

## WATCHET HARBOUR ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 9am – 10:30am**

**Zoom**

**Attendees:** Cllr Peter Murphy (PM) (Chair), James Burnell (JB), Craig Butler (CB), Matt Driscoll (MD), Emily Glover (EG), Chris Odling-Smee (COS), John Richards (JR), Jonathan Stevens (JS), Martin Stevens (MS), Cllr Loretta Whetlor (LW), Steve Yeandle (SY)

**Apologies:** David Mainwaring

**Note taker:** Emily Glover

Agenda Item	Notes
<b>1. Welcome, attendance and apologies</b>	<p>Apologies received from David Mainwaring.</p> <p>This was a meeting outside of the usual cycle called by the Chair in response to an offer by Chris Odling Smee (COS) to respond to points made in several emails circulated by John Richards (JR), WACET representative, to members of the Committee.</p>
<b>2. Statement by Chris Odling-Smee in response to the email circulated by John Richards representing WACET</b>	<p>JR confirmed that the email was sent by WACET following rumours around the marina raised by traders and businesses. COS stated that email contained serious accusations. When asked by COS, JR confirmed that he felt that his research had been properly and professionally conducted.</p> <p>COS provided a detailed response to the points raised in the email</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- COS clarified that the Bayscape Ltd accounts are separate from the Marine &amp; Property Group's.</li> <li>- COS presented the Marine Group's public aggregated accounts to provide assurance on the balance sheets and investment capability of the group.</li> <li>- The commercial disputes raised in the initial email were all paid.</li> </ul> <p>Members were satisfied with the information presented at this stage.</p> <p>COS presented the Marine &amp; Property Group's 5-year business plan which was tracked and audited.</p>

	<p>JS offered assurances that Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) was comfortable with the position with the Marine Group and there was a good working relationship. COS confirmed the Marine Group's commitment to Watchet and stated that he would return to Watchet monthly to report on progress.</p>
<p><b>3. Question and answer on the statement and email</b></p>	<p>When asked by COS, JR conceded that the information he had presented was both factually and technically incorrect. PM asked whether JR would like to retract anything from the email. JR confirmed that certain elements had been concluded.</p> <p>COS asked for professional contact with proper debate if there are any concerns in the future. PM agreed and asked for any concerns to be directed to MD or COS directly.</p> <p>JS and LW added that they had been contacted by the press regarding the email.</p>
<p><b>4. Discussion of the proposed new marina lease to Marine Group</b></p>	<p>Discussion took place around the marina lease and its ownership. The current owner had 'quiet enjoyment' of the lease meaning SWT could not get involved unless the lease holder came forward wanting to renegotiate the lease. A purchase price had been agreed with the Marine Group and the current owner which neither party can fail to complete upon due to a Put and Call option on the current lease.</p> <p>COS &amp; JS outlined the proposed changes to the lease.</p> <p>JR queried why WHAC was not consulted on the new lease. JS apologised for not having followed up on discussions in September. JS had sent a formal email in August 2022 to the Town Council, the Onion Collective and ward members of Watchet providing an overview of the material changes to the lease. JS and PM considered this meeting as fulfilling the requirement to consult with WHAC.</p> <p>COS summarised that the information stated in the email from WACET was false.</p> <p>JS confirmed that rumours that the Marine Group had applied for planning permission were false.</p> <p>JR raised that the town was concerned about the current state of the harbour and the survival of businesses in the town and looked forward to seeing improvements in near future.</p>

<b>5. Date, time &amp; venue of next meeting</b>	Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2023 14:00 – 15:30 Watchet Visitors Centre (confirmed)
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