

SHRA AGM – 09 JUNE 2022 – NOTES OF MEETING AND REPORTS

ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1.1 Susan Kerrison introduced herself as the Chair of the SHRA Committee and said she would be chairing the meeting. Apologies were received from several members, along with Penny Di Cara (Cllr.) and Paul Metcalfe (Shadow Cabinet Member and Cllr.).

1.2 100 tickets had been sold for this AGM. An AGM has not been held since May 2019.

ITEM 2 – INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

2.1 Susan welcomed and introduced the following speakers to the meeting:

Caroline Ansell – MP for Eastbourne

Andrew Walker - Environmental Agency

Thea Taylor - Sussex Dolphin Project (Harbour Seals)

Kshama Shore OBE – Shadow Cabinet Member, who was in the audience

ITEM 3 – INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMITTEE

3.1 The current Committee comprising of: Susan Kerrison (Chair), Carol Collier (Treasurer), Tony Smith (Website and Waterlines Editor), Caroline Lynam (Membership Secretary), Dave Rogers, David Shaw, Iain Shore, David Preager, Bridget Newlyn, and Penny di Cara (absent). There are now vacancies for a Vice Chair and Secretary.

ITEM 4 – COMMITTEE AND TREASURERS REPORT

4.1 The Chair spoke about the Committee's Report and success we have had this past couple of years: We now have three new seats in the harbour. A successful Environmental Agency online Webcast was held (150+ people) and was informative to residents of the Harbour. The association has grown from strength to strength with over 200 new members joining since last January. This brings increased workload and therefore it was previously discussed to increase the Committee total to 14 (agreed in the Constitution).

There was a legal problem with Premier Marinas last year. SHRA received notification in April 2021 from solicitors advising that they intended to take action for defamation of Premier Marinas regarding correspondence between SHRA and a fishing boat owner who was having problems with Sovereign Marinas. A letter was sent apologising for this. As the Residents Association is unincorporated, individual committee members' assets could have been at risk if the matter had gone further. It was agreed that we would meet Premier every three months, but it was not easy to agree meeting dates with them - a meeting was finally held in February 2022, and more are in the diary so it is hoped these will go ahead on a regular basis.

Sue highlighted the effort it takes to get anything done, for example the fencing around Macauley Place. The developer has been contacted many times, but we have got nowhere, being stuck between the developers and the solicitors acting for Eastbourne Borough Council. One of the Committee members is looking at parcels of land that we could potentially plant trees on, but again Persimmons are proving difficult to contact.

We have asked Premier many times about tidying the area on the south side of the locks. Also, with regard to the seals, we need Premier's permission to erect signs.

Ian Shore then spoke about taking responsibility for putting seats in around the Harbour. ESCC have not been easy to deal with when trying to put seats on adopted land. With some of the funding coming from EBC - A certain type of bench had to be agreed, and also the supplier along with licences. The seats needed to be vandal proof and weather resistant to rust/salt. Getting the actual benches proved easy, one bench is still in stock; Premier want it to be installed but there are ongoing discussions with their legal department as to where it should be situated. The Association wants to put more in, and also some with arms for less able people, but these are more expensive. All will have plaques on so they can include names if required.

The Association's membership is going from strength to strength with over 200 members having joined since last January. We are also taking legal advice about whether to become a limited liability company, due to the risk of being sued after the trouble with Premier.

Sue thanked the local councillors, and Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club and Haven School for the use of their premises.

4.2 The Treasurers report was presented to the meeting by the new Treasurer Carol Collier. One member asked the floor about the insurance cost which had increased. It was explained that this was due to the dispute with Premier in 2021 when we consulted the insurance company's solicitors which resulted in an increase in the insurance premium. Another member asked if members would have a say about any proposal to become a limited liability company or CIC. SK responded with yes, they would.

ITEM 5 - QUESTIONS AND VOTE

5.1 Committee and Treasurer's report was voted upon - A vote was then carried with a show of hands regarding both reports – with no-one against and no further queries.

