CHAIRMAN’S REVIEW OF 2015

2015 saw Bridlington continue to lead the way as the country’s best performing shellfish port, according to Chris Wright, Chairman of the Harbour Commissioners.

Speaking at the Commissioners’ Christmas lunch at the Rag’s Restaurant, Chris described how the past 12 months had been a period of sustained commercial achievement coupled with several key announcements.

As previously reported, the Commissioners have placed an order with the Scottish shipyard of Ardmaleish Boatbuilding Company for a new dredger for the port. The £1.2m vessel is expected to arrive at Bridlington this summer, hopefully in July.

Repairs and maintenance have been carried out on the harbour estate as and when necessary and included in 2015 vital repairs to the fish quay canopy with the help of a grant secured from the Small Ports Recovery Fund.

Late in the year, it was announced that the Commissioners had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council to upgrade the harbour in general. This would involve significant investment and, as Chris emphasised, “the interests of our fishing industry will always be top of the Commissioners’ list of priorities during these discussions”. The harbour surveyor, Mr Mark Trevitt, will steer the Commissioners through this project.

One of the key harbour events of 2015 was the Seafood Festival, promoted by FLAG, ERYC, the Commissioners, Dr R. Robinson from the University of Hull and other harbour users. Chris said: “This was a great success as has been the Maritime Trail which was set up by the same people. However, pride of place should go to the Gansey Girl sculpted by Mr Steve Carvill – an absolutely wonderful job.”

Chris welcomed the two new Commissioners, Andy Wheeler and Steve Cowan, and thanked those who have left the Board, Norman Woodhouse and Neal Newby. Of Neal, Chris said: “He served as a Commissioner for 40 years, witnessed many changes and in fact presided over many of those changes for the good of the harbour. He has worked tirelessly to ensure the continued prosperity of the harbour and to protect the estate from outside forces.”

Chris concluded by thanking the harbour staff for their hard work throughout the year.

Late last year saw the passing of Mr George Wallis, a true gentleman who will be remembered with great respect and affection for his services to the harbour and the Commissioners.

George joined the harbour staff in 1952, serving as a watchkeeper until February 1958 when the call of the sea led him to join the fishing fleet at Grimsby aboard the vessel ‘Winifred’. While the vessel was laid up in port, he received a call from Bridlington Harbour Commissioners offering him the position of Deputy Harbour Master, a post he readily accepted.

George began work as Deputy on 7 August 1960 and stayed in the post for 14 years until in 1974 he assumed the position of Acting Harbour Master on the retirement of Captain Rowland Spear. The following year, he became Harbour Master and gave 16 years of excellent service until retiring on his 65th birthday.

George continued to give his services to the Commissioners, acting as Relief Harbour Master when required. He served on the Board from 1993 to 2003.

The Chairman, Chris Wright, said: “George’s knowledge and experience of the harbour proved invaluable. He gave nearly 40 years’ service to the Bridlington harbour community.”

GEORGE WILLIAM WALLIS
ARCHBISHOP IN PILGRIMAGE TOUR OF THE HARBOUR

Bridlington harbour was proud to play host to the Archbishop of York as he continued his six-month Pilgrimage of Prayer, Witness and Blessing across the Diocese of York.

Archbishop Sentamu spent a couple of hours meeting the Harbour Commissioners, several of the Lords Feoffee and staff at the harbour offices before going on a walk-about of the harbour estate during which he stopped to speak to members of the public.

Chairman of the Commissioners, Chris Wright, welcomed the Archbishop and spoke of the strong links between the harbour and the Church that go back hundreds of years. He also highlighted the commercial success the Bridlington shellfish industry has achieved in recent years.

Bridlington remains the leading shellfish port in the United Kingdom, accounting for around 13 per cent of the UK’s lobster catch, almost all of which is exported.

Harbour Superintendent Lawrence Porter explained to the Archbishop the importance of the harbour hoist as it lowered local vessel Ocean Crusader into the water. The Archbishop then visited the fish quay at the end of the South Pier, the landing point for the shellfish catches.

Archbishop Sentamu praised the harbour and its workforce for the significant income generated every year. He added: “This requires a great deal of investment and hard work but industry cannot stand still if it is to continue to grow and improve. This harbour is a fine asset, not just for Bridlington but for the whole of the United Kingdom.”

The Archbishop spent a week in Bridlington as part of his Pilgrimage, which began at Whitby in December and has since taken him to Guisborough, Middlesbrough, Stokesley, Mowbray and Northern Ryedale before travelling to Bridlington and then north to Scarborough for four days. It is due to finish at York Minster on Trinity Sunday (May 22).

For opportunities to walk and pray with the Archbishop, visit http://pilgrimage.archbishopofyork.org/

HARBOUR SCHOOLS PROGRAMME: WILL YOUR SCHOOL TAKE PART THIS YEAR?

Plans are once again underway for the annual schools initiative organised by the Bridlington Harbour Commissioners to promote the important role the harbour plays in the life of the resort.

This year is the fourth year for the project, which has already seen several hundred primary school pupils take part.

In 2015, the stars of the show were the pupils of New Pasture Lane Primary School, who successfully designed and published their own newsletters reminding us of some of the harbour’s history while also focussing on today’s commercial and leisure activities that provide income and employment for so many local families.

As well as inviting some of the Bridlington primary schools to take part, the organisers will this year hope to encourage schools from some of the neighbouring villages to join in the project.

Margaret Hyland, Chief Executive to the Commissioners, said: “The schools programme has become an important event in our annual calendar. It enables us to remind people of the hugely important role the harbour plays in the economy of the town while helping the youngsters to gain a better understanding of what actually goes on here on a day-to-day basis.

“The harbour employs around 400 people and is home to 100 or so companies, ranging from the large landing organisations to a number of single person businesses. Our schools programme is designed to be both educational and fun and we are so pleased to see so many local schools willing to take part.

"If your school wishes to take part in this year’s programme and have not yet been contacted, then please get in touch with the harbour office or email us at email@bridlingtonharbour.com."

Details of this year’s initiative and the schools taking part will be announced in a later edition of the Harbour Herald.