



Minutes

Name of meeting	FB User Group Meeting
Date and time	14 th October 2019 at 5:30pm
Venue	East Cowes Town Council, York Avenue, East Cowes
Present	Cllr Lora Peacey-Willcox, Cllr Michael Paler, Alex Minns (Chair), Sean Newton, Mark Downer, Jayne Tyler (Isle of Wight Council Staff), Jeanie Pelling, Pauline Wallis, Nichola Roe (FB users)
Apologies	Cllr Ian Ward, Cllr Jane Rann, Cllr Neil Oliver, Roger Rickman. For noting Dan Olive was invited but did not attend
1.	<p>Minutes of the last meeting were agreed and the group noted the continued requirement to seek retail outlets in Cowes that would offer the saver card. Suggestions included Aquamarine and also the Post Office next to the Vectis Tavern.</p> <p>Action: MD to seek further outlets in Cowes Action: JT to invite Allan Bridges to next meeting</p> <p>SN noted promotional material re Saver card Shelter in Medina Road and old waiting room in East Cowes – Banners designed but needed planning permission; but ways round that in terms of redesign and rotating the messages NR noted the potential for A4 leaflets to go in shop windows advertising the FB MD added that saver cards in circulation currently stood 5,700 Passengers and use of high value notes discussed but not considered major issue.</p> <p>The pre-paid card issue was also debated and SN/MD have discussed this with Trans IQ, who are keen to have the cards registered as opposed to just distributed. NR suggested that the library could register the cards and MD noted that the FB staff can help set up the card on the system for those who needed extra assistance. This could be done in the FB office. AM suggested that the price differential should make people sign up for the saver cards.</p>
2.	<p>Management update – spreadsheet and trading accounts and this appear to have been seen. SN noted that these can be updated and sent again. Action SN: update spreadsheet and trading accounts and send to JT for distribution.</p> <p>Cllr Oliver's query at the last meeting in respect of drug and alcohol policy was noted AM stated that the council has a policy around drug and alcohol policy and it is in place. AM noted that it would be good to raise again with staff so that they are aware.</p>

FB user group meetings, TOR review - Number of users discussed and it was felt that there should be a non-user on the group. Cllr Ward felt that FBSEG would introduce an additional political element and it was noted that schools should be represented, together with GKN staff 2-3 people from each from the school 6th former and teacher. AM noted that he hoped that there would be a reduction in meetings in due course.

Business Associations from both sides can and a nominated person and whether they would like to be able to attend. Number of Cllrs also discussed.

Action JT: consider best approach for inviting these individuals (non-user, Cowes and East Cowes school staff and sixth form pupil, GKN, Cowes and East Cowes Business Association) to the user group.

Dates pre-set, to be for the forthcoming twelve months over the course of a year

Did people want to continue, and to extend beyond 6 members of the public? Those who were there were happy to continue, although TOR can be amended to reflect 1 year as an opt out.

Action JT: set dates for next 4 meetings

3. Progress on standing issues SN noted the meeting in June and this was prior to coming out of service SN outlined the work that has taken place:

- Replacement chain
- Cheek plates
- Noise assessments both on the FB and in other public areas are within published guidelines.
- In terms of clearance over the chains the council has met with WSY regarding a managed solution, chain tensioning system and piles to 'park' the vessel against - this will require a marine traffic light system. An independent navigational risk assessment has taken place and this illustrated that there will be a marginal increase in safety. IWC will then meet with CHC as the area of water concerned is within their area of jurisdiction.
- Mainstay marine – work investigating the use of thrusters.

Both those pieces of work on-going and it is hoped that there will be agreement on the way to go forward before Christmas. MMSL have already noted thrusters are feasible and can be fitted. Ultimately the most technically proficient will be chosen.

NR asked about the traffic lights solution, SN explained when the traffic lights would be used, AM noted that this solution is something that has been asked for by yachts in the past as it is simpler to understand than the notice to mariners.

AM summarised that the issues have been mainly resolved in terms of noise, in terms of the chain depth there are two possible solutions and the prow issue is still needing further investigation.

The group discussed the FB turnaround. AM noted that some of these issues are down to staff and MD noted that the FB6 was at a pivotal time in terms of its reputation and needed to prove it was an efficient, professional and good

service. AM suggested the issue that slowed the service down was putting vehicles and passengers on separately.

LPC noted the changes that have been made in E Cowes in terms of the roadway and these were noted as being good. MD noted that there could be barriers that can be moved on the slipways to facilitate synchronous foot passenger and vehicle loading/unloading although this would need an extra member of staff.

LPC also suggested that nothing be done whilst traffic lights are at St. Mary's junction works.

There was a discussion regarding general pricing and this is to be fed back to Wendy Perera

NR noted that cars are too expensive at £2.60 and £2, for a saver card holder.

AM stated that he thought that the pricing structure has gone beyond what people will pay and suggested that if the price was reduced it would have a positive effect and the group agreed with him.

It was suggested that The roadworks is an opportunity. The reliability is key to winning users over. Cars and the price reduction there was a penalty to pedestrian users, and it was noted that the issue was because it is cheaper to get a car across with several passengers.

Signage at the county show ground was felt to be a good thing.

Prows hinge failure at Cowes out of service for 3 weeks DMR undertook the work, recommending that the prow was removed and DMR liaised with MMSL throughout this process. Damage was due to wear and tear potentially plus operator damage although not proven.

Works to both prows included:

- 1) Replacing hinge backing plates with thicker steel plate.
- 2) Using high tensile bolts on hinge arrangement, and torqueing to the manufacturers (Mainstay Marine) requirements.
- 3) Replacing prow finger bolts and hinge pin bushes
- 5) Vertical stiffeners welded to both sides of hinge arrangement, to stop any movement.
- 6) Cutting out and replacement of bent/damaged steel on prows.

AM added that it was difficult to withdraw the FB at that time but felt it was important to get all issues resolved at the time because of the roadworks that were due to start in November.

Future legal action still to be decided.

MD summarised hours operated with FB6 running 100% operating time in August with 67,864 foot passengers and 22, 861 vehicles.

Although foot passengers down to 34,000 in September and 7,799 vehicles due to the FB6 being out of service.

Trend is that foot passenger traffic is static and vehicles are going up gradually and MD compared the previous 2 weeks with the same period last year at 8700 vehicles compared to 6900 the previous year, also 1100 more-foot passengers (33% in September with 89% overall average reliability)

Payment methods and contactless - £30k for a capital, requested and AN thought that the saver card needed to be cheaper than the other methods. AM noted that there was a lack of data from the contactless payments

NR suggested that it was a good thing to issue an email to let them know the service status issues.

Cashless systems discussed and the issues around this noted, contactless would be beneficial for people getting off the Red Funnel. AM noted that the payment activity was important and should come back to a future meeting. Reliability of machines was significant and new handsets, ticket printers etc was discussed. Together with the issue of printed receipts and the group discussed the type of equipment required on the FB. AM added that he has to wait for capital approval and if not investigate something cheaper, this is ongoing activity

4. Open Forum

JP – staff are courteous and helpful and there was an issue about people leaving their engines idling whilst on the bridge and they should be instructed to turn their engines off whilst on the bridge.

Meeting rotation discussed:-
Jan/April/July/October suggested
(January/July – Cowes; April/October East Cowes)

AM noted the need to have real users views; pricing structures can change quite quickly, MD to do income projections and this will be done quickly.

PW end of Clarence Road – issues regarding exit as blocked by cars using the FB6 and suggested yellow hatching in this area as the exit from this road was often difficult.

Action MD – discuss with IR