

Meeting of the boating community to discuss the proposed Portland Oystermen Development

Date: 18:00 Thursday 11 May 2017

Present: Alex Porter, Andrew Simpson Sailing Centre (ASSC)
Michael Gregory, WPCA
Brendan Moore
Peter Goss, RNSA
Stephen Green, CCSC
Michael Conroy, CCSC
Peter Allam, WPNSA
Russ Levett, Portland Marina (PM)
Anne Goldsack, RYA Marine Planning
Richard White, RYA Local Representative

Apologies: Euan McNair, WSC
Kristin Crook, RDYC
Tris Best, OTC
Luke Johnson, PGL
Ian Green, CCSC

Objective:

To discuss the Portland Oystermen development to share understanding of the implications to the boating community and identify any aspects that will cause hazard or have any significant impact to the current or future boating activities.

Summary of common concerns

At the time of the meeting, most participants did not have sight of a more recent version of the management plan that may capture some of the objections already raised by individuals, organisations and commercial operators.

Cages

The cages were highlighted as a significant feature of the proposed development with the following impacts identified:

- Cages present a serious hazard to inverted dinghies where the mast could get caught in a cage leading to a potential entrapment of the crew creating a risk of drowning.
(Dinghy mast heights typically range from 3m to 8m)
(ASSC, CCSC, PGL, WPNSA)
- Cages create a risk of anchors (from Keelboats, RIBs, training & race marks) getting caught leading to their loss if they cannot be freed.
(ASSC, CCSC, OTC, PGL, RNSA, WPCA, WPNSA)
- Cages create a risk to keelboats anchoring in emergency in bad weather by preventing the anchor bedding in and thereby dragging; potentially leading to the boat and cage being washed ashore.
(CCSC, PGL, PM, RNSA, WPCA, WPNSA)

- Cages cannot be placed within the area of the harbour marked as a safe anchorage.
(CCSC, PGL, PM, RNSA, WPCA, WPNSA)
- Cages cannot be placed in or adjacent to the preferred channel from the harbour entrance to the Portland Marina & WPNSA.
(CCSC, PGL, PM, RNSA, WPCA, WPNSA)
- Cages limiting the servicing and replacement of the fixed marks in the area.
(CCSC)
- Marking all the groups of cages with buoys will cause a hazard to navigation.
(ASSC, CCSC, OTC, PGL, PM, RNSA, WPCA, WPNSA)

It was noted that the cages will need a tidal works licence and this will require Portland Port Authority to formally consult with all stakeholders.

Management Activity

- Activity level of managing and harvesting the shellfish could limit the areas which are currently used for normal sailing activity and lead to a conflict between novice sailing groups and divers operating in adjacent areas.
(ASSC, CCSC, OTC, WPNSA)
- Mechanised conveyor harvesting vessels could present a danger to novice sailing groups.
(ASSC, CCSC, OTC, WPNSA)
- Cage Lifting Vessels could be operating continuously in order to service the cages
(ASSC, CCSC, OTC, WPNSA)

Shellfish not remaining within the area of the several order

- During Easterly gales it is likely that shellfish will be washed into the shallows and ashore along the Ham Beach area of the harbour. This will present a significant hazard to windsurfers, kite surfers and other harbour users in bare feet.
(ASSC, OTC, WPNSA)
- The normal flow direction within the harbour is likely to lead to migration of the shellfish from the farm towards RNSA moorings and the marina.
(PM, RNSA, WPNSA)
- Shellfish, particularly mussels, migrating and fouling mooring chains and boat gear (rudders, propellers and water inlet rubles). It was noted that Hugh Wiltshire had suggested that when the experimental mussel farm was in place near the Northern breakwater, he saw a considerable increase in fouling of gear making it more difficult and more expensive to service moorings.

Other questions requiring clarification

- How many cages are proposed?
- Where will the Cages be located?
- Will & how will the cages be marked?
- Will the cages require a Tidal Works Licence?
- Is there another location where the cages will not conflict and create a hazard to boating activity?

- What is the seasonal timescale of activity?
- How many boats will be harvesting / servicing the farm and how frequently?
- How many divers will be working and how frequently?
- What measures will be in place to prevent the migration of shellfish onto the Ham Beach during easterly gales?
- How are the mussels to be grown (they need to anchor to something)?