

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL/COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WATERSIDE COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 5.00 PM

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL (CORONAVIRUS ACT Part 2020 1 Section 78 Regulations 2 – 17)

PRESENT

Stephen Collis - Chairman, CBC
Fiona McDonald - Neighbourhood Manager, CBC
Petra Palfreyman - Town Clerk, WMTC
Cllr John Akker - WMTC
Cllr Julie Baker - WMTC
Cllr Peter Banks - WMTC
Cllr David Bragg - WMTC
Cllr Bob Jenkins - WMTC
Cllr Carl Powling - WMTC
Cllr Sylvia Wargent - WMTC
Cllr Sophie Weaver - WMTC
Cllr Patricia Moore - CBC
Tim Wood - Commodore, WMYC
Richard Taylor - Mersea Harbour Protection Trust & WMYC
Rachel Ramsay - Club Manager, Dabchicks
Rick Boreham - LOM West Mersea Lifeboat
Martin Wade - Chairman, West Mersea Lifeboat
Peter Rudlin - Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator
Richard Haward - Oysterman
Maureen Phillips - Houseboat Mojo
Charlotte Jeffery
Ian Clarke
Will Bixby
Geoff Pearce
Elizabeth Willey
John Kent
Isaac Ferneyhough - HMCG

20/001 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Borough Councillor John Jowers and Rebecca Bromley, Anglian Water.

20/002 REPORT ON BATHING WATER QUALITY

One result has been published for Mersea so far this year. Mersea was sampled on 29 July 2020 and recorded <10 intestinal enterococci and e coli / 100 ml sample. <10 for each bacteria is the best result available – as the bacteria cannot be accurately counted below this figure.

Bathing water sample results can be classified as excellent (the best) through to good, sufficient, and poor. These individual results are then used to calculate an overall classification – the classifications can be one of the same four terms as used above.

These results would fall into the ‘excellent’ range of the bathing water sample classifications. Recording <10 bacteria/100 ml of the water sample taken, is the best possible result for a bathing water sample – the labs cannot accurately record zero so the lowest number of bacteria they will report is <10.

You cannot get a better result than <10 cells/ 100ml for each of the bacteria sampled.

Covid19

Fiona McDonald gave the Committee an overview on Councils response to Covid19 since March 2020.

- Since mid-March Covid19, has changed the way the Council has been able to operate, there have been different priorities, which have included helping people within the Community
- We have had staff who have been shielding, some can work from home, while others who are front line staff have not been able to
- This like many other organisations has caused the Council to prioritise works
- We have had to staff front lines services like bin collections as a priority with other works, and other areas were sometimes left or had a reduced service
- At the beginning of Covid19 there was daily and weekly information that the Central Government was issuing that the Council had to respond to, this took time and resources
- Our open spaces within the Borough including the waterside areas had unprecedented usage which brought problems throughout the Borough mainly on the amount of rubbish
- An evening rubbish collection of street bins and bins near the beach huts has been put in place to help alleviate the pressure on the bins
- The Council has had to act quickly at times to resolve issues or put measures in that Central Government have requested, these have been uncharted times for us, we have no book on the Council bookshelves saying Pandemic

Floating Pontoon

Concerns about the pontoon at low tide lying at angle

- We believe the cause of the problem is the props on boats being left in engage when moored on the hammerhead have been washing away the seabed leaving a hollow under the pontoon
- This has resulted at low tide the pontoon resting in the hollow and the pontoon lays at angle rather than flat
- This puts a stain on some of the connectors
- A meeting with a specialist has taken place and several proposals have been suggested that the Council are looking into
- One of the suggestions will be to install metal shuttering along the front of the pontoon intervals then put concrete sections between them to form a barrier and then with spoil in front of the new barrier be put behind the barrier to level the area under the pontoon
- For this work to be undertaken: -
 - We need to obtain the money to undertake the work
 - Gain permissions from the following organisations to undertake the work
 - Mersea Haven who own the water
 - Obtain Planning Permission
 - Consent from Environment Agency
 - Natural England
 - Marine Management Organisation
- This is not going to be a quick turnaround due to: -
 - Obtain money to undertake the works
 - Going through procurement of work
 - Obtaining Consents
- The works may not be able to be undertaken until Spring next year
- The work could take two to four weeks depending on the tide
- Pontoon could have restricted access or none for that period
- Stephen Collis will email everyone at the meeting about the above

