Incidentally, a recent aerial illustration of this project, published in the JEP & elsewhere, caused some excitement among various eagle-eyed members who noticed that the marina layout looked nothing like the draft plans, and that the old harbour had once again acquired a lock gate to enable it to be permanently flooded. In other words, an exercise in rubbing salt into old wounds! For the prevention of confusion, it is probably worth mentioning that the offending illustration apparently dated to back to the proposals that were muted about 10 years ago, and as such was a rather unhelpful Red Herring!

BERTH & MOORING HOLDER ISSUES

The Storm Gate at Elizabeth Marina will be inoperative during this winter, following the significant damage that it suffered during the 2018/19 winter. Meanwhile the tidal gates have been proving troublesome, resulting in them being locked in the up position at least twice this autumn, which of course then results in much more restricted access for boats than is the norm. Indeed, berth holders have had to seek clearance from St Helier VTS before entering or exiting. A number of members have commented that these restrictions are a significant hindrance to their boating.

The locked tidal gates have also caused some impressive overfalls on a rising spring tide, accompanied by significant water turbulence.

A number of other minor issues have arisen....

- Fuelling berth at Elizabeth
- Silting at Elizabeth
- Oil disposal La Collette
- Parking (question later)
- Dinghies (Question later)

Not all of these issues, if taken in isolation, amount to a particularly big deal, but what is apparent from where I sit is that quite a few of you feel that you have something to grumble about. The point I would like to make is that this evening you have the Harbourmaster attending our AGM, and I encourage those of you with views to not be shy about airing them so that he has a chance to react & respond. After all, you are all about to receive the benefit of the first increase in Harbour fees for several years so what better time for an open exchange of opinions!

BOAT SHOW

The 2020 Jersey Boat Show will be once again be occurring in the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, from Saturday 2nd May 2020 to Monday 4 May 2020.

Following the 2019 Boat show, your Association has suggested to organisers, and indeed they have readily agreed, that the event provides an excellent opportunity for PoJ to reach out & meet its leisure clients. Accordingly, we understand that an invitation will be issued for all mooring & berth holders, not just in St Helier but also in the outlying harbours, for light refreshments in the PoJ marquee at the show with a view to meeting members of their team and discussing topical issues. Currently we

believe that this is scheduled for around midday on Monday 4th May and we encourage all boat owners to take this chance to meet with PoJ.

BOAT PARK

We are aware that the Boat Park has been the subject of a recent review, and the flavour of the feedback reaching us is that we can expect that in future access to this area this will become more regulated. The logic is that this is a working industrial site where appropriate safety equipment – hard hats, Hi-Viz clothing etc, - should be used by all, and where casual access is not desirable. The suggestion is that in future those of us boat owners wishing to get to our boats in the boat park will need to do so with the knowledge & approval of the company lifting and /or working on the boat, so that you are covered by their insurance policy.

These proposals are only at a relatively early stage of development at this time but as things progress we will make it our business to keep you informed. Your Chairman is one of those who likes to go boat fondling when his boat is in the boat park, so I for one will be motivated to ensure that there is a workable balance struck between good regulation and acceptable access for boat owners.

DONATIONS TO AIR SEARCH & LIFEBOATS

The Association annually donates money to our local voluntary marine rescue organisations, namely the Channel Islands Air Search, the RNLI lifeboat and the independent Jersey Lifeboat Association. At this meeting each year the Association determines, by a vote of members present, to **determine** these donations and the amounts to be paid.

This year the committee propose that we will donate £560 to each of them which includes allowance for the increase in the cost of living in recent years.

You will shortly be asked, a little further down the agenda, to approve this proposal – or otherwise. I will say no more until we reached that stage of the agenda

BREXIT & FRENCH CUSTOMS & RED DIESEL

When I first attended an AGM as Chairman in 2017 I commented that it was premature to analyse the likely effect of Brexit on our boating activities. In 2018 I expressed surprise that we still did not have any clear guidelines but recognised that things would clarify very shortly. Yet here we are in 2019 and nothing has changed, except that it seems to me that the less said, the better. Let's talk about it when we know what there is to talk about.

DUTY ON MARINE FUEL

Nothing is ever new under the sun, and once again, our government is looking for ways to produce more revenue. Some of you have noticed that at least one local politician has very recently re-introduced the idea that duty should levied on sales of marine fuel. He has suggested 20p duty on a litre of marine fuel, and says it will raise £168,000. That sounds like an awful lot of trouble and strife to raise a fairly insignificant sum in the context of the island's budget deficit.

Many of you will recall that this topic arose some 13-14 years ago and was finally dropped in 2006. At that time, the then Head of the British Marine Federation, no less, commented that "the States should be investing in a growing maritime industry, not strangling it with tax. You should be promoting Jersey as a great place for the boating visitor"

Those comments remain as pertinent today as they were then – in fact even more so because of the very successful growth of visitor traffic, encouraged in recent times by the weak pound and our sensibly priced fuel.

I can see only one benefit from such a tax. Whenever I visit the refuelling berth in the summer I seem to go to the back of a long queue of jolly French matelots over for the day & waiting to fill up! What a great way to make the queue disappear, probably to Guernsey!

But actually, not even that works, because of course I would then find myself at the back of an even longer queue, in St Peter Port, consisting of all the aforesaid Jolly French Matelots, plus many you lot, as we all head off to Guernsey to avoid the local fuel duties leaving the Treasurer of the States wondering why his £168,000 of marine fuel duty is accumulating so very slowly!! Not to mention his reduced GST receipts from the shops, chandlers, boat yards, pubs, bars, & restaurants that all the visitors used to frequent!

One hopes that common sense will swiftly prevail and that this ill-advised initiative will suffer the ignominious fate that it deserves. However, one should never underestimate the ability of almost all governments to simultaneously shoot the goose that is laying the golden eggs, while also shooting itself in the foot, and we all need to keep a close watch on how this develops.

That concludes what I have to say this evening. Thank you for listening.

Will Simpson