



TRINITY HOUSE

# **Minutes of Trinity House Lighthouse Board**

## **28 January 2026 – Tower Hill**

### **Present**

Mr Lance Batchelor (Chair) (LB)

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

Captain Andrew Holt (Director of Operations) (AH)

Captain Desmond Donworth (Director of Navigational Requirements & Policy)  
(DD)

Mr Alan Moore (NED) (AM) by Webex. Items 1-7.3

Mr Curtis Juman (NED) (CJ)

Mr Garrett Copeland (NED) (GC) by Webex

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

Mr Michael Barnett (Interim Director of Business Services) (MB)

Mrs Michelle Major-Butler (Director of People & Culture) (MMB)

Mr Damien Oliver (Director of Major Projects) (DO)

### **In attendance**

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

Ms Jessica Willan (Head of Safety and Environment (JW) <sup>Item 3.2</sup>)

## **1. ADMINISTRATION**

### **1.1 Chair's Welcome**

LB welcomed those present and in attendance to the first meeting of 2026.

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## 1.2 Apologies

None.

## 1.3 Declarations of Interest

None.

## 1.4 Minutes of Lighthouse Board – 27 November 2025

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the correction of a minor typographical error at point 4.4 “POLE STAR”.

## 1.5 Log of Actions/Matters Arising

The Board reviewed the log of actions, noting that the majority had been addressed to fulfilment. In addition, No 2 was now ready to be *Closed Out*. With regard to No 7 – the Board noted that the timing of the performance of this action is critical.

## 2. CEO’S REPORT, RISK AND PERFORMANCE

### 2.1 Chief Executive’s Report & Risk Review

Ilo presented his report outlining the priorities for this meeting as:

- Endorse Report on Futures Afloat Bid Evaluations
- Agree Benchmarks for Local AtoN Inspections
- Review H&S Action Plan
- Approve Built Heritage Policy
- Agree Built Assets Managed Ruin (S5) Categorisation
- Discuss draft (TH generated) ToRs for a strengthened sponsorship function
- Approve revised ARAC Terms of Reference

On 29 January Ilo and DO have a session with the DfT \*\* to discuss Futures Afloat.

The naming of NLV POLE STAR last week was a great event, attended by HM The Master in her capacity as Patron of the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses and the Deputy Master.

A fixed-term appointment has been made within the H&S team. Linda Flint has extensive H&S experience in the construction sector. This appointment allows the Head of Safety and Environment (JW) to focus exclusively on the H&S action plan embodied in the SAFER project.

Chief Financial Officer recruitment interviews are set up for mid-February. DfT is involved in the process.

Kevin Dace has resigned as Head of IT after 34 years’ distinguished service; he will be missed not only for his technical knowledge and experience of senior management but also for his exemplary inter-personal skills and approach. Recruitment of his successor will commence.

### 2.2 Risk Management Update

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The Corporate Risk Register has been redesigned. Work is ongoing to describe and define the risks appropriately and to align it with the Departmental Risk Registers. The ARAC in March will receive a full report on this project before the Lighthouse Board. CJ as ARAC Chair expressed contentment with the work on behalf of the ARAC. He suggested adding a trend line to the report presented. He also commented on the two highest risks which suggests that the mitigations are not working. AH commented that this was due to the Criteria descriptions. Further work is required to mature the Controls description. GC questioned whether the risk matrix truly reflected the risk associated with the Condition of Ageing Vessels. The Board noted that for the time being there is a disconnect between the CEO's report and the CRR whilst the redesign project progresses.

### 2.3 IALA KPIs

Report noted.

AH reported that performance was good and TH is meeting targets.

### 2.4 Inspection of Local Aids to Navigation: Target and Performance Benchmark

This report recognises the virtual impossibility of meeting the nominal target of 100% of AtoNs per year due to weather and other complications and notes legal advice that TH should aim to do at least 95% including all high risk AtoN each year and to prioritise catching up with inspections as soon as possible if they don't get done in a calendar year.

The Board **RESOLVED** to agree the establishment of a general benchmark of 95% AtoN inspections coverage per year including all high risk inspections, together with the associated reporting and planning requirements set out in the note.

The Board examined the rationale for the 95% target, to ascertain how it compared with comparable organisations. The recommendation of 95% is the highest international target we know of but the Board felt it was correct to strive for this.

DD confirmed that there was a comprehensive set of risk assessments and Safe Work Instructions (including use of drones) relating to the role.

