



TRINITY HOUSE

# **Minutes of Trinity House Lighthouse Board**

## **26 March 2025 – Harwich**

### **Present**

Captain Lance Batchelor (Chair) (LB) *by Webex*

Rear Admiral Iain Lower CB (Deputy Master/ Chief Executive) (IL)

Captain Andy Holt (Director of Operations) (AH)

Commander Nigel Hare (Director of Navigational Requirements) (NH)

Valerie Owen OBE (NED) (VO) *by Webex*

Alan Moore (NED) (AM)

Curtis Juman (NED) (CJ)

### **Present (non-voting)**

Natalie Gull (Director of People & Culture) (NG)

Damien Oliver (Director of Major Projects) (DO)

Barry Nunn (Head of Finance & Risk, deputising in the absence of the Director of Business Services) (BN)

### **In attendance**

Thomas Arculus (Head of Legal and Estates / Board Secretary) (TA)

Jessica Willan (Head of Safety and Environment) (JW) *(Item 2.2)*

Lisa Gilmour (Head of GLA Sponsorship Team, Maritime Strategy and Sponsorship Division, Department for Transport) (LG) *by Webex*

## **1. ADMINISTRATION**

### **1.1 Welcome by Chair**

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The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

## 1.2 Apologies

Ton Damen (Director of Business Services).

## 1.3 Declarations of Interest

Annual written declarations of interest were requested from members at the start of the new financial year.

## 1.4 Minutes of Lighthouse Board – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025

Approved.

## 1.5 Log of Actions

The Board reviewed the Log of Actions and made appropriate updates to it.

# 2. **PERFORMANCE**

## 2.1 Chief Executive's Report

IL presented his report and outlined the desired outcomes of the meeting which were, to approve a suite of six People Policies; to approve the new Operations Directorate Policy; to endorse the Tri-GLA Five Year AtoN Review Final Report and to approve the revised Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Terms of Reference.

He was also pleased to announce that the new Trinity House Strategy “Lighting the Way to 2035” had been finalised.

He spoke about the ongoing communication to the staff of the results of the People Survey and the actions arising as a result of it, the development of the Strategy Implementation Plan, improvements to the management of civil engineering, Health and Safety, progress with the Futures Afloat project and the outcomes of the first General Assembly and Council meetings of the new IALA.

The CEO's Risk Review focussed on the renewal of the lease of the St Just Forward Operating Base (FOB), wood dust problems at the Swansea Depot, and matters in connection with removal of mercury from lighthouse optics.

The Board discussed St Just FOB lease. The landlord is undertaking a business process review which will conclude in the summer.

Swansea wood dust has been monitored for some months now, the Board considered that the time is approaching to escalate and make decisions about the future, noting the sensitive nature of these discussions.

VO advocated the commissioning of a piece of contingency planning work recognising the issues at St Just, Swansea and the Harwich sea wall. AM added that the possible

loss of a ship should also be factored in. CJ confirmed that there will be a contingency planning audit undertaken in the 2025-26 Internal Audit Plan and these subjects should be included in the audit scope.

## 2.2 Health and Safety Committee Report

JW presented the Health and Safety Committee's Report highlighting three Stop Work Authorities (SWA) which had recently been issued by Management. This is where an immediate halt is called to a task if a safety concern is detected. SWAs had been called for:

- (1) Helicopter under-slinging (paused whilst risk assessments and SOPs were renewed and reinforced),
- (2) Use of the Swansea tipping rig (use was paused whilst a new improved rig is made).
- (3) THV Alert self-mooring operation.

Regular H&S Drop-in sessions are being well attended across the Service.

Safety Roadshows are planned for the summer.

The Life Saving Rules (Fair Safety Culture) are being rebranded and will be relaunched.

An intention exists to review Safe Systems of Work.

The Government's Maritime Decarbonisation Strategy has now been published and we are actively considering it.

AM expressed appreciation of the improvements which have been made since the inception of the H&S Committee and recommended that there should be a message in the H&S Roadshows from the Board.

A discussion followed about further improvements such as punctuality of reports and feedback on safety investigations.

The Board discussed the culture of H&S in the organisation and the importance of it being a 'learning' culture.

The Code of Conduct will also be revised.

