

## **EXE ESTUARY USERS ASSOCIATION (EEUA).**

Notes on the General Meeting called on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2008.

SFCC represented by Comd.Jenny S. & V/Comd. Tony C.

Apologies were given for such short notice in calling this important meeting and it was stressed that attendance was essential prior to the public meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup> 2008.

Chairman Graham Wheeler addressed the meeting with his concerns, having been on the Harbour Revision Working Group with Exeter City Council (ECC) in agreeing the proposals of the future and EEUA involvement.

He pointed out to the meeting that it was not the case to debate what we have already agreed under the main heads which are:

- a) No Mooring Licences
- b) Enhanced Representation
- c) Reduced Scope
- d) Reduced Costs

Accomplished exchanges took place with ECC on a,b,& c. but EEUA expresses concern about rising costs. The Chairman wrote formally to ECC, and they replied in an open letter ([www.ECC.gov](http://www.ECC.gov)) and the steering committee met with ECC who suggested that EENA hand back to ECC if income failed.

The concerns based on 90% collection rate on 1860 vessels, a figure put up by ECC, and without actual eyeball evidence.

Simon Tytherliegh of the EEUA took to the river on two occasions some distance apart for a count of vessels and came to results of his count to more like 1300 vessels. It was not a count of moorings.

The ECC based their costs on a mean 9mtr. but actually closer to 7mtr. So estimated on £8.71 per metre per vessel would produce no reserve, so therefore would need to be at least £9 per mtr.

It could be envisaged depending on the number of vessels, and the movement of the mean, could take costs up and up to as much as £18 per mtr. This would make us the most expensive river in this country if the charges rose to £30 due to less boats and less water.

What are the consequences?

We have agreed to pay, but it would have to be a reasonable amount. Navigation Authority require £50,000 to buoy the lower Exe which could become coastal with ECC taking on higher Exe and Devon County taking on the Western side.

£120,000 total costs of managing the river, with a £2,000 reserve, which was hardly viable in what is likely to be a reducing income of present economic environment, and the changing river conditions.

Members raised several questions and the more it was debated it was becoming clearer that the HRO (Harbour River Authority) would be difficult to manage on this sort of potential income guestimates.

Graham Wheeler and the steering group, after three years of very hard work, including travels to various meetings in London and with ECC, and talking to representing barristers, felt they had to come back for direction of the EEUA . Graham made the point, adding it was not for him to say, but consideration should be given to abandoning the scheme and withdrawing the support of the EEUA .

How would this action affect the HRO? was asked.

The chairman said if our support was withdrawn the HRO falls too, and would no doubt throw a spanner in the public enquiry. ECC would have to apply for a renewal of the HRO but without local support of bodies like EEUA, again it could not progress.

The meeting was called to a vote that: The EEUA withdraws its support for the trust port from HRO. The vote was carried unanimously.