Speeding Watercraft

- The Marine Police, has a dedicated officer for our area
- The Council and residents have worked with the Marine Police
- They report incidents to the Police and take photographs and forward them to the Police who have stored them a data base. This has come in useful when boats have been stopped, they can prove that this is not an isolated incident and the fine at court has been heavier
- Email address for the Marine Police is: marineu@essex.police.uk

- There are two Court cases this Friday for speeding offences
- The Council is working with the Marine Police on a possible solution to speeding boats around West Mersea and the River Colne this could be the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders
- PSPO can give on the spot fines rather than taking people to court
- For a PSPO we need to hear from organisations who attended the meeting regarding the problem they are experiencing on the water. **Please could we have the information by Friday 23 October**
- With this information an application can be made to Senior Management Team at CBC to take this forward
- Concerns were raised about swimmers swimming off shingle beach and could the speed limit in the area be reduced. Mr Bird owns the beach and the water and could be asked to undertake this.
 - The Coastguard had concerns about the change of speed limits which could be quite confusing
 - The Chairman asked if there was proposal for this that information be sent to him so he could take guidance from CBC Solicitor
 - Signage was asked for along the beach explaining the rules about fires and guidance on swimming. It was explained that this was not practical, and the Chairman would look to see what could be put on the Council web site regarding this

Pontoon Management

- The pontoon is becoming busier and busier, due to Covid19
- CBC is considering applying for a Public Spaces Protection Order for the pontoon
- What we need from groups and organisations at this meeting is to write to us regarding the concerns on the pontoon,
 - from problems with boats mooring,
 - to deck chairs on the pontoon
 - should be reviewing how boats should be moored on the pontoon
 - use the hammerhead
 - **Please could we have the information by Friday 23 October**
- With the new rules the PSPO can then enforce them
- For the PSPO to work would there be a willing volunteer to help Police the pontoon
- CBC would look to obtain accreditation for people to be able to enforce the PSPO they would need to undertake training to do this
- Cllr Powling said there would be people who would be willing to volunteer to help manage the pontoon
- Councillor Moore asked if on the Visit Colchester website, the reference of crabbing on the pontoon could be removed, to stop promoting it when people cannot crab on it at present due to Covid19. The Chairman said that we would look into this
- Fran French asked for more permanent metal signs to be made up for the pontoon saying "Keyworkers and boat users only"
- It was asked could the local shops be asked not to sell crabbing equipment while the pontoon is closed. CBC to look into this

20/004 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- If Covid19 restrictions are going to be with us for longer can a review of the opening and closing of toilets be considered by WMTC, as visitors are using bushes etc
- Coast Road toilets will be extensively refurbished from 5 October and will be closed for 6 weeks. WMTC are also hoping to be able to refurbish Fairhaven toilets by next Spring.
- Social Distancing is not always adhered to could signage go up about this. Central Government is promoting the guidelines and individuals should be taking for responsibility to adhere to them
- Ian Clark indicated that there is need of maintenance works to the boardwalk on Coast Road.
 - The surface of the board walk has worn.
 - The service between path in Coast Road and the start of the board walk needs repair for its difficult for a wheelchair to use
 - The end of the boardwalk near the beach the sand is encroaching on the area and needs to be cleared back
 - West Mersea Town Council is aware of the above
- Path at the end of Broomhills Road, has eroded and difficult for wheelchairs to use. CBC to investigate
- Richard Taylor reported that during winter of 21/22 the Recharging Works will be undertaken

- Richard Hayward had concerns regarding the New Red Route and asked if there was any consultation about it. There was information on this and the red route is in operation from 1 April to 31 October.
- The Red Route is that Traffic Officers and Camera Cars are able to issue fines if there is a contravention
- Richard Hayward was concerned about the parking bays and disabled areas not being in the right place. Cllr Carl Powling said he would speak with Richard about this.

20/005 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be confirmed.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 6.45pm.

Minutes prepared by Mr Stephen Collis, CBC.