The Sustainability Working Group has met for the first time, jointly chaired by AH and DO. The initial focus will be on compliance, the scope will then expand.

## 2.3 Business Services Report

Approaching financial year-end there is currently an underspend comprised mainly of pay and capital. Once year-end procedures have been carried out it is predicted that there will be a larger underspend across the organisation. Reserves have not been touched, including for Royal Sovereign.

Several large projects are still ongoing in March and will straddle year-end, such as the dry-docking of THV Particia.

The Board noted a slight overspend on Futures Afloat. This relates to the cost of delays resulting from Government approvals.

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The Board noted that more work was required to tackle underspending issues in future. This is a key objective in the Strategy Implementation Plan and in terms of capital is the purview of the Portfolio Progress & Assurance Committee (PPAC).

The Procurement team is currently doing roadshows on the new Procurement Act 2023 which came into force in February 2024.

### 2.3.1 GLA & GRAD Sanction Letter 2025-26

The Sanction Letter from the Maritime Minister has been received, allocating £49.3m to TH and £1.7m to GRAD for the delivery of their respective Corporate Plans in 2025-26.

The Board noted the letter and thanked the DfT for its prompt issuance.

A discussion followed about changes to governance, including the new PPAC which are designed to tackle the persistent underspending issue, amongst other things.

### 2.3.2 2025-26 Budget Overview

The Board noted:

The total budget (including staff costs) for 2025-26 is £49.3m.

Following a departmental budget bidding process and three days of review meetings, the Executive Committee approved the non-staff running costs budget at its meeting of 12 March 2025.

Subsequent to the Executive Committee meeting, expenditure proposals have been received to fund a number of strategic level projects.

The ARAC will continue to review the controls and processes for budgeting.

### 2.4 People and Culture Report

The report focussed on:

Pay and rewards – a uniform pay increase was awarded to all staff in January. The outcome of the remainder of the Pay Business Case is expected to be announced soon - LG reported promising news from HM Government that the Pay Business Case has been submitted to Ministers and may be decided within 2 days.

*[Post meeting note – the Pay BC was approved on 23 April 2025]*

The People and Organisational Development Committee (POD) has met to discuss the appraisal system and outstanding mandatory training.

It is proposed to conduct another Employee Engagement Survey in November.

Sickness absence trends are reducing.

Across the organisation there are currently 19 live vacancies. Turn-over rates for the Support Vessel Service (SVS) have seen a slight reduction from 25% to 24% whilst on the shoreside the rate is 13%.

Procurement of the new Core HR IT system has made good progress meaning we can now proceed to contract, subject to Board approval. The Board agreed that this could

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be circulated to the Board for approval out of committee so as not to delay implementation.

#### 2.4.1 People Policies Review

Six People Policies were presented to the Board for discussion and approval in outline prior to consultation with the SMT and Trade Unions.

Namely,

- Grievance Policy
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Performance Management and Capability Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy

The Board discussed the need to be respectful to the emotional well-being of employees and the attention being paid to the sensibilities of staff in relation to the introduction of these policies across the organisation.

The Disciplinary Policy will be reviewed to ensure alignment with ACAS Guidance.

The Board **APPROVED** the People Policies in outline and the approach to consultation with the following steps being taken:

- a) Lighthouse Board Endorsement.
- b) Commence consultation with SMT and the Trade Unions.
- c) Communicate changes to SMT and middle managers, with FAQs.
- d) Finalise procedures/tool kits and training/awareness raising.
- e) Implement policies.

#### 2.5 Navigational Requirements Report

NH described the GLA response to the SOLONG – STENA IMMACULATE allision on 10 March off Spurn Point demonstrating effective GLA collaboration and co-operation with other agencies. Lessons will undoubtedly be learnt from the event.

The Maritime Minister, Mike Kane MP, has publicly commented on the good work done by the GLAs on this occasion as part of the wider national response.

VO asked a question about presentation of the data and how incidents such as this will show up in performance reporting to the Board. AH explained the work ongoing in relation to KPI reporting to provide the key points and the right level of granularity for the Board whilst also fitting-in with the wider GLA reporting method and style.

CJ asked about whether there is a play-book for incidents like this. NH confirmed that we have written procedures relating to these sorts of events although in reality when they happen they all occur in different ways.

