

Proposal to Sussex Yacht Club Board of Directors – July 2016

Possible sale of land to AWDC to facilitate tidal wall

Background:

Work will shortly start on the south bank of the River Adur to build a tidal wall for the protection and preservation of homes on Shoreham Beach for the next 100 years (based on future tidal modelling).

In the next few years a similar barrier will be built along the northern bank of the river to similarly protect the town of Shoreham.

Some of the north bank tidal barrier construction, north of Ropetackle, will be erected as a part of the south bank contract starting this year. Where possible the Environment Agency (EA) and the local planning officers have sought to ensure that developers and land owners along the riverbank pay for their own tidal defences to an agreed standard ensuring uniformity and conformity.

There are two areas which are exceptions to this rule: Kingston Beach (the area by the Lifeboat Station) and Sussex Yacht Club (from Dolphin Hard adjacent to the footbridge, east along to Tarmount Hard at our eastern boundary). Adur and Worthing District Councils (AWDC) have been granted Local Economic Partnership (LEP) funding in the sum of c£3.5million to cover the erection of tidal barriers to these two areas.

AWDC approached SYC a year ago, in July 2015 and met with Terry Kinch to explore possibilities including the hope that SYC might pay for their own defences. Terry advised them we would not and could not. SYC is a community club and any tidal barrier would be deleterious to our outlook and objectives; asking us to pay for this was tantamount to asking us to pay for our own funeral. Numerous further discussions have subsequently taken place with Officers of the Club in attendance at all times (Steve Vyse, Terry Kinch, Laurence Woodhams, Tim Leigh).

Options:

As a part of these discussions, three options for a tidal wall were placed on the table, two by AWDC and one (the third) by SYC.

1. Erect a tidal wall running along the current line of our southern land boundary putting in tidal gates across our slipways and new access ways to our jetties and pontoons
2. Demolish the northern wall of our existing clubhouse, building a new one which meets tidal barrier specifications and carrying on this wall along our northern boundary with the A259 Brighton Road From Dolphin Hard to Tarmount Hard
3. Purchase a strip of land (between 2 and 3.5m wide from SYC along our northern boundary from end to end, demolishing our current clubhouse. SYC would use the funds from the sale of the strip of land to build a new clubhouse to meet our expectations of today and the future in a new location close to our western boundary.

AWDC engineers went away and costed all the options and the third option became a clear favourite from an ease and cost of construction point of view.

For SYC to even consider the sale of land, a vote on a special resolution at General Meeting is required (a special resolution requires a 75% majority of votes cast in favour to be passed and is a requirement for land disposal resolutions).

Clubhouse:

Our clubhouse has served our club very very well and continues to do so. It is an aging building and as such the costs of maintenance are and will only increase as time goes on. The Club has an opportunity to consider whether it wants to look to the future in a new purpose designed and built clubhouse, raised above the predicted tidal heights over the next 100 years, a clubhouse with direct access from its entrance onto the High Street, a clubhouse designed to meet the needs of today, the regulations of today and our expectations of the future.

A local firm of architects have prepared a very very rough conceptual drawing purely to give us a starting point should we go down this route; this building in the area where we would expect to build the new clubhouse, down by our western boundary, turned ninety degrees and raised by one storey so we overlook the river, the footbridge, the High Street, East Street and perhaps have a better view south over the houses and to the sea beyond. The plans they have provided do not reflect the internal layout or fit and finish. It is very important to understand that these are a concept only and not a finalised design.

We are at a very early stage of this and at the time of writing we are awaiting the AWDC District Valuer (DV) to advise us a figure which may be offered for this strip of land. If this figure makes the scheme even remotely realistic, we will take it further, if they do not, we will return, probably, to option one and negotiate for the best possible deal on that instead.

Proposal:

At this stage, we would like to seek the opinion of the Board to the option being most closely considered, we would like to have a mandate from the Board to proceed or not down this route. We further propose to call a general meeting of the membership on Saturday 3rd September to debate and this matter and if plans are sufficiently progressed to proposal a vote on a scheme to the membership.

We are nowhere near the point of agreeing specifics, right now we are wanting to explore the principle of this option only.

A few facts that may help you are listed below:

- i. The cost of a new clubhouse may be in the region of £1.5 - £2million, possibly more depending on how we design it, size, quality of fit and finish, etc.
- ii. The existing clubhouse will not be demolished until the new clubhouse is built and commissioned if we are able to work quickly and obtain the necessary permits and funding in time.
- iii. The entranceway may be altered to delineate better the working part of our property and our parking/social side

- iv. Tidal gates will still be required which we will have the responsibility of operating. These may comprise entrance gates to SYC in the future, improving our security.
- v. Existing dinghy parking, workshops and storage areas in the western part of the club will be relocated to elsewhere in the yard more in keeping with our operational requirements.
- vi. A new building will be designed and built with flood friendly areas on the ground floor and all other floors being set above the predicted future tidal heights
- vii. A new building will be at least the same size as existing, maybe larger, and would be designed to serve our needs specifically.
- viii. A new building will cost more than we will ever get for the strip of land and as such SYC will have to borrow funds to bridge the gap, use our reserves or seek other funding or more likely a combination of all three.
- ix. A new building will be fairly maintenance free for the first ten or more years of its life and the club will be able to reduce significantly the, approximate, £30k a year we spend on maintaining the existing building.

The Flag Officers do not wish to sway opinion but forward thinking believe this may be the best current option subject to the figures tabled. Not proceeding is not an option; flood defence work is classified as infrastructure works and as such commands such a priority with regards to planning and ultimately compulsory purchase orders that resistance would inevitably prove extremely detrimental to the club.

AWDC have to spend the LEP funding during the fiscal year 2018 or at least have to have started to spend it. This is putting added pressure on them and on us to agree a scheme whichever it may be.

The planners have moved on plans at Kingston Beach as this is a simpler scheme and the land is council owned. This of course is eating into the LEP funds and reducing potentially the availability of the funding pot for SYC. A decision in principle to aid their deliberations would be useful for them and for us.