

There is an increasing number of boats being lifted out onto harbour property and just left - almost one could say abandoned. Add to this the trailers that are lying around this is meaning that there is now a lack of space and waiting lists (Douglas and Peel have waiting lists) for boat owners who need to lift their boats out to carry out routine maintenance. The other harbours are bursting at the seams for hard standing space. In light of the Australian Tubeworm now in Peel boat owners are now going to have to undertake, depending on how well it is managed, regular preventative maintenance and cleaning. This could possibly be more than once a year - for example some marinas on the South Coast of England with this tubeworm insist on boats being cleaned every 6 weeks, others twice a year. These boats and trailers left lying around long term need addressing within the fees. Say for example once they have been out for 12 months their fees double every year/ trailers being left without boats on year in year out need removing. I am sure there are other ways to gently persuade the owners to remove/dispose of these boats and trailers but they need to involve substantial fee increases as it is paramount for safety at sea, that there is space for boat owners to have the ability to lift out their vessels on the hard to keep their vessels maintained.

With the Tubeworm present in Peel the boats that are in the marina itself and not maintained are now an ideal marine habitat for the Tubeworm to spread out of control. Some method needs to be put in place to ensure these boats are maintained and their hulls cleaned regularly. Some of these boats are definitely not seaworthy and again fees need to be increased to ensure boat owners are not just leaving them in the water as a dumping ground for unused and unwanted boats. It is now imperative that all boats in the harbours have their hulls checked and cleaned regularly.

Anonymous

In response to the consultation document, I have very little to say, in that increases somewhere between 5% and 6% seems to be fair and reasonable for pontoon berth holders.

Anonymous

Further to this consultation I would make the following comments which in the main are related to the deep water moorings in Port St Mary. On the face of it I can understand why the Department feels a 5.4% increase is a reasonable one, given the cost of living and recent Government staff pay awards for example. However across the board increases are not always the best way forward. Historically many moorings in Port St Mary were privately owned with owners arranging these moorings both in terms of hardware and divers. This was outlawed by the Department of Infrastructure a few years ago, many private owners saw a massive increase in premiums enforced by a sole provider. Private moorings are now no longer allowed. Conversely this did improve organisation, laying of moorings, safety, quality with improved insurance piece of mind. Deep water moorings do not have the same benefits as a marina, notwithstanding Isle of Man marinas have significant issues both in terms of tidal access and silting. Irrespective of this the prices for deep water berths compared to local marina berths are disproportionate, the latter representing better value for money. A few larger local deep water mooring craft have moved to UK marina's which they feel offers a better base for Irish Sea cruising, these marina's have even advertised in the local Manx press from time to time. A good number of PSM deep water mooring lay vacant this year with lost revenue to the department. What is the reason for this? Value for money? Surely better to have these moorings more competitively priced, encourage uptake and occupied? My impression is the biggest interest in deep water moorings in Port St Mary is from small boat owners. For me as

a small boat owner, having access to a deep water mooring is critical for the enjoyment of my hobby, giving me the flexibility to get out when otherwise I wouldn't bother. However it could be argued that even deep water mooring costs are disproportionate between larger boats and small boats in terms of space taken, all pay the same ground rent but the meterage costs between say a 6 metre and a 12 metre boat don't add up to much. Small boats represent a large proportion of pleasure boaters on the Isle of Man. More competitive rates for smaller boats could increase uptake from such boat owners (say < 6 metre craft), it could possibly help ease slipway congestion and vehicle / trailer congestion which is ridiculous at times limited parking spaces, boats clogging / moored on slipways and pontoon etc. or even encourage other small boat owners to relocate to Port St Mary for the summer. Encourage younger people and others to get involved in boating. Personally I can afford the fees but my son, who has not long started out in working life could not afford such an annual outlay notwithstanding that boating is not a cheap hobby in any case. Some marinas offer concessionary rates for small craft. Obviously there would be a need for owners to buy a tender but this is a one off purchase. No doubt tender spaces could be consolidated in the boat parks. I am not suggesting that local marina rates or those for large craft on deep water moorings are increased beyond inflationary rates, I am just making a suggestion to potentially help small boat owners and young people make the most of their leisure time in a more cost effective way whilst possible utilising redundant moorings.

P Woods

The 5.4% increase sounds ok but percentage increases on an already high figure is increasing the charge to a point where it appears a lot of boat owners are not using harbours. Owning a small leisure craft has never been a cheap hobby but given the short season and ever increasing charges make it is very expensive. The level of maintenance has decreased with the increase in charges. On the topic of insurance, after the first year of insurance there has been a complete lack of any checks of insurance documents, vessels should have some means of proving they are insured i.e. a sticker for the year. It's no good passing a law on compulsory insurance and not policing it, is this another lack of staff issue? The charge to change registration document details is too high and could discourage some from changing it. The registered owner must be responsible for the vessel and it should be possible to track down the owner of an abandoned vessel. The "I've sold it to someone in the pub" storey ignored. The £20 (now plus 5.4%) increase to rid the harbour areas of abandoned boats was not only completely unfair but didn't seem to work. The registered owner must be held responsible. There seems to be a huge increase in harbour use with kayaks and paddle boards they appear to enjoy the use of their vessels without the need of insurance or registration or storage charges.