5.2 Changes to The Constitution:

A Para 5, Each member will have a vote, previously only one vote per household

B Para 16, Committee expanded from 12 to 14 members

C Para 18, Quorum for AGM of 25% members proposed due to the Association growing and having difficulty finding premises large enough to hold all whom wished to attend– however, following an intervention from the floor, it was discussed that it should be 50% plus the Committee - this motion was carried with a show of hands.

ITEM 6 – ELECTION OF COMMITTEE FOR THE COMING YEAR

6.1 All Committee members have agreed to stand again. New members were sought previous to the AGM. Three new members have agreed to join: two unfortunately were unable to attend the AGM; Michael Jones, Rajendra Pisavadia. Francis Lawrence said a few words on her background – we look forward to welcoming them to the next meeting.

ITEM 7 – PANEL DISCUSSION – Q & A

7.1 Andy Walker from the Environment Agency spoke about the flood defence project, their primary responsibility. This is going to be one of the biggest sea defence projects in the UK - which runs from Hollywell to Cooden Beach (15 kms) this is a Front-Line defence (which is paid by the Treasury). They have to work with nature in providing defences against rising sea levels for the next 100 years and reduce carbon emissions and improve biodiversity.

The Outer Harbour – privately owned for commercial use includes the eight individual Lock Gates. Sea levels will rise, and the Harbour will require protection.

Most residents feel that it is not right that they should be charged for this – EA have no control over costs and are seeking to boost partnership funding i.e., with Network Rail and Southern Water.

Member from the floor asked, “where does the money go?”, “what do we actual pay for?” and is there a percentage that is divided between the properties? Further clarity is required from CIC and Premier (Welcome Trust who own Premier). Residents feel the Rent Charge should be open and transparent and that the residents should be allowed to see the accounts. A query was also made regarding the Beth Holders costs – In past years residents were advised that as more properties grew the cost would go down – this appears to have not happened.

Caroline Ansell advised that overall, the cost went down, however, this year the cost went up due to the maintenance cost of the Lock Gates.

Premier have agreed to meet with the Committee and Caroline Ansell for discussions to be.

Caroline Ansell said the sea defence work could bring opportunities for the sea front and how we could open it up to cycling, although a safe route along the whole seafront could not currently be found despite a strong cycle fraternity, this being due to separate space issues i.e., for the elderly/disabled and children etc.

7.2 It was asked if the flood defence works would increase the rent charge. Caroline Ansell explained the history of the charge and said it is wrong, but it is legal, until challenged in court as illegal, however, costs would be too high and could potentially be borne by residents. The EA will not increase the charge, but Premier’s position is unclear as they have not moved into a feasibility study so therefore the cost could potentially come to the residents. Andy Walker is encouraging Premier to be part of the conversation and SK said SHRA is also trying to get into discussions with Premier. Caroline Ansell said EBC had undertaken to look at whether they could manage the administration fee element as this had increased significantly over the years and have asked for tender documents so it can be properly costed - as 20% is significant cost. Caroline Ansell also said the matter has been taken to the Minister

7.3 Another question was about the standard of the seafront (looking worse for wear), particularly the Bandstand and Redoubt. Caroline Ansell confirmed that the council had a successful bid of £20million but were seeking a second bid to the government levelling up fund for £50m to save the Bandstand and Redoubt. A previous bid had been made so another one will have to be strong to succeed.

ITEM 8 – SUSSEX DOLPHIN PROJECT – “OUR HARBOUR SEALS... LIFE AND TIMES”

8.1 Thea Taylor then spoke about the Harbour seals - the two different types seen in the Harbour; their lifestyles and behaviour and how to protect them. Notices will be placed with information for the general public. RNLI have agreed to a temporary notice by their station, but the SHRA are looking to put a permanent stand (similar to the one about the birds) near where this is – funded by the SHRA if necessary.

