



The purpose of this Report is to provide Members with an update on continuing conversations with Cheetah Marine and Blake Fisheries about the future management of the Haven.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Isle of Wight Council have now provided Cheetah Marine with a two-year extension of the current contract for seaweed clearance and that is a welcome postponement of the risk to the town although not a longer term solution.
 - b) There is a shared willingness among all four stakeholders – the Town Council, the Isle of Wight Council, Cheetah Marine and Blake Fisheries - to explore the possibility of a governance structure for local management, given the Isle of Wight Council's decision to advertise it for sale at £1 on the open market from 1 April next year: their internal deadline for wanting to remove the £75k cost from their annual Budget is 1 April 2021.
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2) ACTION AREAS

- a) Councillor Toogood and I met with Cheetah Marine's Sean Strevens and Blake Fisheries' Geoff Blake on 27 December and identified two action areas that presented the same challenges for a local management agreement as for the Isle of Wight Council: the safety of the Haven and the treatment of the seaweed.
 - b) Geoff Blake is of the view that significant funding may be available from the Maritime Management Organisation (MMO) and perhaps other government agencies for projects that improve the safety of fishermen; he is particularly concerned about the dangers of a south-westerly gale.
 - c) He and Sean Strevens (now with considerable international experience of rock harbours) both believe that they have identified changes to the re-arrangement of the arms that would both make the harbour safer and also reduce the amount of seaweed it collects.
 - d) We agreed to ask for a meeting with Bob Seeley in the expectation that he can signpost any potential funding sources for the necessary works; that meeting was requested by email on 29 December and a reply still awaited.
 - e) In respect of the need to reduce or remove the £75k annual cost of the current arrangement for removing the seaweed two options were agreed to explore:
 - Geoff Blake has secured a Ventura Pump which, along with additional pipework, could significantly reduce the processing cost and provide a cheaper alternative to the need to replace the current boat and pump in the medium term. It now needs practical testing and it is planned to expedite that in the next three months.
 - The Mayor received an interesting proposal for a use of the seaweed that could provide a positive income from its management from local resident David Baldwin – a fellow of the Linnean Society, the world's oldest active biological society founded in 1788 – who clearly knows everything there is to know about seaweed and its uses as well as being up-to-date with issues around the Haven's future.
 - It was agreed to ask him to meet with us for discussion of his proposal and the technical issues around any implementation of it.
 - f) That meeting took place on 7 January from which David Baldwin has agreed to test through his contacts with related companies and York University whether the type of seaweed that collects in the Haven does have a commercial value.
 - g) A meeting has also been arranged with Alex Minns and Sean Newton, at their request, for 20 January to discuss both the Haven and the Central Car Park.
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3) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to consider and comment on progress to date and identify any other action areas that need to be explored.
