

Dart Harbour Communities Group

Minutes of Meeting held 14th March 2019. At Greenway House, courtesy of
Tim Bumby, NT.

<u>Present</u>	Mike Pearey (MP)	Ashprington PC (Chairman)
	N. Mortimer (NM)	S.Devon AONB
	T. Bumby (TB)	National Trust, Kingswear to Coleton
	M. Cooper (HM)	Dart Harbourmaster
	S. Seeley (SS)	Ashprington PC
	L. Maurer (LM)	Kingswear PC
	R. Searle (RS)	Kingswear PC
	P Charlesworth	Dartmouth & Kingswear Soc
	J. Distin (JD)	DH Board Rep
	Sue Pudduck (SP)	Secretary
<u>Apologies</u>	Rob Lyons	Dartmouth TC
	Tony Whitty	Totnes TC
	James Dodd	DH Board rep
	DH Leisure Group.	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action All - Support to DHCG. The Chair would like to remind parishes that they are encouraged to both contribute to the agenda and feedback on activity or outcomes, or just report their thoughts and observations. Without this engagement the group cannot be fully representative, nor can it properly fulfil it's role within the Dart Harbour Trust Port organisation. All parishes are encouraged to send a representative to future meetings.

Action NM - support for Beach Cleans. NM to pass details of **Till the Coast is Clear**, who can provide their boat for litter collection around the estuary.

Post meeting note: Insurance for Beach Cleans (discussed last meeting) can be accessed from Surfers against Sewage.

Action - Police Community Engagement Policy (Agenda item 1).The Chair welcomes feedback from parishes / representatives on Police Community Engagement. Chair to compose and circulate a letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner to express our disappointment that the police were unable to attend this meeting, and seek clarification on the apparent cessation of community liaison activity.

Post Mtg note: the Chair has submitted on online form to the Police and Crime Commissioner reporting our disappointment that a Police rep was not available, and seeking clarification on police policy for community engagement. A PCC case officer is investigating.

Action – Reporting Crime (Agenda item 1). In addition to calling the police, representatives should encourage their groups / parishioners to report water crime directly to DH.

Action – Boat Stickers (Agenda item 1). Reps to communicate the importance of having a boat sticker so as unnecessary search and rescue events are avoided if an unmanned dinghy is found adrift.

Action: Neighbourhood Plans (Agenda item 3)- Representatives are requested to make sure that their councils are aware of, and make reference to, the Dart Harbour Policies.

Action All – DHNA Review of Mooring Policy (Agenda item 5). HM is seeking inputs from all on the upcoming DHNA review of Mooring Policy

Action All – Ash Die back. (Agenda item 6) Please ensure your Council is aware of the continued spread of ash die-back and is both considering and monitoring the issue.

Post Mtg note: See attached the one page brief from DCC, which has also been sent to Parish Clerks. Essentially it reminds landowners of their responsibility for the safety of their trees.

For Information:

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

Minutes from meeting held on Wednesday 26th September 2018 were agreed.

Matters Arising - SHDC Recycling; confusion about recycling discussed at the previous meeting had been followed up with SHDC, and more information on their revised recycling scheme is due soon. There are challenges in creating a system that meets both the needs of domestic and commercial users but there will shortly be a government review (after Brexit is settled!).

Action: Details of Till the Coast is Clear to follow. NM

Further Information post meeting; Insurance for Beach Cleans (discussed last meeting) can be accessed from Surfers against Sewage.

Agenda Items

1. Invitation to Police to update on Riparian Crime & Policing Issues

The group were disappointed that despite extending an invitation, the Police had not taken up this opportunity to reach out to the parishes and towns along the Dart. It was felt by the group that this type of partnership could achieve much. The HM covered the topic from the perspective of DHNA. He meets with Sgt. Ian Simmons 2-3 times a year. It was noted that Sgt Simons is about to retire , which might affect this liaison. DH also compiles statistics for the police and these are invaluable as they provide a clear indication of trends. Most crime on the river is minor theft of fuel or the unauthorised borrowing of ribs. However, there have been a couple of instances of theft to order of more expensive craft. DH provide a good point of contact to report theft as often the location of thefts reported are not coordinated by the police in time to allow intervention on organised crime. DH also provides a good contact point both for the MMO to report illegal fishing or the Border Agency to report suspicious activity.

The DH Volunteers no longer operate, but river staff are often available to follow up concerns phoned in. DH are intending to put in CCTV to cover security and speeding. There is some match funding available to local organisations for the installation of CCTV, and the HM has further details.

The HM emphasized how important it is that all vessels display a DH sticker. These are free for tenders. Without a sticker, if a boat is found free floating without passengers, it can initiate a full search for casualties.

Actions:

- **Chair to compose and circulate a letter for comment, to the Crime Commissioner to express the disappointment regarding lack of liaison and co-operation with the DH Communities Group.**
- **Representatives to encourage their residents to report water crime directly to DH.**
- **Reps to communicate the importance of having a boat sticker.**

2. AoNB Update on Management Plan Review. (NM)

The updated AoNB Management Plan is not yet available.

Action: NM to update at next meeting

3. Neighbourhood Planning

Some riparian Parishes are formulating a Neighbourhood Plan. It was pointed out that smaller parishes could form partnerships to make the task more manageable. It was also pointed out that although NPs take quite a time to get approval, emerging plans could be beneficial to decision making and ensuring the residents have some influence over planning. Dartmouth has an informal group currently setting up the Neighbourhood planning.