Further information on the talk can be found on the link below:

<http://www.shra.co.uk/pdfs/SussexSeals.pdf>

9 CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business, members were thanked for attending the AGM and for their support of the Association. The meeting closed at 9pm.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – Thursday 09 June 2022 @ 7:30pm

Haven School, Atlantic Drive, BN23 5SW

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Apologies
2. Introduction of Guests
3. Introduction of Committee
4. Committee's and Treasurer's Report
5. Questions and vote on
 - a. Committee or Treasurer's report
 - b. Constitution
6. Election of Committee for the Coming Year
7. Panel Discussion/Q and A
 - Andy Walker, Environment Agency
Pevensey Bay to Eastbourne Coastal Management Scheme,
 - Caroline Ansell MP
 - SHRA
8. Thea Taylor, Project Lead- Sussex Dolphins Project
– *"Our Harbour Seals .. Life and times" -*

CURRENT COMMITTEE

Chair	Susan Kerrison
Vice Chair	Vacant
Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Carol Collier
Membership Secretary	Caroline Lynam
Website & Waterlines Editor	Tony Smith
Committee Member	Penny di Cara (Cllr)
Committee Member	Dave Rogers
Committee Member	David Preager
Committee Member	David Shaw
Committee Member	Iain Shore
Committee Member	Bridget Newlyn

New Additions:

Francis Lawrence

Michael Jones

Rajendra Pisavadia

REPORT 2020-2022

Introduction

As we were unable to hold an AGM in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid restrictions, and because no Annual Report was produced last year, this report covers the past two-year period.

THE SHRA COMMITTEE

Since the last report the committee has been joined by five new members, Carol Collier, Kelvin Hartstone, Caroline Lynam, Bridget Newlyn and David Shaw. Lindsay Roff, Ray Johnson, Geraldine Scudder and Kelvin resigned from the committee, and we have also said goodbye to two valued long-standing members Dilys Iverson and Jan Mortlock. We would like to thank Dilys and Jan for all their work over the years as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. In late 2021, the committee was sad to learn that Chris Mephram, who was the SHRA chairman from May 2017 until June 2019, had passed away.

Chair	Susan Kerrison	Committee Member	Bridget Newlyn
Deputy Chair	Vacant	Committee Member	David Preager
Secretary	Vacant	Committee Member	Dave Rogers
Membership Secretary	Caroline Lynam	Committee Member	David Shaw
Treasurer	Carol Collier	Committee Member	Iain Shore
Committee Member	Penny di Cara	Waterlines & Website	Tony Smith

The Committee would like to thank Tony for his work on the SHRA website and Waterlines, Iain for his work on the Harbour seating, and Carol for her work as the new Treasurer - the SHRA accounts for 2020-22 are attached to this report. We are grateful to Caroline for taking on the role of Membership Secretary.

The SHRA constitution currently specifies a committee of 12 persons. In April 2022, we sought a volunteer to fill the remaining committee vacancy and had a very positive response with 8 candidates applying. We are looking at ways of involving all the candidates in our future work and/or possibly increasing the size of the committee.

THE COMMITTEE'S WORK 2020-22

Committee Meetings

The pandemic restrictions and the risk of transmission posed difficulties for the committee, particularly in the first half of 2020. We did manage to hold some committee meetings outside during that summer, and during the autumn and winter months of 20/21 we got

used to meeting monthly using Zoom. This continued into early 2021, but by last summer we were able to return to regular monthly committee meetings in the Yacht Club.

Pevensey Bay to Eastbourne Coastal Management Scheme

In the Autumn of 2021, we organised a very successful online meeting about the EA's Coastal Management Scheme. Ian Thomas from Pevensey Bay Coastal Defences Ltd gave a presentation as to how the beach is currently managed and Andy Walker from the Environment Agency outlined the Agency's plans for dealing with a predicted rise in sea level of 4 ft over the next 100 years. Over 150 people logged on to the event and a video recording can be found on-line at: www.shra.co.uk/seadefencesmeeting.html

Although the Environment Agency scheme runs from Beachy Head to Cooden Beach, it has become apparent that the Agency will not fund the construction of enhanced sea defences for approximately 1.6 km around the actual harbour, including the outer harbour wall, the promenade round the outer harbour and the lock gates. The EA argues that the outer harbour wall and lock gates are privately owned structures, and their primary purpose is for the commercial benefit of the asset owner, namely Premier Marinas. Therefore, any works required to make this asset more resilient to sea level rise is solely the responsibility of the asset owner, Premier Marinas. The Residents' Association is concerned that Premier's costs will be passed on to the residents through the Rentcharge.

