

# Minutes

**Title of meeting:** Dee Conservancy Consultative Committee Meeting (No.3)

**Location:** NRW Buckley Office and online (MS Teams)

**Date of meeting:** 20/05/25 10:00 - 1200hrs

**Members present:**

- Sarah Bailey – West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce (Commercial Representative) Chair
- Jayne Eade – Maritime and Coastguard Agency
- Josef Hanik – Wirral Council
- Andy Judd (Environment Agency) - Deputy Appointed Representative
- Lisa McLellan – Flintshire County Council
- Jim O'Toole – Port of Mostyn
- Lyndsey Rawlinson – NRW (Appointed Representative)
- Peter Willett – Cheshire West & Chester City Council
- Tom Woodall – Flintshire County Council

**Attendees present:**

- Dawn Beech - NRW Senior Advisor Dee Conservancy
- Rob Jackson – Dee Conservancy Harbour Master
- Andrea Winterton – NRW Marine Manager

**Apologies:**

- Anthony Bestwick – Wirral Council
- Kathleen Bealby – Natural England
- Andrew Challinor - Cheshire West & Chester City Council
- Nigel Glasgow - Appointed representative – Environmental regulator
- Trevor Jones – Fisheries Representative
- David Parker (Dee Estuary Conservation Group) – Conservation representative
- Roy Sheriff (Inland Waterways Association) – Recreation representative
- James Stuart – Royal Yachting Association
- Stuart Thomas – NRW Marine Sustainable Mgt. Team Leader

**Secretariat:** Kath Roberts - NRW Environment Team Assistant

## 1. Welcome

Sarah Bailey opened the meeting of the Committee by welcoming everyone and inviting those in attendance to introduce themselves. Sarah explained that she would take the Chair role for this meeting, in lieu of a Chair being formally appointed.

## 2. Minutes of last meeting (26/11/24)

Actions arising from the last meeting as follows:

**Action 2 – Closed.** Dawn Beech presented maps showing public body jurisdictions to members in the meeting.

**Action 3 – Closed.** Terms of Reference have been amended and signed off by members. Terms of Reference will not be published on the NRW website, but will be shared with members and will be made available on request.

**Action 4 – Closed.** Jim O'Toole presented Corus Jetty/North Wales Ambition Board slides to Andrea and members in the meeting.

**Action 5 – Closed.** Josef Hanik has provided Nigel Glasgow with contact details for Sefton Council.

**Action 6 – Open.** Andrew Challinor (apologies sent) will present Cheshire West & Chester navigation jurisdiction and duties to members at the next Committee meeting 25/11/25.

Matters arising – members agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting were a true reflection of the meeting.

## 3. Harbour Operation, management & regulation

**Introduction to the Port of Mostyn** - Jim O'Toole gave an informative and interesting presentation on the history of the Port of Mostyn, including current projects such as the Port Extension and plans for the Warwick site, and proposals for a tidal lagoon.

**Dee Cockle Regulating Order** – the current Order ends in 2028. Options are being explored with North Western Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority regarding cross border arrangements for future regulation of the Dee cockle fishery. Discussions are underway with the Welsh Government and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as part of this work to ensure a sustainable future for the fishery.

Jim O'Toole reiterated the issue regarding the disclaimer that cockle licensees are sent to sign and return with their licence packs. The disclaimers aren't being returned by the cocklers. This will be raised by NRW with cockle licensees in the Dee Estuary Cockle Advisory Group (DECFAAG) meeting being held on 21/5/25.

**Action 7 Dawn Beech** – send Wirral Council and Flintshire DECFAG contact names to Joseph Hanik and Tom Woodhall.

**Harbour Master Updates** – The updated 'Ports & Marine Facilities Safety Code April 2025' is now available. The MCA have suggested a 6-month grace period for Ports to review the code and confirm compliance. During a webinar with ABPmer it transpired that the Code has changed very little, and compliance will not be an issue for the Dee Conservancy.

Annual audits by Trinity house completed for the Port of Mostyn and Dee Conservancy Aids to Navigation. Both successfully completed with a target of 97% availability required the PoM scored 99.14% and the DC scored 99.98%.

Mooring application process and a boat registration system for the Dee Estuary are being looked into.

