



# Minutes

Name of meeting	FB User Group Meeting
Date and time	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2018 at 4:30-6pm
Venue	East Cowes Town Council, York Avenue, East Cowes
Present	Cllr Ian Ward (chair), Cllr Lora Peacey-Willcox, Cllr Karl Love (part) Cllr Jane Rann, Cllr Neil Oliver (part); Isle of Wight Council Staff: Alex Minns, Sean Newton, Jayne Tyler; resident members of the public: Roger Rickman, Jeanie Pelling, Jane Perry, Jennifer Gladdis.
Apologies	Jill Bredon, Will Darling
1.	Welcome and introductions (both Cllrs Love and Oliver arrived after the start of the meeting. Members of the public were asked why they were interested in attending the meeting
2.	Chair stated the user group was set up as a result of a scrutiny committee recommendation and the public had many different opinions regarding the floating bridge and he was interested as to whether this was about the FB itself or the service that is provided.
3.	Terms of reference for consideration. Cllr Love asked why there was not anyone from the existing stakeholder/user group. The selection method for members of the public was explained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Persons with saver cards were sent an email inviting expressions of interest in being a member of the user group;</li><li>• Approximately 100 residents and saver card holders responded;</li><li>• Random number generator used to identify potential members <a href="https://www.random.org/">https://www.random.org/</a>;</li><li>• Persons emailed with Draft TOR and Agenda and asked to attend today.</li></ul>
	Cllr Love wanted the meeting to be an open forum and he felt that members of the existing stakeholder/user group should be included. However other members of the group noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Members of the public are in attendance</li><li>• They are all regular users that hold Saver Cards</li><li>• The terms of reference are draft only and were guided by internet research and recognised good practice</li><li>• One member of the group is able to feedback comments back to the the group mentioned <del>reference</del> by the councillor.</li></ul>

- Member of staff noted that this user group was being run in a similar way to the Newport Harbour User Group. People were asked to represent particular interests, there are no open meetings although meeting notes are publicly available. The make up of this group was discussed
- This was the first meeting and the terms of reference are to be reviewed and agreed
- Town Cllr noted that this was a measured forum for consultation and it was a shame that the elected member did not like it.

4. Cllr Love left the meeting at approximately 16.50. Cllr Love stated that he was withdrawing from the user group at that time.

It was noted that this was a forum to move forward and examine how things could be improved, the main aim being how to improve user experience. TOR discussed and minor amendments made to them. Floating Bridge staff member replaced by Floating Bridge Supervisor.

5. Issues raised by members of the public

Different levels of reliability	Service overall Frequency of service Public perception poor
Staff should be more efficient	Nice that they are friendly but need to concentrate on job Don't seem to realise people have connections that they need to make; no sense of urgency. Users are unable to guarantee that their journey will take a set amount of time Vaping / drinking whilst at work Staff had no no idea what to do when the vessel grounded during Cowes Week 2018. Staff do not know to refund monies if user has paid and service has to stop/wrong category of vehicle entered in error
Can rely on the service less	Turn around seems longer and on that basis the FB is unreliable Business case specification not met Crossings per hour appear reduced Is there a way that foot passengers and vehicles can embark/disembark at the same time? Why does the master have to

	leave the pilothouse everytime the vessel docks?
Advance warning regarding service status	Not enough information when the service is not running or goes out of service unexpectedly. There needs to be 'live' information available at all time.
Advance warning – static signs	Not in the best places and needed to be further out (Coppins Bridge). Suggest dicussion with Red Funnel to see if notification can also be utilised by them
Noise issues	Generally noisy Chain slap on concrete and internal undeside part s of the vessel.
Vehicles grounding	Always appears to have been an issue
Health and safety	Ribs should have lifejackets if used as a replacement service
Replacement launch	The council should consider the purchase of a replacement launch that is DDA compliant and can be used for other activities when not required as a replacement for the floating bridge.
Training for staff	Staff should be trained in customer care as well as the operation of the vessel

6. In respect of service status it was noted that Twitter was in use and had been introduced within the last 2 weeks with updates set at 07:00am and 1:00pm : **User group requested that this starts earlier, i.e. 6am**

It was noted that the Floating Bridge website ([www.iwfloatingbridge.co.uk](http://www.iwfloatingbridge.co.uk)) has recently been refreshed and provides more information including service status.

It was noted that the website would shortly be a live webcam feed that will show the current position of the Floating Bridge. In addition an AIS feed will also be available shortly through the website.

It was noted that there will be dicussions with Hampshire County Council in relation to Variable Message Signs.

7. The group thought that there should be more frequent crossings and IWC keep fiddling with the vessel, observation made that the vessel

should have been smaller and lighter as noise and drift are predictable features. It was noted that some factors may not be fixable

Noise readings discussed.

The Council noted the main issues affecting the FB.

Insufficient chain depth – there is insufficient chain depth at all tidal states and when chains are slackened to accommodate this the vessel slews in the channel.

Noise issue – a range of options are being considered in conjunction with Wight Shipyard and progression with current work packages. A shoe was fitted to the prow on the Cowes side slipway last Wednesday.

This has reduced the impact noise and further noise readings are to be taken today.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> work package to re-engineer the ramps (to make ramps longer and provide new fingers) to reduce noise and vibration is being worked on and will build on results of the 'shoe'.

Improvements have seen noise recordings drop by 10db ( note not all readings have been taken)

A third work package relates to how to land the FB square on the slipway. This would be a concept design which could lead to a final design and would be a second stage of development.

Longer ramps would reduce the risk of cars hitting the slipway.

8. The group discussed the position of the breakwater and thought that this was causing some of the issues in terms of the tidal flow.

The group asked who was paying for improvements? The council or whether this was being passed on to the shipbuilder/naval architect. It was noted that some issues are being paid for from floating bridge income and there are other legal discussions in progress.

IWC discussed the situation with BTCQ (who are the Naval Architects) and noted that there was a requirement to get the vessel fixed properly.

9. An elected member discussed whether it was possible to run a scheduled service and it was noted that it was not as the service was dependent on the tidal state, volume of river traffic and number of users.

10. The group discussed issues with the launch service during Cowes

Week. Use of a rib was noted with no life jackets

11. Payments and charges were discussed. A handout was issued describing the various ways that payments can be made.
12. The Council noted that groundings occurred with the old vessel
13. The group noted that they thought it in the best interest of the council that a launch was purchased as the Jenny Lee is not really suitable for this purpose. It was noted that currently the launch service is used twice a month due to tidal issues and an elected member noted that it did not need to be a new boat – and had received two offers from local companies on the subject.
14. The group discussed the staff numbers – the council staff explained there are different types of staff and some of these were casual. There were six regular pairs though and a pool of relief staff. The council staff pointed out the role of a supervisor has been introduced and a further supervisor is in the process of being recruited. Training in the areas of customer care is something that should be focused on as staff have received training in relation to the operation of the vessel. The group discussed staff attitude which they felt at times was unprofessional and potentially slowed down the service.
15. The chair noted the requirements to improve the service and the council staff summarised the main points of the meeting.
16. The council staff described the train the trainer process and the group discussed the bridge operation when coming in to 'land'. The group reiterated that customer care and frequency of service is key and the group discussed the pros and cons of waiting for passengers and then when on the boat people sometimes were not asked for payment. The council staff stated there was a move towards contactless and other methods of payment.
17. Next meeting to be held at Northwood Cemetery meeting rooms and will provide an update on actions to date and the meeting is expected to be in early December.
18. AOB – A member of the public asked if Red Funnel could be of any assistance in terms of training.