

SEATON TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

8th January 2008

PRESENT: Cllr J Knight (Chairman)
Cllrs P Burrows, L Garner, M Greenyer, G Jones, J Meakin, Miss R Palacio, Mrs J Roebuck, Mrs C Wise

APOLOGIES: Cllrs Semple and Collins (on holiday), Cllr O'Connell (youth matters)

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr Angus Walker, a Seaton fisherman and assistant Harbour Master for Axmouth Harbour, spoke on the risk assessment undertaken by EDDC on Seaton beach on which the town council had been asked to comment. He said that he was particularly concerned that such an assessment had been undertaken on 29th November, which was well outside the period when anyone would attempt to undertake passenger trips. He said he used to operate passenger trips for many years from Seaton beach but only ceased that activity, not because the beach was dangerous, but because there was not enough business to make it financially viable.

Mr Walker said there were risks on any beach in operating passenger trips, depending on weather conditions, and at Seaton it was inadvisable to undertake lone working. However, recent press reports implied that EDDC were considering removing all boats from Seaton beach because it was dangerous. He said such action would not only affect passenger boats but remove the fundamental right granted by Royal Charter exclusively to Seaton fishermen to be able to go to sea, i.e. to undertake commercial fishing.

Mr Walker concluded by recommending that further risk assessments be undertaken, particularly during the summer months when passenger boats operate, and for such assessments to be undertaken on more than one day.

Mr Charlie Ziemann, chairman of East Devon Fishermen's Association, spoke on the same matter. He said that he had had a boat for nearly 50 years, either in the harbour or operating off Seaton beach. He said any activity that dealt with the force of nature had an element of risk attached to it, but boating off Seaton beach was no more dangerous than using the district's roads. He believed the findings in the risk assessment gave the general public a misleading impression of dangers on Seaton beach. He said there had never been a serious accident on Seaton beach and he referred to the 92ft long landing stage that had been successfully in use up until recent years. He confirmed that what should be assessed was winch users. In conclusion Mr Ziemann offered the help of the

Fishermen's Association to members of the council if they would like it in considering this assessment.

Mrs Jacky East, caretaker of Seaton Town Hall, said she wanted to raise a matter with the town council about an incident that took place after the new year activities in the town hall, which was making her consider her position as caretaker. For members' information she advised them that she was employed on a part-time basis, with no fixed hours. She was upset to have learned that during the morning of 2nd January, without attempting to contact her, Cllr Knight had complained to EDDC that the premises were not clean, as a result of which a relief caretaker had been called in. She said this had not been an appropriate way to deal with the matter, as such action not only undermined her but undermined her role.

In view of the presence of the fishermen's representatives, the chairman proposed taking agenda item (5) before agenda item (4). This was agreed.

478/07 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted and approved.

479/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Knight declared an interest as a district councillor in agenda item (5) risk assessment of Seaton Beach, as the beach was the responsibility of EDDC.

480/07 TO CONSIDER EDDC RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE OPERATION OF PASSENGER BOATS FROM SEATON BEACH, AND AGREE RESPONSE FOR SUBMISSION BY 10th JANUARY 2008

Members raised the following concerns about the risk assessment:

- a) some items contained in the assessment were not appropriate to passenger boats operating off the beach;
- b) risk assessments can produce conflicting results dependent upon days on which they are undertaken and opinion of those making the assessment;
- c) as passenger boats do not operate in the winter, any assessment should only be undertaken during the period of activity;
- d) the assessment does not appear to have taken account of experienced operators;
- e) has the opinion of Stuart Lines been sought;
- f) the granting of concessions could be limited to less than a year to take account of beach conditions;
- g) risk assessment does not provide for competence of operators;

Cllr Palacio proposed that a working party of the committee should consider this matter in greater detail, with the input of representatives of East Devon Fishermen's Association to enable a formal response to be submitted.

It was unanimously agreed that Cllrs Wise, Greenyer and Palacio would meet with Mr Walker and Mr Ziemann on Friday 11th January at 2.00pm at the Town Hall to agree a response.

481/07 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 11th and 20th DECEMBER 2007

The chairman handed the Clerk a copy of the minutes of a meeting held on 20th December 2007 that had been conducted under Standing Order 73. As these had not been circulated to members, it was agreed to defer approval until the next meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2007 were confirmed and signed by the chairman.

482/07 TO NOTE TENDERS RECEIVED FOR THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL GROUNDS AND SERVICE MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR 2008/9 AND TO AWARD CONTRACT/S

It was unanimously **Resolved** to award contracts as follows:

Section 2 Valley Park Play Area	EDDC	£ 977.62
Section 3 Underfleet Footpath	Gardencare	£ 560.00
Section 4 junctions of Harepath Rd/A3052 & Seaton Down Road/A3052	Gardencare	£ 477.00

These Minutes confirmed thisday of2008

Presiding chairman