

Harbour Board
Meeting Room, Port Administration Building, Sella Ness
Thursday 29 September 2005 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

J G Simpson I J Hawkins
W Tait N McCracken
C Smith

Apologies:

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| E J Knight | Capt D C Gray |
| J C Irvine | W A Ratter |
| J Smith | |

In Attendance (Officers):

J T Dickson, General Manager, Ports & Harbours Operations
R Moore, Deputy Port Operations Manager
A Inkster, Port Engineer
D Haswell, Committee Officer

Chairperson:

Mr J G Simpson, Chairperson of the Board, presided.

Circular:

The circular calling the meeting was held as read.

Minutes:

The minute of meeting held on 11 August 2005, having been circulated, was confirmed.

Members' Attendance at External Meetings

The General Manager advised that he had attended a meeting of the British Ports Association Marine and Pilotage Group in London where various issues had been discussed.

20/05 **Ports Project Monitoring Report**

The Board noted a report by the Deputy Port Operations Manager (Appendix 1).

Members were provided with an update on various projects as follows:

Dock Symbister

The Port Engineer advised that the revised construction method had been sent to Planning Services in June. Planning Services had subsequently sent the revised construction method to Historic Scotland but, to date, no response had been received from. Planning Services had been asked to chase up a response from Historic Scotland. As soon as approval was received from Historic Scotland, a report would be presented to the CPMT.

In response to a question from Mr N McCracken, the General Manager confirmed that the funding available for the project was in the budget and could be put back to next year, if necessary. The Port Engineer explained that funding had also been made available from the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Executive had indicated that this funding would be held.

Navigational Aids, Sullom Voe

As indicated in the report, only one bid was received. Discussions had been held with the contractor who submitted the bid and it was anticipated the work could be done for £55k which was within budget. BT were laying the fibre optic cable at Sullom Voe Terminal at the moment and it was hoped that the work would be completed by 31 March 2005.

Dolphin at Symbister

The Port Engineer advised that handrails had been fitted at the top of the dolphin this week. Also, a bollard had been installed at the end of the Pier. The only work remaining was the installation of guards on the horizontal braces. In response to a question from Mr N McCracken, the Port Engineer confirmed that there were no safety implications for members of the public, the only concern being that the public had access to the dolphin. However, it was noted that most piers in Shetland were accessible to the public.

Extension to Sella Ness Pier, Sullom Voe

The General Manager said that the Capital Projects Unit was assessing the results of the seabed survey. With regard to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), he said that he had been advised that this would be available by the end of this year, at the latest. Once available, the EIA would be distributed to all stakeholders for their comments. The General Manager stressed that the project was still on schedule and there had been nothing from the developers to the contrary.

Walls Pier

The Port Engineer advised that the fendering had been completed. However, a complaint had been received from a user of the pier that the fendering is too low. The Port Engineer and the Deputy Port Operations Manager were meeting with the complainant this week in an attempt to resolve the issue.

In response to questions from Mr N McCracken with regard to the budget, the General Manager clarified the position and assured Mr McCracken that it would be spent by the end of the year.

Small Ports Marketing Group

As indicated in the report, the Deputy Port Operations Manager explained that AB Associates had almost completed their draft report. AB Associates had asked for comments from the Chairperson on the conclusions in their report by the end of next week. A further meeting of the Marketing Group had been scheduled for 31 October. The Deputy Port Operations Manager advised that the background papers from AB Associates were available, if Members wished to see them. In response to a question, the Deputy Port Operations Manager confirmed that the findings and proposals from the Marketing Group would be presented to the Harbour Board.

Members recognised that the resources available for marketing would also have to be considered and it was noted that if additional resources were required there would have to be justification for that.

Mrs I J Hawkins said she recognised that the redevelopment of Blacksness Pier had been delayed because of the possibility of "Fresh Catch" building a pelagic plant at Scalloway. However, she was concerned that this project had been in the Capital Programme for some time. The General Manager explained that the Economic Development Unit was driving the Fresh Catch project and, if it had not come on the horizon, the design work for the redevelopment of Blacksness Pier would have already been done. Clarification was still needed as to whether the project was going ahead or not and, when this was received, progress would be made on the redevelopment of Blacksness Pier.