#### 4. Incidents & Near Misses

In the last 6 months there have been 2 incidents reported to the Harbour Master:

- i) Tractor and trailer incident off the RWE (Gwynt y Mor) pontoon, December 2024. No injuries or damage to the environment. Investigation carried out by RWE in conjunction with the Port of Mostyn and Dee Conservancy Harbour Masters. The investigation determined that the incident had been caused by a mechanical tractor failure, in combination with faults relating to maintenance and training.
- ii) Berthing incident with a Crew Transfer Vessel, April 2025. This low speed collision caused a small amount of damage to a stationary vessel. Investigations determined the cause to be maintenance issues and human error.

Smaller incidents include the RNLI rescue of 2 people who attempted to walk out across the estuary when their vessel ran out of fuel.

Also, a number of small boats have broken free of moorings and have been found adrift in the Estuary. These incidents require valuable RNLI time in terms of establishing whether there are casualties overboard. The incidents reinforce the need for a boat registration system for the Estuary to assist rescue services turning out to unmanned boats adrift.

Joseph Hanik asked what could be done about abandoned boats, can they be removed or stored? Rob Jackson stated that if they are causing problems, the owner should be contacted. If the owner cannot be identified, or no response is received, the boat(s) can be removed following a period of notice. Matter discussed in detail later in the agenda.

Jayne Ede informed members that Chris Jones from Cornwall Council Harbour has had success in removal of abandoned vessels. Jayne will share information and contacts.

## 5. Harbour Maintenance & Improvement

**Midway Berth update** – Airbus are looking to surrender their NRW lease regarding the Midway Berth, which had supported A380 wing transshipments in the past. NRW and Airbus negotiations about the future of the Midway Berth continue.

Jim O'Toole raised concerns about the deterioration of the Corus Jetty next to the Midway Berth, which is owned by Tata Steel. Dawn Beech confirmed that the jetty is monitored, and contact made with Tata Steel if remedial works are required.

Jim O'Toole discussed the deterioration of the Duke of Lancaster (Funship). He is concerned about the asbestos in the vessel. Dawn Beech stated that the Funship has been condemned by the MCA, as the hull is significantly holed due to rusting. The most likely end of life scenario for the Funship will involve insitu breaking. A multiagency response plan is in place to inform operational and tactical actions in the event of an emergency incident (e.g. Fire) on the Funship. The plan has been agreed by NRW, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Flintshire County Council.

### Derelict boats and Mooring process

**Action 8 Dawn Beech** – share NRW Milford Haven 2021 Report, and NRW Derelict Boat Management Guidance (in progress) when available.

NRW Marine Project Team used Welsh Government Nature Networks funding to remove 15 derelict boats in two phases in October 2024 and in March 2025. Boats were removed by NRW contractor. This project is now working on similar issues in the Milford Haven, as well as developing guidance on the disposal of derelict and abandoned boats.

There is now a dedicated NRW email address for reporting and requesting advice on derelict boat management - Marine Litter and Derelict Vessel Prevention Project  
[MLDVP@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk](mailto:MLDVP@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk)

There are only a few end of life options available for small boats, mainly due to the mix of construction materials (fibre glass, plyboard etc.). Bluepoint Marine have worked with Grundy Skip Hire to send waste fibre glass for waste to energy disposal, which is better than disposal in landfill. Dawn Beech is keen to look into sustainable disposal routes where possible.

Future priority areas for the removal of derelict boats are Heswall (Wirral Council), Connah's Quay (Flintshire County Council), Greenfield dock (Flintshire County Council), The Holy, Bagillt (NRW Dee Conservancy) and Warwick Bay (Port of Mostyn).

## 6. Member Comments

Rob Jackson stated they are looking into removing Dee Buoy No.1a as it is no longer needed. If anyone has any objections, please contact Rob.

Joseph Hanik highlighted that work is underway to block off the slipway near the old Dawpool landfill site.

Peter Willet asked if the new Connah's Quay power station would impact navigation in the estuary. Based in information provided by the developers to date there are no impacts expected. Developers are planning to refurbish the existing infrastructure. However, some disruption may occur during the construction phase.

## **7. Action Confirmation**

Actions confirmed.

## **8. AOB**

Jayne Ede stated the revised Dee Estuary Oil Spill Response Plan needs to be submitted to the MCA. Jayne recommends, if not already done so, that this goes to consultation with NRW/Welsh Fisheries ASAP to allow enough time for review and amendment. She will email Sam at Mostyn separately - Dawn Beech confirmed that Sam is progressing the review of the Dee OSCP.

## **9. Next Meeting(s)**

25<sup>th</sup> November 2025

## **10. Closing remarks**

Sarah Bailey thanked members for attending and for the presentations.