At the end of April 2022, the Environment Agency held events to inform the public of their long list of options for local coastal protection. For more information on the EA's scheme visit: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/solent-and-south-downs/pevensey-bay-to-eastbourne/>

Rentcharge

The increase in this year's Rentcharge of over 20% has caused considerable concern. The Rentcharge has two elements: one part is paid to the Environment Agency and is capped as it is linked to RPI, and the second part is paid to Premier for the maintenance of the locks and water ways. The latter is uncapped and can rise indefinitely.

The Rentcharge is collected by Sovereign Harbour (Sea Defences) Community Interest Company. Community Interest Companies (CICs) are regulated, and to be compliant with the regulatory standards, CICs are required to seek the opinions of the local stakeholders and provide high quality information about their activities. In the Association's view the CIC has fallen short in these requirements.

The SHRA has consistently argued that the Rentcharge invoice could be made more transparent and the terms of payment made more user friendly. Residents also have major concerns about administrative costs which currently stand at £186,000 or some 18% of the charge. Throughout the last year the SHRA sought to meet with the CIC to discuss these matters, but no dates were forthcoming. It has taken the combined efforts of the Environment Agency and the local MP to secure a meeting and dates for future meetings. For further information on the Rentcharge see our Q and A on the SHRA website www.shra.co.uk/rentcharge.html

Seating

We are pleased to report that this year we managed to source funding, including from the EBC Ward Councillors devolved budget, to provide and install four much needed respite benches. Three of these have been installed and the fourth awaits site approval. The seating was well received by the majority of residents. The Association is actively seeking funding to install further benches, that again, will be installed away from local apartments so residents are not disturbed.

Greening the Harbour and the Environment

Last autumn the Macauley Place Open Space or park was planted and we eagerly awaited its opening. The S106 monies paid to ESCC by the developer also included monies for a pedestrian crossing and bus stop. These have yet to appear in ECSS expenditure plans.

In the meantime, the committee has been actively trying to identify areas for “greening” - planting trees or wildflower meadows. A couple of small sites owned by Persimmon have been identified and we are actively pursuing Persimmon for permission.

Residents have also shown great interest in our visiting seals – how to protect them from disturbance and provide a good environment for them. The Association is exploring the provision of information boards about the seals or notices encouraging people not to disturb them.

Community Centre

We are keeping an eye on the future of our community centre. Until November 2022 it is assigned to the NHS as a Covid vaccination hub that has helped protect thousands of people, but local clubs and social organisations have lost their home.

Retail Park and Cinema Site

In 2020 we asked M&G, the owners of the retail park, to smarten up the area and they told us of their plans to upgrade the store fronts and resurface the car park. However, all that has happened to date is that the covered walkway had its covering removed. We also talked to them about problems with the cinema site being vandalised with graffiti. In late 2021, a plan to convert the cinema building into a B&M retail store with a garden centre at its rear was submitted to EBC and a decision is expected soon.

Car Park at end of Key West

This area beside Lock 1 forms the link between the inner harbour walkways and the outer harbour prom, but access is extremely difficult, particularly for the less-able, prams and wheelchairs. There is either a steep concrete slope to negotiate or either a steep bank of shingle or one of loose gravel. We have discussed the matter with disability group representatives and will support their demand for improvements.

Othe Issues

The committee continues to meet the Sovereign ward councillors on a regular basis and is grateful for their support. We have discussed a wide range of issues: parking, dog poo bins, the state of roundabouts, S106 notices for pedestrian crossing and bus shelter, plans for undeveloped land between the new Open Space and Medical Centre. Our local Councillors are actively pursuing all these matters.

FUTURE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Since it was set up, the Association has operated as a voluntary, fully constituted Residents Association. However, last year after we published a letter from a fisherman who was having difficulties with Premier Marinas, Premier argued that the publication of this letter and our response was defamatory and threatened legal action. As the Association is not incorporated, it does not have limited liability and all members of the committee personal assets were at stake should Premier have decided to pursue the claim. Fortunately, the matter was settled with legal advice from our insurers.