**[Action: TA to provide an update on Local Lights Inspections in Gibraltar and the Channel Islands]**

The Board discussed whether there were any financial consequences relating to the 95% target. A second Inspector of Seamarks role has been recruited to help to meet this target and to give resilience. The ExCo confirmed there wouldn't be any new financial consequences, the second Inspector was in the current year's Corporate Plan.

## **3 DELIVER SAFELY**

### 3.1 H&S Report & Placemat

Presented by DO and noted by the Board.

CJ asked about Accidents/Incidents on the vessels and asked whether there are any patterns, is it the same personnel each time? AH confirmed that they are focussing on exactly that question.

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### 3.2 Review of Health and Safety Action Plan

JW joined the meeting. She is focussing exclusively on delivery the H&S Action Plan embodied in the SAFER project and is making good progress.

The Plan is based on feedback from the H&S Culture Survey. Central to the Plan is empowerment of staff to give them confidence in their roles.

Feedback loops for investigations are improving with use made of WAVE.

The Permit to Work Working Group has been established. The system will be tried out on different equipment and progress is on track.

One item which is behind target is the review of work instructions, but steps are being taken to mitigate.

Linda Flint has been appointed on a fixed term basis, focussing on operational delivery. Linda's priorities will be to address, in the near term, the observations made in the Health & Safety and People Surveys.

HALO software has been installed. The Board noted good progress and asked whether the NEDs could provide any assistance in deal with roadblocks. JW said the main obstacle encountered related to getting the word about this work across, but this is being addressed.

CJ asked how we get notes from staff about safety improvements. AH confirmed that technical safety ideas come into the Engineering Manager. Occupational H&S is different. The business is derisking via technology. CJ advocated involving the staff in the conversation. JW confirmed that this is happening during the review of Safe Work Instructions and the Annual Management Review meeting.

JW departed the meeting.

### 3.3 Navigational Requirements and GRAD Update Report

#### **Incidents**

During the period since the last Board meeting a plan had been agreed by owner's insurers of the sunken sailing vessel ALIUNDE to raise the wreck which poses a hazard to navigation in the western Solent. Despite this the wreck has not been raised yet. The lift has been delayed and rescheduled to happen on the next suitable neap tides at the end of Feb/early March. TH buoys will then be removed.

#### **Team**

Workload is increasing as decommissioning of Offshore Wind Farms starts to happen whilst at the same time new OWFs are being commissioned.

One member of the Navigational Requirements and Policy team has recently gone on maternity leave.

#### **Port Quin**

The team is monitoring the navigational implications as part of the statutory development consent process for the proposed Port Quin Seaweed farm in Cornwall.

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## **MV FAITHFUL**

DD has taken part in a lessons learnt exercise following scuttling of this vessel.

### **Review of Risk Response Criteria**

The review of the RRC by the IGCs has commenced.

### **GRAD**

GNSS monitoring is taking rapid steps forwards and will advance further as a consequence of increased Government funding for eLoran being announced.

### Container Incidents Overview

MV BALTIC KLIPPER lost overboard a number of containers east of the Isle of Wight on 6 December 2025. THV PATRICIA sailed to check TH AtoN in the area, MCA then requested her to assist in a surface search and located one container, which was in fact the only container found at sea by any agency. All the others broke up or were washed ashore. THV PATRICIA recovered some pieces of the containers which were classed as pollution by the Receiver of Wreck.

On 9 January MV CONDOR VALPARISO dropped some containers which sank off St Catherine's Point (Isle of Wight). The same vessel also dropped some more containers off the Isle of Wight on 10 January.

THV PATRICIA responded as she had done for the BALTIC KLIPPER. She found and marked some containers. MCA took over with an air search. The owners' P&I Club commissioned a search to track the containers and THV PATRICIA stood down. Most of the containers ended up on the beach at Selsey Bill. Three containers are still missing and MCA (SoSRep) is co-ordinating the search (off Selsey Bill).

A surface search is preferable to an airborne search because the container numbers can be read more easily and the search prioritised.

On 19 January a pilot boat hit some of the pollution.

On 8 January a vessel dropped 3 containers SW of Lizard Point. There is now a law in place to require ships to report dropped containers.

Our response to this will be factored into the Risk Response Criteria review, being discussed with IL and NLB.

The other GLAs do not experience as many such incidents due to different trading patterns in their waters.

