

MINUTES OF PENZANCE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING held in
Committee Room 3, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Tuesday 13th June 2006 at 4.30 pm

PRESENT

Councillor D. Axford (Town Mayor)
Councillor F. Granger (Deputy Town Mayor)

Councillors R. Clark
M.R. Cotton (left at 5.55pm)
J.H. Dixon
M. Freeman
J.S. Lambourn
R.M. Lawrence
K.L.W. Perry

Also present: Cllr. M. Pilcher from Penwith District Council.

25. APOLOGIES

Cllrs. S. Bennett , C.A. Dennis, C.A.C. White, T.E. Williams

26. THE MARINE BILL – CONSULTATION

The Town Mayor introduced Mr. Steve Crummay, Natural Environment Section Manager with Cornwall County Council who addressed the meeting and explained the County Council's response to the proposed Marine Bill. Mr. Crummay also stressed the importance of the Bill as a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to protect the marine environment effectively and efficiently.

(a) Background to the Proposed Bill

Over recent years, there has been a build up of pressure on the Government to act on marine environment issues and it has been announced that a Marine Bill will be put into place during the life of the current Government. A draft of this Bill should be available by October/November this year. Extensive consultation has taken place over the last 12 months and anyone (organisation or individual) can respond – the deadline for responses is 23rd June 2006. Cornwall County Council were already looking at marine environment issues when the Marine Bill Consultation document was produced and it was therefore well placed to respond. (A copy of the County Council's summary of the consultation document and its response appears as Appendix 'A' to the minutes.)

PDC feels it should also respond to the Consultation Document due to the extensive coastline attached to Penwith and the three harbours owned by PDC.

Much of the response compiled by CCC is currently being used to shape the response from the Local Government Association.

(b) The Bill Addresses Six Specific Areas:

(i) Marine Spatial Planning

To put in place a system for the best use of marine sea space. Current planning does not include areas below sea level.

(ii) Marine Planning Consent

This would streamline activities and make everything more cohesive. Currently some activities require consent from six different authorities.

(iii) Marine Management Organisation

A single body that would deal with all areas of marine enforcement, licensing, fishing etc. – bringing together all the areas that are presently regulated by various different bodies.

(iv) Marine Nature Conservation

The networking and management of the marine environment (similar to the system that exists on land). This will also include a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPA's).

(v) Coastal & Estuary Management

Different areas in Cornwall are managed by various forums and partnerships. Current legislation only recommends a management forum or partnership – it is not statutory. The Marine Bill would implement an integrated system of interaction between terrestrial and marine interests – Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

(vi) Fisheries Management

A Government review of fisheries management is currently taking place but this has not been included in the Marine Bill. The CCC response emphasises the need for this to be included in the Bill.

(c) Cornwall County Council's Response to the Bill

After outlining the different areas addressed by the Bill, Mr. Crummay then answered specific questions put by members of the Town Council before proceeding to talk through the County Council's specific responses to the questions raised in the consultation paper.

Concern was raised over the question of funding marine management, e.g. bathing water quality and spillage clean up, and it was felt that this cost should be spread nationwide – not borne solely by those counties with a coastline. It was also pointed out that local authorities will need to employ a marine specialist.

Mr. Crummay drew the Council's attention to the regulatory section of the proposed Bill that deals with the breakdown of costs.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Crummay for his time and the Town Clerk asked him if he would attend a future meeting when the Marine Bill was formally published later in the year. Mr. Crummay left the meeting at 6.30 pm.

PROPOSALS

It was resolved that the Town Council would endorse the County Council's response to the consultation document with particular emphasis on the following:

- (i) A Marine Management Organisation should be created with powers available to local County Councils or an appropriate accountable body in consultation with District and Town or Parish Councils.
- (ii) The Licensing Regime should be streamlined (currently across several different departments).
- (iii) The present remit of the Bill is considered to be a lost opportunity to manage fishing stock.
- (iv) It should be incumbent on the County Council or the accountable body to consult locally on detailed applications and proposals.

Given that the meeting was concerned with maritime issues, Cllr. Clark raised the issue of the Route Partnership - the Harbour Revision Orders for Penzance and St. Mary's and the proposed new vessel, and it was

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk should write to Tony Roche at Cornwall County Council requesting a response to the following three questions:

- It is understood that a study was undertaken to examine the various options for replacing the vessels Scillonian III and Gry Maritha. What proportion of the costs of this study were met from public funds? Are the findings of this study in the public domain?
- What public and private monies are being sought for what projects by the Isles of Scilly Route Partnership?
- What statistical assessment has been made of the consequences for Penzance of the proposals of the Isles of Scilly Route Partnership?

and with an invitation for him to attend a meeting to clarify matters with the Town Council.

6.45 pm

Chairman
10th July 2006