

Dart Harbour Communities Group

Minutes of Meeting held 16th March 2021 @ 7.30

Meeting held on Zoom

<u>Present</u>	Mike Pearey (MP)	Ashprington PC (Chairman)
	Nigel Mortimer (NM)	S.Devon AONB
	Adam Davidson (AD)	S.Devon AONB
	Geoff Holland (HM)	Dart Harbourmaster
	Pam Thompson (PT)	Ashprington PC
	Lynne. Maurer (LM)	Kingswear PC
	Graham Anderson (GA)	Dittisham.
	Marion Adams (MA)	Totnes
	Brian Deakin (BD)	SG Boating Assoc.
	Chris Moore (CM)	SG Boating Assoc.
	David Wells (DW)	Dartmouth TC
	Graham Webb (GW)	Dartmouth TC
	Phil Charlesworth	Dartmouth & Kingswear Soc
	Julian Distin (JD)	DH Board Rep.
	Jeremy Rawlings (JR)	DH Board Rep.
	Sue Pudduck (SP)	Secretary
	Linda Maby (LM)	Clerk Cornworthy PC
	Charlie Pritchard Williams (CPW)	Clerk Dartmouth TC
	Julian Williams (JW)	Guest presenter: SG Cycle Path
<u>Apologies</u>	Ben Piper (BP)	Totnes TC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action ongoing: Boat Stickers: Reps to communicate the importance of having a boat sticker so that unnecessary search and rescue events are avoided if an unmanned dinghy is found adrift.

Action ongoing: Neighbourhood Plans: Representatives are requested to make sure that their councils are aware of, and make reference to, the Dart Harbour Policies in Local Plans or other vision statements.

Action ongoing: Investigate options for dredging at Totnes (HM).

New Action: Circulate contact list to members, and contact Stoke Gabriel, Berry Pomeroy and Galmpton PCs concerning organising a Rep. (SP)

New Action: Organise a river trip for familiarising & raising awareness of group members (Priority to new members) (HM/MP/SP)

New Action: All Reps are encouraged to promote the Totnes to SG Cycle Path scheme through their councils or organisations, including highlighting the petition (*at the link*) (ALL)

New Action: Set up meeting with SW water about the water quality, including their combined drain project. (GA)

New Action: Organise a brief for DHCG by SWW on their Combined Overflow Drain / water quality project (MP).

Minutes from meeting held 12th November 2019 were agreed.

Matters Arising: In view of the long period since the last meeting because of Covid-19, it was accepted that, where possible, actions had been carried out and there was nothing outstanding to bring forward to this meeting.

Agenda Items

1. Welcome and introductions.

The Chairman, MP, welcomed new and returning members to the group. He gave a very brief summary of actions or events over the last 18 months, including the County Wildlife Survey work at Fleet Mill Marsh. It was agreed to circulate a list of members. (attached). It was also agreed to contact Stoke Gabriel, Berry Pomeroy and Galmpton to encourage those parishes to send representatives.

Action: Circulate list to members, and contact Stoke Gabriel, Berry Pomeroy and Galmpton PCs. Action: SP.

2. Captain Geoff Holland. Background and experience

MP introduced the new HM, Capt. Geoff Holland to the Group. The HM has only been in post for a few weeks. He gave a brief resume of his career (East Anglia; keen on sailing and wildlife; Hutchinson Ports; Tilbury Docks). He is looking forward to working in a port that is less commercial and more customer focused. He sees his role as delivering the Harbour Board's objectives, including protecting the environment, improving the facilities for yachtsmen on the river, and water quality, for which the Noss Marina development offers an opportunity to increase pumping-out stations for boat owners and thus improve water quality.

GH is keen to work with Parishes and Town Councils to ensure that the objectives of DH are embedded in Neighbourhood Plans and that the riparian communities are included in Dart Harbour planning.

Issues raised with HM:

DHCG River Trip - HM would be happy to reinstate the awareness-raising River Trip that had to be cancelled last year. It was hoped that this could include a visit to Noss Marina. This offer is much appreciated. **Action: HM / MP / SP.**

Disabled Access: the DHNA have recently completed a public consultation on accessibility, which is currently limited. Improving access will be challenging, and is a priority. All will engage with this work.

3. Totnes to Stoke Gabriel cycle path. (JW)

JW outlined the ambitious plan to create a cycle path between Totnes and Stoke Gabriel, using improved existing lanes and/or newly constructed pathways. The project has attracted favourable media attention and JW showed a clip from BBC Spotlight. Martin Oldridge is the project lead, and they have the services of experienced ex-Sustrans campaigner and cycle path consultant John Grimshaw.