The HM asked all parishes and TCs writing a plan to make reference to the DH Policies and evidence a good correlation between the two. He asked the representatives to ensure that they consider all Dart Harbour related issues in

their plans, such as employment, use of temporary pontoons, dispersal of rubbish, transport for fishing, recreation opportunities tourism and other socio-economic items.

Action: Neighbourhood Plans - Representatives are requested to make sure that their councils are aware of, and make reference to, the Dart Harbour Policies.

4. MMO and Devon Marine Park Update: HM.

Devon Marine Park - The area for the Devon Marine Park is situated off-shore from Plymouth. At present, the HM believes that there will not be much impact on the Dart Estuary.

MMO. Consultation on the Marine Plan - The HM had attended a workshop on the Development of the Marine Plan run by the MMO. They are keen to encourage community engagement. Details of the plan are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-planning-iteration-3-engagement-for-the-north-east-north-west-south-east-and-south-west-marine-plan-areas>

Possibly the section of most interest to Councils as it covers the socio-economic factors, can be found at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/769139/South West - Social.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/769139/South_West_-_Social.pdf)

The Dartmoor National Parks Plan won't necessarily cover the Dart Estuary, but the impact of planning decisions higher up the river can impact on water quality in the estuary and conditions could be imposed by planners such as the treatment of water entering the River Dart.

DH now writes directly to developers to encourage them to involve the MMO at an early stage. Often too little detail is supplied with the application and Planners do not always recognise the requirements of the MMO.

Development at Dolphin Boatyard is delayed as requests for the species surveys were submitted too late.

The HM emphasized the importance of all Plans correlating to insure that marine planning and land planning were driven by the same indicators and were sustainable and were formulated by stakeholder engagement.

Action: Reps to make sure their Councils are made aware of MMO Planning developments as it is important to engage at an early stage with their planning.

5. DH Update (HM)

Speeding appears to be less of an issue and the HM put this down to more education amongst boat owners re the environmental damage wakes can cause. As it is so difficult producing the evidence needed to proceed with a prosecution, river users and locals are asked to take photos where possible, or make note of

habitual offenders. As DH is the licensing body for the river, they do have some power to remove privileges / benefits of moorings, landing permissions etc.

Action: Parishes are asked to continue to remind river users of the 6 knot speed limit, and advertise HM efforts to curb speeding on the river, including – ultimately – the risk of prosecution.

There has been an on-going plea from Totnes Boating Association re dredging of the river. Now river boats have shallower drafts, there is less natural disturbance of silt. Removal of the spoil is the major factor that stops any dredging. There are solutions being investigated like spraying the spoil onto fields as fertiliser or making it into blocks for river construction. DH now carries out on-going digital surveys of the riverbed. This data will provide information to gauge long-term change. The HM pointed out that if the Estuary didn't operate as a Harbour, there would be no money for conservation.

The temporary pontoons will be re-instated this summer season. As well as providing extra access to shore facilities, they can be used as a floating slip.

The Harbour Authority is about to start their review of the Moorings Policy. They will be looking at the visual impact of moorings on the Dart, anchoring versus providing moorings, installation of "sea bins " where there is a natural collection of water-borne rubbish. The Community Group are encouraged to seek out opinions from their residents and feed them back to DH.

Action: All. HM is seeking inputs from all on the upcoming DHNA review of Mooring Policy

6. Environmental Issues on the Dart. NM.

NM made a plea to Parishes and TCs to get involved in the Pacific Oyster survey. This could include beach surveys and also shorelines surveys by kayakers. Pacific Oysters are farmed North and East of Greenway and these areas do not require mapping. Pacific Oysters are rarely found on open coast. Their position can be marked by GPS and then NM would compile the data. NM can provide training.

The IFCA (Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities) consultation is out for comment.

The University of Plymouth is still seeking ideas for environmental science research projects. The HM made a plea that ideas were forward thinking and, importantly, focussed on how to improve the River. He suggested that they were forwarded from the group to the Harbour Authority for evaluation by the Board. Ideas suggested are: Dredging, salt marshes, water and sediment data, boat algae blooms, a drone flight over Sharpham Marshes to inspect the impact of the Hole in the Wall.

Action: Parishes please seek volunteers for the Pacific Oyster project. Names direct to Nigel Mortimer at the AONB Office, Follaton House: 01803 8613

Action: Suggestions for short-term environmental science projects to MP or HM

Action: NM will check that the draft AONB Management Plan is being sent out to ADRUC , Commercial Users Group, DHCG and to the HM.

Ash die-back. MP outlined the way in which ash die-back (*Chalara fraxinea*) is likely to affect South Devon, where about 20% of all our large trees are ash. After the last meeting he had circulated all members with a paper on Ash Die Back. Since then a fatality caused by an oak tree blown onto the highway has prompted a flurry of activity by DCC Highways, who are now being more very pro-active in encouraging Parishes and towns, and especially landowners, to inspect the ash along Highways, footpaths and green lanes.

Action All. Ensure your Council is aware of, and is addressing, the issue.

Post Mtg note: See attached the one page brief from DCC, which has also been sent to Parish Clerks. Essentially it reminds landowners of their responsibility for the safety of their trees.

7. AoB

DH is re-launching a scheme similar to the Young Champions Award. When it is running, each Stakeholder Group will have the opportunity to send a representative to sit on the judging panel.

Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be a river trip looking at a different section of the river than we covered last year. Planned for sometime in June, possible dates will be circulated within the next two weeks.

The Chairman thanked Tim Bumby and the National Trust for their hospitality.

Mike Pearey

Chairman

mikeandyo@gmail.com

01803 732629

The Govt Environmental Incident Hotline number 0800 807060