

Coastal Communities Fund Round 5.

Sail the Wash – The Business Case.

1. Executive Summary.

1.1 The overall aim of Sail the Wash is to further tap into the economic and social benefits from a thriving leisure craft scene and small boat culture. Although this has been nurtured by recent (mainly) public sector initiatives in and around local coastal settlements, it is time to build on that gain and take interest and activity to a higher level. It is key to protect existing jobs as well as increasing related employment prospects. This will secure the longer-term viability of existing small craft mooring and related infrastructure.

1.2 For small boats, The Wash presents some challenges - as despite deep water abounding, access to the ports on its rivers is tidally constrained. Sail the Wash seeks to adopt best practice from elsewhere and adapt it to suit local needs. What works in other, similar coastal localities and indeed regions can work here too.

1.3 In addition to the tidal factors, two shortcomings require addressing. First, as the Wash is off the beaten track boats from seaward need encouragement to divert. The towns already offer destinations for the leisure boater through their developed facilities and have much by way of attraction ashore, both local and regional.

An extension of this need is signposting and direction, for intending users, clarifying passage making into and out of the Wash waterways. Local aids to navigation are good because the commercial Wash ports make them so. Nearly 2000 coastal and short sea trading ships per annum make that necessary. But information pertinent to the small craft sailor is lacking or out of date and as with other regions, only respected information will be taken seriously.

1.4 The second shortcoming that needs addressing is that the Wash has a poor reputation amongst the target markets and this needs countering. A campaign to this end is a vital component of the task, just as it was in the mid-1990s when Sail Scotland set about changing perceptions of Scottish waters – promoting it as somewhere to keep a boat or go on a summer cruise. The Initiative was very successful, activity there has changed and Sail Scotland is now an arm of and financially supported by Scottish Tourism. Sail Scotland and has been a consultee in Sail the Wash planning.

1.5 Before promotion can begin much is required to make the 'product' 'user friendly.' Promoting before this may generate greater use by the sailing fraternity but it is unlikely that this would turn into repeat visits or result in good public relations.

Therefore, a programme of coastal surveys, with the placing of additional minor aids to navigation, is planned to 'sign post' routes for leisure vessels. Ordinarily, either the three statutory harbour authorities or Trinity House, the General Lighthouse Authority would fill the gap. However, their guiding principle is cost benefit and their intervention in the waters and interest in small boats has declined. Hence the need for the Sail the Wash project.

1.6 Overall, Sail the Wash seeks to:-

- Augment the existing short term, visitor mooring facility in King's Lynn where demand exceeds supply.
- Establish six permanent moorings in King's Lynn as the starting point for a simple but wider scheme which can be expanded as demand is stimulated.
- Appoint a Marine Officer to manage all King's Lynn leisure craft movements and coordinate 'umbrella marketing' under the Sail the Wash banner.
- Increase the existing permanent pontoon moorings at Cross Keys Marina, Sutton Bridge to a) bring the scheme up to designed capacity and b) provide short term visitor berths.
- N.B The business plan for Cross Keys Marina (see attached – Nene Marine, Colvill Consulting) was predicated on a scheme with 32 more berths than the 'as built' outcome. Occupancy is approaching capacity and from a business perspective at least, the time is highly opportune to address the shortcoming.
- Conduct hydrographic surveys to identify destination and passage anchorages in and around the Wash to enable better and more extensive use of local waters by permanent berth holders and visitors.
- Establish the Sail the Wash 'umbrella marketing' initiative to promote the re-packaged, Wash wide marine tourism 'offer' and have a positive influence on how the Wash is regarded within the target markets.

Main Report

2. Organisational Structure.

2.1 This project results from and builds on the earlier successes of an informal partnership and joint working between two district authorities and one county council who share coastlines and therefore interests in marine activity in the greater Wash area.

The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) is a littoral district authority in NW Norfolk with, *inter alia*, responsibilities for regeneration and economic development. BCKLWN, together with its local Coastal Community Teams

leads on the proposed project in conjunction with Fenland District Council (FDC) and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC).

Given a successful Stage 2 application, BCKLWN would be the contracting body and an MoU would be created to manage the areas of responsibility of the other project partners.

2.2 Oversight of project delivery and responsibility for decision making will lie with specific borough council officers, who will have a duty for; Flood Risk and Special Projects, Regeneration Programme Management and at Corporate Director level, port and statutory harbour authority functions, engineering and asset management and economic development.

2.3 The evolution of the Sail the Wash project has been in consultation with other appropriate local bodies. These include the neighbouring harbour authorities, the private marina operator and the Wash wide European Marine Site Management Scheme. While there is no partnership arrangement beyond the three parties, the Sail the Wash ethos has been to work and consult across borders. As far as the target markets are concerned - the boating fraternity in all its guises – local authority borders are of no consequence.

2.4 The project team principals are well versed in delivering marine infrastructure development in local waters. FDC retains an assets and civil engineering team offering design and principal contractor capability. BCKLWN is currently scoping an extensive waterfront regeneration scheme of which the existing visitor moorings form an integral part. LCC led on the newly established marina at Sutton Bridge and is delivering the Fens Waterways Link bringing inland waterways connection between the cathedral cities of Ely, Peterborough and Lincoln and the town of Boston.

2.5 Similar projects completed to date have demonstrated significant success. The Sail the Wash proposal that forms the CCF Round 5 bid is the extension of what has been achieved so far.

3. Project Background.

3.1 Twenty years ago, facilities for leisure boating in and around the Wash were rudimentary, if they existed at all.

Although, leisure boating has long since been part of the scene in the drying harbours of Burnham, Brancaster, Wells and Blakeney when compared with other areas, levels of activity have been minimal and by modern standards, basic. A local driver of the economy, there was surely more to achieve by national measure.