The Chairperson said that given the events that had taken place this week with Fresh Catch, this might result in further delays on the project.

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Port Operations Report

The Board noted a report by the General Manager (Appendix 2).

Referring to section 5.2.2, the General Manager said there had been quite a successful emergency response in Scalloway and he was proud that 185 cubic meters of oil had been recovered which was quite unusual. There had been very little environmental damage. In response to comments from Mr N McCracken, the General Manager said that lessons had been learned from the incident and he would be organising a wash-up of the area very shortly. In relation to disposal costs, the General Manager advised that these would have to be paid by the ship.

As had been advised at the Infrastructure Committee on 30 August, the Chairperson advised that the Met Office is reviewing how and where weather forecasts are produced and were consulting the Council as users of the service. The General Manager advised that the preferred option of the Met Office is to centralise all civilian forecasts to Exeter and close the Aberdeen office. He said that the Council had a major contract with the Met Office, which was due to expire in 2007. The level of service received was very good and the accuracy of forecasting had improved tremendously in the past 5 years.

The General Manager continued to say that from where the weather forecast was received from was not an issue but what was important was that it was accurate. Ports and Harbours Operations and the Roads Service had sent a joint letter of response to the Met Office and had stressed the point that if operations did move to Exeter, it was important that the forecasting team was kept together. Also, the point was made that weather radar coverage should be extended to Shetland because it was the only place in the UK that did not have radar coverage. The letter of response had also been copied to Mr Alistair Carmichael, MP. Alistair Carmichael had subsequently written to the Minister responsible and had received a response.

The General Manager said he had sent another letter to the Minister responsible via Alistair Carmichael, MP, and had received a response intimating that radar systems were going to be expanded. Also, a new radar office would be opened in Kent. The General Manager advised that he had asked why Shetland could not be provided with radar coverage and had been told that it came down to money. The General Manager said he had copied his letter to Tavish Scott, MSP asking if the Met Office and the Scottish Executive could get together with a view to the Scottish Executive partly funding radar coverage for Shetland. The General Manager said he hoped Members would support the provision of radar coverage in Shetland.

Members unanimously supported the General Manager and it was stated that because Shetland had the largest Oil Terminal in Europe, this should carry some weight in the argument for the provision of radar coverage. There were also oil developments in the West of Shetland.

Mr N McCracken said that anything Sullom Voe Terminal could do to help support the case would be done. The General Manager said he would pass on the information on this issue to Mr McCracken.

The General Manager explained that Ports and Harbours also used the Faroese weather forecast although it was the Met Office that provided the most information. When the contract with the Met Office expired in March 2007, the Council would then have to go out to tender for the provision of the weather forecasting service. At that time, the Council

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could ask the Faroese weather forecasting service if they wished to submit a tender.

Mr N McCracken said that there appeared to be 2 arguments here and it was important that the Harbour Board articulated what exactly it wanted. The General Manager agreed and said he recognised this. The main problem would be the change of the forecasting team at the Met Office if they moved to Exeter. If this happened, in the short term, the situation could be improved by the provision of radar.

The General Manager then provided a brief update on ship-to-ship transfers and Members noted the information provided.

With regard to the transfer of Shetland Towage to the Council, the General Manager was pleased to report that the MCA had issued a 4 person safe manning certificate for 4 of the tugs. The General Manager said that the transfer had involved a lot of work by the Deputy Port Operations Manager.

Mrs I J Hawkins expressed disappointment that commercial information had been supplied to an organisation following a request for information in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Mrs Hawkins said that the Board should contest this as much as possible and suggested that the Board should have a policy with regard to releasing such information. However, it was pointed out that any such policy would not over-ride the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. Advice on the request had been sought from the Head of Legal and Administration who had advised that the information had to be released.

CHAIRPERSON