The aim of Phase 1 is to get to Planning approval stage by the end of 2021, at an estimated cost of £10K. Phase 2 would require an estimated 350k for construction, and could be completed by 2024. If full funding was not achievable by 2024 the construction could be done in two stages. There is some public money available and the scheme is on the DCC project list. MA said that she thought that Totnes Council would be very supportive of the scheme and that the Council has a fundraiser who might be able to help. The AONB would support the plan provided there was minimal disturbance to wild life. MP pointed out to the group the potential for this project to lead to development of a wider network of Dart estuary cycle paths, eventually covering the whole estuary, bringing improved healthy / sustainable transport and improved access to the countryside. There would also be some air quality and wider economic benefits.

<https://www.change.org/p/devon-county-council-cycle-path-between-stoke-gabriel-and-totnes>

Action: All Reps are encouraged to promote the scheme through their councils or organisations, including highlighting the petition (*at the link*) ALL

4. AONB Update Nigel Mortimer (NM) and Adam Davison (AD)

The AONB reported their concern about the impact on the countryside and the river when lock-down is lifted. Previous easing of lockdowns has resulted in a large increase in the number of visitors and a rise of reported incidents of anti social behaviour. Initiatives to combat this include updating the Countryside Code. People are being encouraged to plan their visits, so that they remove all waste, ensure safe use of BBQs, keep dogs under control, etc. Councils are putting into place more refuse collections.

A number of group members similarly expressed considerable concern about managing the impact of anticipated visitor numbers.

The AONB also reported on a DEFRA R&D project for carbon capture at Sharpham. They have also been working on brand development: there are opportunities for members of the Stakeholder groups to get involved and anyone interested should contact Adam, adam.davison@southdevonaonb.org.uk

5. Members introductions and reports.

Dittisham (GA)

There have been on-going issues around the pontoon and litter. There are also far more kayakers and paddle boarders than in previous years. GA extended an invitation to HM to attend a Council meeting.

On the upside, Dittisham has planted 100 trees and there has been a far greater incidence of wild life observed.

DH Board Member (JR)

JR has recently joined the DHNA board. He has significant experience of the Exe Estuary, both as a sailor, forum member and environmentalist. On the Board he will have responsibility for Environment and Safety.

DH Board Member (JD) - reported that there has been a change of 50% of Board members during this last year. The new format for meetings will be for fewer full meetings and more sub groups. The Annual ("AGM") meeting has been moved from December to Early Spring.

Stoke Gabriel Boating Association (BD,CM)

Both members attended as Chris Moore is about to take over as Commodore. SGBA now has 800 members. Stoke Gabriel Council is currently short of Councillors which, hopefully, will be resolved in the May elections.

Stoke Gabriel is also preparing for the influx of visitors. There are concerns about parking on the foreshore including people who park and leave their car to go boarding. There is general concern about river visitors not knowing the "Rule of the Road".

Water quality was discussed and it was agreed that GA will set up a meeting with S.W. Water.

Action. GA to set up meeting with SW water.

Dartmouth TC member Responsible for Parks and Open Spaces and Water Activities (DW).

The main issue in Dartmouth is access onto the water. The Higher Ferry Slip is far from ideal given the number of people who launch from there and shared space with ferry operations. The Board are working on how to make it safer and more accessible but there are very limited options. A survey of river access areas will be carried out this year. The Board work with the ferry regarding H&S operations.

Ashprington PC (PT).

Residents are very concerned about the expected increase in visitors, traffic and littering when the holidaymakers are allowed to return. It is hoped that waste can be collected more frequently.

An Amphibian Migration Route has been established in Tuckenhay: contact MP if you are interested in setting one up.

Totnes TC and Totnes Boating Assoc. (MA)

MA raised the issue of silting at the south end of the island: this topic was also raised at the last meeting. There was a suggestion that the silt could possibly be used to shore up banks elsewhere in the estuary. HM explained how expensive dredging has become because an MMO license has to be obtained. Further investigation by HM is required.

Action; On-going investigation (HM)

6. SWW water quality project on over-flow drains.

The Chair drew the attention of the group to the email that had been circulated. He will try to organise a SWW brief on this at a future meeting.

Action. MP to organise a brief by SWW.

7. MCZ.

The DH is still waiting for further information on regulations in the newly designated MCZ.

8. AoB

The group were informed that Penny Johns, Senior Administrator was retiring in April. MP thanked Penny for all the work she had done to support the DHCG and wished her well in her retirement.

9. Date and Venue for next meeting

It is hoped that this can be the annual river trip. Itinerary, and tides to be investigated.

Action; HM, MP, SP

For Information:

To contact any Parish/Town Clerk on river issues, full contact details are available on <https://www.southhams.gov.uk/contactyourparishclerk>

Minutes of this meeting are held on <https://www.dartharbour.org/about-dart-harbour/port-management/stakeholder-groups/>

Mike Pearey

Chairman

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The Govt Environmental Incident Hotline number is 0800 807060

Attachment: Members contact details.