#### 2.5.1 Five Year AtoN Review

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The Board endorsed the Tri GLA Five Year AtoN Review Final Report.

## 2.6 Operations Directorate Report

AH reported on Recruitment activity, Commercial activity, PPAC and process improvements, HSE meetings, Marine Technical performance and ongoing DD&R.

The Procurement of the new West Coast Work Boat has closed, the report and recommendation will go to ExCo and then to Board for approval due to its value.

Five projects are currently in progress, the most notable of which is the Skerries Modernisation.

The PSTN project has been completed and the Wolf Rock helideck survey is due to be conducted in June.

### 2.6.1 Operations Directorate Policy

The Operations Directorate Policy has been rewritten and was now presented to the Board for approval.

The Board **APPROVED** the Operations Directorate Policy.

### 2.6.2 Civil Engineering Team Update

AH provided an update on the main workstreams being pursued by the Civil Engineering Team including the successful recruitment of a Civil Engineering Manager, development of a Civil Engineering Plan and categorisation of civil assets, and improvements to the work planning processes.

### 2.6.3 KPI Reporting

Adding to matters discussed under agenda item 2.5 above, AH outlined work being done by the ExCo to improve KPI reporting and to consolidate KPI reporting into a single concise report linked to the Strategy Implementation Plan.

## 2.7 Futures Afloat Update Report and Plan on a Page

Financial position – the spending profile for two ships needs to be consistent with the Government Spending Review position. DfT has provided advice on what this should look like and the Futures Afloat team is working to make the spending profile fit the requirements.

The Maritime Minister, Mike Kane MP, is expected to write a letter to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury to prepare the way for publication of the tender.

Market interest and enthusiasm is very high. Additionally, a number of UK companies have expressed an interest in assisting potential bidders with partnership arrangements to maximise UK content.

A New Build Technical Lead has been recruited to the Futures Afloat team and will join on 6 May. *[Post meeting note – the candidate has since turned down the role which will now be re-advertised]*

The current timeline is aiming to achieve contract signature before the start of summer recess 2026.

A discussion followed about the difference between a commercial shipbuilding process and a public procurement process, to understand the differences and the reasons why it takes significantly longer for the public sector to build a ship. The Board felt that it would be useful to take this comparison to the DfT to illustrate the risks resulting from this.

CJ reported that the TH Head of Internal Audit (Government Internal Audit Agency) had awarded a ‘substantial’ opinion in relation to the governance of the process.

DO confirmed that the risk register for the project will be comprehensively reviewed.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 TH Strategy and Implementation Plan (SIP)**

NH presented the revised SIP providing a clear link between Strategy and Action and how these will be reported to the Board.

The SIP identifies ownership of objectives to drive forward the strategy and timelines for delivery.

NEDs were content with the overall format and noted that the SIP is currently a work in progress.

**[Action: NEDs provide feedback on the SIP to NH]**

NH invited the Board to consider the cadence and regularity of reporting against objectives in the SIP.

The Board **ENDORSED** the SIP recognising that it was a living document.

The Board noted the intention to reformat the Annual Report and Accounts in line with modern best practice.

### **4. GOVERNANCE**

#### **4.1 Board Development Objectives**

TA had reviewed the comments from the Board Effectiveness survey returns (November 2024) and identified the following key themes:

- Provision of management information (the Board pack). Needs to be tighter/shorter/more focussed. A process of constant improvement is underway.

- Evaluation & review of projects and major programmes. The need for timely and robust post project reviews looking at the extent to which the objectives and benefits were realised including safety, budget and time management.
- Risk appetite for the organisation. The need to be clear about it.
- Translation of strategy into actions. Some strategic goals, such as a new digital first strategy, would benefit from a more programmatic approach rather than being considered as an add-on to the 'business as usual' of the IT team.
- Compliance – protection against H&S, employment litigation and reputation risk.
- Financial and delivery performance are still reported separately. Limited 'earned value' type performance reporting and capital underspend still persists.

TA requested further thoughts from NEDs on these themes and suggestions of ways to address them. Any ideas on potential training courses for the Board to do collectively in order to address these themes would also be appreciated.

**[Action – NEDs to send thoughts on Board Effectiveness Survey results and suggestions of training courses and to address them to the Board Secretary]**

#### 4.2 Corporate Risk Register Status Report and Dashboard

The Geopolitical Risk has been increased slightly.