In the next few months, the committee will consider bringing forward proposals to change the structure of the Association to an entity where the officers are protected by limited liability and the Association can pursue legal action, if it so chooses. We are currently exploring different options: Community Interest Company (CIC), Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and a Limited Company and will provide more information and recommendations in the next few months. Some of these options could also provide a greater ability to apply for grants and funding for other improvements that residents would like to see.

SHRA MEMBERSHIP

Between January 2021 and May 2022, 107 new members were signed up with over 70 of them claiming an additional membership card for a partner or family member. The current 'lifetime' membership scheme presents some difficulties in keeping track of the precise number of SHRA members, so the committee is examining the possibility of returning to a yearly subscription model.

KEEPING MEMBERS INFORMED

Website

Our news and updates are announced first on the SHRA website or in a mass emailing to all members (see below). The website is regularly updated and contains a great deal of information useful to residents of Sovereign Harbour, including the history of the harbour and the annual rentcharge. It receives around 1,500 visitors a month.

Distribution List & Social Media

For major or urgent announcements, SHRA's *MailChimp* email distribution list is used to contact members and subscribers. You can subscribe to the list from the SHRA web site: www.shra.co.uk/waterlines.html. When appropriate, we have responded to relevant posts that have appeared on the various Sovereign Harbour Facebook Groups.

Waterlines

Waterlines is our digital, online newsletter that is published as a PDF file every second month, commencing each year with a February edition. Contributions from members is always very welcome; anything that would be of interest to other harbour residents. Email the editor: waterlines@shra.co.uk

THANKS

We are grateful to our sponsors, AP-it, First Response Learning, Ginger and Sanders, Sanders Property Management, Sea Training Sussex, The Travel Concept and Victoria Healthcare, for their financial donations that have allowed us to operate the SHRA website and produce Waterlines at little cost to members.

We also thank the local businesses who offer a discount to SHRA members. Two Waterfront business are the latest to join the scheme - Quay Fisheries and Planet Golf. For the full list visit: www.shra.co.uk/join.html

Finally, I must thank you all for your continued support of the Association particularly throughout these difficult times when it has been hard to meet face to face. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if wish to bring any Harbour-related issue to our attention.

Susan Kerrison
Chair, SHRA
June 2022
chair@shra.co.uk

SHRA

Income & Expenditure Account Year Ended 31 March 2022

INCOME

	2020		2021		2022	
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Advertising	900		0		900	
Membership Fees	758		490		772	
Bank Interest	13		8		8	
Grant Mones Released			0		2250	
TOTAL INCOME		£1,671		£498		£3,963

EXPENDITURE

	2020		2021		2022	
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Insurance	101		101		256	
Website etc	80		120		228	
Computer Softwear	252		80		500	
Printing	85		80		21	
Telephone	0		78		0	
Meetings etc	66		15		130	
Sundries	59		111		132	
Postage	40		33		63	
Accountant	552					
Benches & Associated Expenditure					3599	
IT Services			49		0	
Flowers			48		60	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		1,235		715		4989
EXCESS (DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE			436	-£217	-£1,026	

Prepared by:
Carol Collier
SHRA Treasurer
May 2022

ASSETS

Current Assets	2020	2021	2022
Nat West Bank - Current Business Account	2849	4,254	1,466
Nat West Bank - Business Reserve Account	7525	7,532	7,533
Paypay Account	238	218	370
Equipment Assets			0
Prepaid Expenses			0
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	£10,612	£12,004	£9,369

CURRENT LIABILITIES	2020	2021	2022
Accrued Expenses	0	109	0
Grant Monies Held for EBC	0	1,500	0
TOTAL LIABILITIES	0	£1,609	£0
NET ASSETS		£10,395	£9,369

REPRESENTED BY:

	2020	2021	2022
Net fund brought forward	10,176	10,612	10,395
Surplus for the year	436		
Deficit for the Year		-217	-1,026
NET FUND C/F	£10,612	£10,395	£9,369

Prepared by:
Carol Collier
May 2022