

# Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting  
Over Teams

**Friday 10 March 2023 at 10am**

<b>Present:</b>	Alan McKeown – Chairperson Kevin Quigley – Chief Executive David Knott – Board Member Davey Hill – Board Member
<b>In attendance</b>	Belinda McCaughey – Accounts Administrator

	<b>Action</b>
<b>1. Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	
Alan welcomed all to the meeting, Apology received from Lynn Gilmore.	
<b>2. Declaration of Interests</b>	
Davey declared his interest as an owner of multiple guard duty vessels and also as an employee of Seasource.  Alan asked Davey to update his declaration of interests to confirm the fact that he is no longer a director of Seasource.  Alan confirmed Davey may be asked to leave when Guard Duty Vessel pricing is discussed.	Davey
<b>3. General Overview</b>	
Kevin gave apology on behalf of himself and Belinda in respect of being ill prepared for the Finance Meeting on 28 February and thanked all members for agreeing to attend this additional meeting.  Alan thanked Kevin for the comprehensive papers for this meeting.  <b>Landings dues</b>  Kevin discussed the rationale behind the landings figure included in the budget. These are based on an average of four ‘normal’ years of trading (i.e. excluding Covid. Kevin explained that whilst last year had very strong landings, basing the budget on only one historic year’s figures would be high risk especially with the significant uncertainty about unresolved crewing issues being felt by fishing vessels.	

	Action
<p>Davey noted he had recently attended a conference on the issues around crewing vessels. Fishing industry is not the only industry with these problems.</p> <p>Davey also confirmed issues affect smaller vessels more than larger ones who are able to move outside the 12 mile limit.</p> <p>Davey also confirmed the high level of costs being faced by the fishermen. Whilst the price of prawns has increased so too have other costs with the bottom line to the vessels reducing.</p> <p>After a full discussion it was agreed to leave the landings figure at the average of 4 years with the level set at £609k.</p>	
<p><b>4. Dues and Charges</b></p>	
<p>Kevin noted that when budgeting we use number of vessels at a particular date in time (historically in November). Budget is based on actual vessels in the harbours and not estimated. With falling vessel numbers an increase of 8% on prices will not result in an overall 8% rise in income.</p> <p>The Committee discussed in detail the reasons behind setting the prices at the levels proposed in the budget.</p> <p>Kevin confirmed that whilst NIFHA suffered around 12% inflation in its costs last year, we have set the cost increases at the maximum level he thinks is sustainable for the fishing industry.</p> <p>Kevin advised that ultimately there may be a need to review the Ad Valorem rate – which needs to be discussed at next week’s Board Meeting. Kevin has committed to investigate this, and NIFHA’s cost competitiveness more fully through market research in the Summer, possibly with actual visits to other fishing harbours.</p> <p>Alan advised that the fishermen need to be made aware that for this year we have taken their current circumstances into account when setting the price levels.</p> <p><b>Harbour Dues</b></p> <p>Kevin confirmed minimum landings for larger vessels has been increased to reflect a more realistic level of their current landings.</p> <p>Davey queried the level charged to Visitor Fishing Vessels - this is the rate pelagic vessels also pay.</p> <p>Kevin advised that at the Ardglass Stakeholders meeting an issue was brought up with regard to the Pelagic Vessels berthing and costs associated with the fishermen having to move their boats. This may need to be addressed with this charge. Kevin will review.</p>	<p>Kevin</p> <p>Kevin</p>

	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>Pontoon Rates</b></p> <p>Gap between Kilkeel and Portavogie pricing is increasing due to the rounding up to whole values and this needs to be addressed over time. It is proposed to increase the Composition Rate to £36 per month and Non Comp to £88 per month.</p> <p><b>Slipway Charges</b></p> <p>These are set with a 5% increase. After discussing levels it was agreed to leave at 5% for this year and sense check as part of the above benchmarking exercise before setting next years levels.</p> <p>Davey commented on why there should be a difference between Kilkeel and Portavogie Slipway charges when both slips are the same. Kevin confirmed differential was due to Capital Costs being higher in Kilkeel. Once the Portavogie Slipway is refurbished these costs will be reassessed.</p> <p><b>Ice</b></p> <p>This is a declining market – fewer vessels need to take ice. Kevin noted that most Ice production elsewhere is in the private sector. A quick benchmark against one published price indicated that NIFHA’s proposed pricing for 2023/24 was in keeping with market rate.</p> <p><b>Waste</b></p> <p>A decision was taken back in 2019 to start addressing the gap between revenue and expenditure on waste. An annual increase of 20% was decided upon and this has shown an improvement year on year since then and the gap on cost recovery continues to narrow.</p> <p>Currently in Kilkeel we are addressing the cost of waste disposal and ways to reduce waste. Looking at efficiency savings over time.</p> <p><b>Water</b></p> <p>Current costs include an element of infrastructure charge and meter standing charge.</p> <p><b>Electricity Charges</b></p> <p>These reflect the current increases we have seen over the last year.</p> <p>The committee discussed the cost proposal and it was agreed to leave it at the level set.</p> <p>Electricity charge out prices to stakeholders will be reviewed quarterly and charge out price amended accordingly. a note would be made in the Business Plan referring to the possibility of reduced electricity prices in the last quarter of 2023/24.</p> <p><b>Guard Duty Vessels</b></p> <p>Explanatory paper will be sent to all after this meeting.</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p>Kevin</p> <p>Belinda</p>