D Thornley

My response to the "consultation" is that if the powers that be intend to increase fees by whatever percentage, there's little that we payers can do about it. Even if every single leisure user jumped up and down making a noise, the new charges will still be applied. This is justifiable from the Government point of view, as we all know that our harbours (except Douglas) are loss-making. I was for many years in the fishing and processing business and at that time, fishing vessels were paying higher charges than they do now through a deduction from their gross landing values. I also understand the rationale for keeping these charges low - times are hard for everyone and after Brexit, it's even more difficult to sustain the fishing and processing at all. At a personal level, I do find the summer fees for Department of

Infrastructure moorings in Port St Mary expensive for what we get. My mooring is one a long way out in the more exposed zone owing to the depth of my boat's keel and, although we appreciate the convenience of the current system, it does seem extortionate. The Department of Infrastructure argument will be that it costs more to operate the moorings than they raise but isn't this the case for every public service? The costs of running harbours, the airport, buses, trains, trams, roads and all the other Government run services in every department will always exceed their income. I know it's not a fair comparison but in Norway, leisure boat users pay a maximum of £250 p.a. in order to encourage more people to have boats and use them. The Norwegian government is obviously immensely rich - and they have an almost infinite number of sheltered ports and anchorages in their coastline but as leisure user these days, I can't help but think we are being moderately fleeced at home! Perhaps a zero percent increase in the Port St Mary afloat moorings fees might be a nice gesture?

M Kneale

As a small boat owner who uses Ramsey Harbour may I respectfully suggest that before you go rising harbour dues yet again as you do every year that you chase up the ones who don't pay and clear out the harbour of a significant number of abandoned and derelict craft which litter the inner Harbours? Also over the past forty years since I have been a boat owner I have repeatedly requested a fresh water tap and electric stand for the old harbour and bank west side of the swing bridge. These simple provisions are freely available on the wall side of the harbour at no extra charge. The mooring chain west side of the swing bridge is in very bad shape, it has broken on a number of occasions and boats have become loose, year after year a new chain gets promised but it never happens. The harbour is full of debris. Floating timber and large branches. Maybe you would like to consider giving something back for a change and lower the harbour dues for pleasure craft to acceptable level, perhaps even introduce a six month charge as many small boat owners such as myself take their boat out of the harbour for the winter months.

R Herdman

Our comments concern Proposal 1 -the inflationary increase of 5.4% to all harbour dues and charges for vessels, passengers and goods. We would contend that this review of harbour fees offers an opportunity to address a special case on which our company has been in contact with various Government departments over the past year. This relates to the export of bulk commodities, in our case sand. There cannot be too many (if any) opportunities for regular export of this type from the island, comprising a single product in bulk quantities (750 tonnes weekly, to Glasson Dock, Lancashire is proposed). There are many good reasons for exporting sand. Our Point of Ayre quarry produces a large excess of sand in winning gravel from the deposit. There are currently tens of thousands of tonnes of product in the quarry and this is added to daily, with no prospect of selling on-island. Finding an avenue for regular export would be transformative to the operation and would provide brand new, regular income for not only our business, but also the shipping company who would transport the cargoes weekly. In addition, there would be a spin off for the haulage companies who would transport the sand from Point of Ayre to Ramsey, plus extra fuel purchased on-island and tax revenue from same. Overall, a carbon saving would also be achieved. By importing via Glasson Dock for use in the local Lancashire area, our potential customer would no longer need to transport sand by road from their current sources at Liverpool and Cheshire. This would more than

offset the extra fuel used in transporting the sand to Ramsey and on the ship which would be sailing to Glasson Dock in any case.

The scale of harbour dues payable per tonne has been a significant factor in us being unable to provide a competitive rate to the potential customer and therefore win new business for our company and the island. Even before the proposed increase, the rate per tonne payable is £2.15 – compare please to the dues payable for exporting aggregates from Belfast of 45p! A further 5.4% increase will make it even more difficult. We would therefore ask that consideration be given to giving the Department the power to treat cases such as this (single product exports in bulk quantities) on their own merits and agree reduced or zero harbour dues as required, to facilitate the winning of new business for the island. IOM Government would still benefit from the export through the aggregate royalty payable on all sales from the Point of Ayre (shortly to increase to £2.66 per tonne), plus corporation tax payable on earnings at the quarry (classed as income from land & property and therefore taxed at 20%). At present the income Government receives from the sand stocks which continue to build at the quarry is nothing.

Island Aggregates Limited

The proposed fee increase is not unreasonable, but the Department need to be mindful to not increase the fees to such an extent that it deters boats from visiting or boat owners keeping their boats in Douglas Marina. These help promote the economy in the capital with the hospitality and retail outlets in the area benefiting from the resulting trade. With Douglas now achieving City status, more visiting yacht owners may wish to visit and spend their money in the capital, which should not be discouraged by excessively high fees. Can you clarify the reason why the inflation is set at 5.4% and not the last 2 years inflationary rate and it would be helpful if you can provide any assessment conducted on the price elasticity of demand? Douglas City Council support the pleasure cruise fee increase and maximum charge uplift. By bringing closer to neighbouring jurisdictions' ports, this should not be placing the income at risk, and should help bring some extra cash to the island as a contribution towards the cost of maintaining the harbour access for the passengers.

Douglas City Council