GC asked whether the need to lift containers should be a requirement of the new ships TH is going to procure under Futures Afloat. AH confirmed that this would not happen due to some containers weighing up to 35 tonnes, a significantly different crane would be required to the crane required to lift 7 tonne buoys.

MCA has communicated its gratitude to TH for the valuable assistance rendered in the search for these and other containers.

### 3.4 Swansea Wood Dust Update

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The Board received an update on the legal escalation of the issue to Natural Resources Wales.

The neighbouring occupier's Dust Emissions Management Plan (DEMP) has been reissued recently, therefore time needs to be given before it can be told whether this will result in an improvement in air quality.

### 3.5 Operations Directorate Update Report

The lease of the St Just Forward Operating Base has been extended to February 2027. Meanwhile TH is in positive discussions with the airport owners about pursuing options for continued long term occupation of the site.

Harwich Sea Wall – positive signals have been received from the Environment Agency to fund repairs of the sea wall in the current - hold the line - position. We are awaiting EA's more detailed proposals.

Statutory Buoy Servicing List is catching up and will be almost on target by Financial Year End.

Inspections were assisted by temporary chartering of local boats to do OWF inspections.

Ilo invited Board members to consider whether they are now receiving Management Information they are content with.

**[Action: AH to focus one discrete operational management information data set at each Board meeting]**

### 3.6 Built Heritage Policy

The Board welcomed the newly written Built Heritage Policy.

MB confirmed that funding elements have been addressed in the Policy.

The Board **APPROVED** the recommendations to:

- (a) Approve the Built Heritage Policy.
- (b) Appoint the Estates and Property Manager as Heritage Advocate.

### 3.7 Built Assets Managed Ruin (S5) Categorisation

The Board **APPROVED** the schedule of S5 categories.

CJ requested future recommendations are accompanied by a photograph of each.

## **4. ORGANISATIONAL FITNESS**

### 4.1 Business Services Update Report

Presented by MB.

MB explained that for the 2026/27 TH Annual Report and Accounts may be done in a different way, particularly the order of publication in relation to the GLF Accounts. Conversations are ongoing with the GLF Accountant on the new requirements.

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The Board discussed MB's impressions, as an interim director with a fresh pair of eyes, of the budgeting and corporate planning process within TH and the steps he has taken to improve the forecasting process and accountability for spending.

DO also gave his impression, coming from Government.

CJ requested MB's advice on how TH could aim to have an underspend of 5% or less.

**[Action: ExCo to report to ARAC on how TH could aim to have an underspend of 5% or less]**

#### 4.2 People and Culture Update Report

**The Pay Case** – is nearly over the line. Helpful engagement with DfT is ongoing.

**Engagement Survey** - there is a lower completion rate this year. ExCo is looking at the reasons for this which look like trust and confidence in leadership to deliver. In contrast the engagement score has gone up. The Board debated whether there is a correlation between better engagement but lower response and whether this could indicate that there are more disaffected people not being minded to respond.

**HR15 Replacement Programme “Cascade”**- A decision was taken by ExCo to delay transfer of the Payroll function whilst the rest of the system was rolled-out due to the absolute necessity of doing this perfectly. MMB's team will recommend the timeline for migration. The other functions have been migrated and this week organisational roll-out and introductions are happening.

**Turnover** - has reduced further but there is a growing vacancy list in highly skilled roles.

**Sickness Absence** – is increasing. The possible reasons are being investigated.

### 5 SUSTAINABLE FUTURE [Commercially Sensitive]

#### 5.1 Futures Afloat Update Report, Dashboard and Report on Bid Evaluations

As the competition has progressed the interested parties have been down-selected. They have been assessed according to a variety of themes including Technical, Financial, Contract Acceptance, Social Values and UK Content.

DO reported on the outcome of the thematic review against each of the remaining bidders.

The Board discussed each of the bids in turn.

The Board **ENDORSED**:

- (i) The proposition that the informed review of the ISIT has been conducted fairly and in line with the Futures Afloat Procurement Strategy and the Procurement Act 2023.
- (ii) The SRO's recommendation to proceed to negotiations. The decision on whether to go straight to BAFO stage, or undertake a prior formal tender evaluation stage, referred to as the Invitation to Submit Detailed Tender (ISDT), will be taken following negotiations, the Board will be asked to agree that at the appropriate time.

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The Board discussed the essential need to guard against conflicts of interest at this critical stage.