The main level of risk across the organisation is broadly unchanged.

The Board noted the vessel availability risk. AH explained the co-ordinated fleet planning process and recently renewed Tri GLA Ship Sharing MOU which builds resilience into the system.

#### 4.3 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee – 13 March 2025 Meeting Update

CJ reported on the recent ARAC meeting including the 'moderate' rating on the Key Financial & Commercial Controls Audit which represents a deterioration.

The GIAA Plan showed a large increase in costs. The ARAC asked the GIAA to rework the plan based on risk.

NAO presented its plan and approach and has downgraded the risk on revenue collection, which is a good result.

The Anti-Fraud systems in TH are regarded as being good.

#### 4.4 ARAC Terms of Reference

The Board **APPROVED** the revised ARAC Terms of Reference.

#### 4.5 NED Recruitment Update

The Candidate Pack submission has gone to Ministers this week, with a projected ten days turn-around time.

### **5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**



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### 5.1 High Level Stakeholder Relationships

The Government Engagement Matrix was circulated to the Board and was duly noted.

### 5.2 IALA Update and World AtoN Day Preparations

The MOU with DfT for representation at IALA worked well and demonstrated its worth at the first General Assembly and Council in Singapore in February.

World AtoN Day 1-2 July is being underwritten by the DfT. Fifteen different countries have expressed an interest in attending so far. Several key people from around the UK maritime industry have been invited.

It will also be an opportunity to sign the MOU on Sponsorship of the WWA and Accreditation of TH as an Accredited Training Organisation, with NLB supporting.

### 5.3 DfT/GLA Framework Document

LG reported that there is a suggestion that Irish Lights may in future has its own Framework Document rather than it being a tri-GLA document. The implications of this need to be fully considered.

### 5.4 Purchase of THVs Galatea and Alert

A paper on the purchase of the remaining portions of the leases of these vessels will be circulated Out of Committee.

*[Post meeting note: The Board **RESOLVED** out of committee to approve the purchase of THVs Galatea and Alert from the leasing bank].*

### 5.5 Disposal of 39 Fronks Road, Dovercourt

A paper recommending the disposal of 39 Fronks Road, Dovercourt will be circulated to the Board out of committee.

*[Post meeting note: The Board **RESOLVED** out of committee to dispose of 39 Fronks Road].*

### 5.6 West Coast Work Boat Contract Procurement

Further to matters raised in agenda item 2.6 above, a paper recommending the award of the West Coast Work Boat contract will be circulated to the Board out of committee.

*[Post meeting note: The Board **RESOLVED** out of committee to award the West Coast Work Boat contract.].*

### 5.7 Core HR System Procurement

Further to matter discussed in agenda item 2.4 above, a paper recommending the award of the Core HR System contract will be circulated to the Board out of committee.

*[Post meeting note: The Board **RESOLVED** out of committee to award the Core HR System contract.]*

## **6 DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

- CEC 1-2 April (Trinity House, London)

- JSB 29-30 April (TH, London)
- Lighthouse Board 28 May (TH, Swansea)
- Trinitytide 11 June (TH, London).

### Record of Decisions

2.4.1	The Board APPROVED the People Policies in outline and the approach to consultation on the policies (Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Performance Management and Capability Policy, Recruitment Policy, Sickness Absence Policy, Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy) for the following steps to be taken: a) Lighthouse Board Endorsement. b) Commence consultation with SMT and the Trade Unions. c) Communicate changes to SMT and middle managers, with FAQs. d) Finalise procedures/tool kits and training/awareness raising. e) Implement policies.
2.5.1	The Board endorsed the Tri-GLA Five Year AtoN Review Final Report.
2.6.1	The Board APPROVED the Operations Directorate Policy.
3.1	The Board ENDORSED the SIP recognising that it was a work in progress.
4.4	The Board APPROVED the revised ARAC Terms of Reference.
5.4	The Board RESOLVED out of committee to approve the purchase of THVs Galatea and Alert from the leasing bank
5.5	The Board RESOLVED out of committee to dispose of 39 Fronks Road .
5.6	The Board RESOLVED out of committee to award the West Coast Work Boat contract.
5.7	The Board RESOLVED out of committee to award the Core HR System contract .