Ilo is inviting a follow-up with the DfT Sponsorship Team Lead.

Engagement with LAC is ongoing to create the right conditions for the new Chair of the LAC to be supportive.

## 5.2 TSL Cottages Update

CJ declared an interest as Chair of TSL.

The Board noted the update paper and **ENDORSED** the recommendation to signal to TSL that the Board would support a further extension of the Rural Retreats contract to 30 April 2029 with an option to break in April 2028; or an extension to 30 April 2028, with an option to extend until 30 April 2029.

## **6 PROFILE AND PARTNERS**

### 6.1 ALB Review - Principles for a Strengthened Sponsorship Function

The ALB Review Ministerial submission for the GLAs recommended a strengthened sponsorship function. Whilst awaiting confirmation of Ministerial intent, the Board seeks to get ahead of the upcoming discussion with DfT on what in practice a strengthened sponsorship function might mean. ILo explained the need to update the Framework Document when Irish participation questions and the ALB review are complete.

Board discussed the draft example (TH generated) TORs for a Sponsorship Board and the principles that such a Sponsorship board should:

- a. not hold executive responsibility, but rather its function is one of consult and inform,
- b. provide strategic oversight and assurance of TH's relationship with Government,
- c. provide an avenue to escalate risks and issues, to assure TH's Mission and statutory responsibilities and strategy implementation.
- d. if effective, strengthen advocacy of TH's work across Government.

The Lighthouse Board wants it to be clear that Lighthouse Board remains fully responsible and accountable for Strategy and Delivery.

**[Action TA: Update example TORs to strengthen this]**

The Board would welcome the Sponsorship Board being used to escalate issues to DfT and would like to see the Sponsorship Board reporting back to Board annually on performance.

**[Action TA: Suggest it is called Sponsorship Forum to avoid confusion]**

It is also important to note that this is about the TH-DfT bilateral relationship, not the JSB.

The interplay with the ARAC was discussed.

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[Action: Board members to reply with comments on TORs to TA]

[Action: TA to circulate example Sponsorship Board ToRs to Board in Word]

[Action TA: Change current reference to Board having a statutory duty, TH holds the duty, not Lighthouse Board except as an organ of TH]

#### 6.2 Government Engagement Matrix

Noted.

#### 6.3 Draft JSB Minutes November

Noted.

#### 6.4 IALA Council Update

Noted.

Ilo explained political changes as a result of the change of status.

The Secretary General is not going to stand for re-election at the General Assembly in 2027.

### **7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

GC reported on his first impressions of the organisation after his onboarding process.

The ExCo was asked to look into the concerns GC raised.

[Action AH: Investigate at the following and report back to LHB:

- (1) Safety of ships going to sea.
- (2) Safety of operational processes.]

#### 7.1 December ARAC Update

Report noted.

#### 7.2 ARAC Terms of Reference

Updated ARAC ToRs **APPROVED**.

#### 7.3 NED Succession

AM declared an interest and departed the meeting. CJ declared an interest.

[Action TA: Organise a Nominations and Governance Committee to discuss NED succession, ARAC Chair extension, and progress with CFO recruitment]

### 8 Date of Next Meeting

25 March @0900 – Royal Yacht Squadron, Cowes.

**Record of Decisions:**

2.4	The Board RESOLVED to agree the establishment of a general benchmark of 95% AtoN inspections coverage per year including all high risk inspections, together with the associated reporting and planning requirements set out in the note.
3.6	The Board APPROVED the recommendations to: (a) Approve the Built Heritage Policy. (b) Appoint Estates and Property Manager as Heritage Advocate.
3.7	The Board APPROVED the schedule of S5 categories.
5.1	The Board ENDORSED: (i) The proposition that the informed review of the ISIT has been conducted fairly and in line with the Futures Afloat Procurement Strategy and the Procurement Act 2023. (ii) The SRO's recommendation to proceed to negotiations. The decision on whether to go straight to BAFO stage, or undertake a prior formal tender evaluation stage, referred to as the Invitation to Submit Detailed Tender (ISDT), will be taken following negotiations, the Board will be asked to agree that at the appropriate time.
5.2	The Board noted the update paper and ENDORSED the recommendation to signal to TSL that the Board would support a further extension of the Rural Retreats contract to 30 April 2029 with an option to break in April 2028; or an extension to 30 April 2028, with an option to extend until 30 April 2029.
7.2	Updated ARAC ToRs APPROVED.