3.2 In the late 1990s, FDC as the harbour authority for the tidal River Nene undertook a review of the status and prospects for the Port of Wisbech. Commercial use of the port had declined as the nature of short sea shipping changed, making much quay space now redundant. For the small ports who embraced change, effective alternative use was found by capitalising on the popularity of leisure sailing.

3.3 An initial, simple pontoon layout started the Wisbech transformative process. This was followed by a more formal marina layout in 2000. In total, 128 modern marina berths were created and a good rate of occupancy has resulted. Full

boatyard facilities followed and with them, gradually, marine related trades have become established.

3.4 Not long after, the port of Fosdyke on the River Welland lost its only commercial customer, an agri chemical importer and the port was in danger of dereliction. However, a private enterprise created Fosdyke Yacht Haven which does for the SW corner of the Wash what Wisbech has for the centre. Boatyard services are offered and a latent level of local demand is catered for.

3.5 More recently, BCKLWN has installed a 45 metre short stay visitor pontoon on the River Ouse, located close to the town centre. This provides civilised mooring and shoreside access for boaters from inland and seaward and represents a new destination in the Wash. This has rekindled much local interest in King's Lynn's rich maritime heritage.

3.6 At Sutton Bridge on the River Nene, just across the border into Lincolnshire, the long planned Cross Keys Marina, opened in 2017, has brought a new focus to the social and economic opportunities in this strategically positioned, trunk road settlement. This was an otherwise bypassed township in some decline. Berth occupancy rates are good and have generated confidence over growth prospects.

3.7 The market experience gained by the relevant authorities has been extensive but until recently, unshared, but what is recognised is that these new facilities do not function in isolation.

3.8 A lesson learned is that the infrastructure, while essential, is only part of how market need is addressed. Markets change and while early interest came because new facilities existed, maintaining market interest is a function of management and marketing. Whilst the project partners operate within district and county boundaries, the boating fraternity does not. There is an accepted wisdom that what the Wash has to offer must be treated as a whole. A view supported by feedback from existing users and two independent professional studies.

4. Strategic Context.

4.1 The Aims and Objectives of Sail the Wash are:

- To establish the greater Wash area within the target markets as a credible place to:
 - Keep a boat
 - Visit by boat
 - Visit to enjoy the boating scene (land borne tourist)
 - Make extended visits and return visits.
- To facilitate the growth of a “small craft culture” where boating in any form is enjoyed by locals and visitors and seen as a local pastime.
- To facilitate the economic, social and employment benefits to be derived from leisure boating activity.
- To create and sustain a local leisure boating ‘product’ which is respected and valued within the target markets.

4.2 Development to date by way of mooring provision has been initiated by various bodies who have put their own objectives first. While undeniably this has transformed local boating prospects, like any market, continual adaption and improvement is essential.

A more recent professional appraisal of Wash wide provision and prospects revealed service gaps, a decline in previously enjoyed growth and a perception of the region being insufficiently user friendly, among users and potential users.

4.3 Countering this view needs more than marketing and promotional campaign. It needs fundamental product development.

4.4. Addressing the identified gaps forms the basis of the project plan. This will be achieved through a combination of activities to:

- Improve ease of small craft navigation within and to and from the Wash.
- Build the confidence of small craft users to sail in unfamiliar waters.
- Give reason for boaters to divert into the Wash and to enjoy extended visits.
- Augment and improve existing destinations.
- Develop additional destinations within the constraints of local waters.
- Promote the changes to generate and maintain target market interest through the establishment of the Sail the Wash joint marketing initiative.

4.5 Beneficiaries of a successful project can be direct or indirect. Direct beneficiaries are the boating fraternity, who are presently not enjoying or not sufficiently enjoying what the Wash has to offer. These include:

- Sail cruising
- Motor cruising
- Of inland waterway (non tidal) origin
- Of seaward origin
- Of home or overseas origin
- Sea angling
- Narrow boating
- Seeking permanent 'home' moorings
- Seeking new / interestingly different visitor destinations
- Sail training trusts

Indirect beneficiaries include:

- The land borne tourist attracted by 'masts in the river'
- Marine businesses providing services to boaters
- Non marine businesses supplying goods and services to all

4.6 Identification of need and opting for the solutions represented in the project plan has resulted from:

- Analysis of existing customer feedback. This included formal and informal consultation and information gathering.
- Several professional studies have concluded that for the mooring provision developed to date, to further capitalise on market potential, key enhancement is required of the moorings and the wider local marine environment.

4.7 Other consultees have included the statutory harbour authorities, private marine businesses, BCKLWN tourism and leisure specialists, publishers and authors of specialist marine journals, including overseas titles. Sail Scotland have also been consulted. Sail Scotland are the umbrella marine marketing organisation founded in 1996, now part of Scottish Tourism, which changed the face of leisure boating in Scottish waters. Sail Scotland provides a sustainable model for Sail the Wash - what worked there can work here.

5. Project Delivery.

5.1 The Wash, along with much of the lower UK east coast is tidally constrained. Opportunities to sail when the fancy takes, enjoyed in other regions, is denied to many an east coast sailor. The scope for 'marina hopping' – day sailing from destination to destination – is not an option.

Nonetheless, the Wash in particular has much to commend it, including the sense of wilderness, its fauna and by no means least, not being crowded.

5.2 Due to a reputation for being somewhere not to go sailing, there is an identified need to change perceptions. But more than that, there have to be subtle, though substantive, changes made to the ease by which boaters can sail the Wash.

5.3 The project aims to:

- Establish through hydrographic surveys and the placement of aids to navigation, a means by which small vessel mariners can plan and execute passages into Wash destinations, benefitting from pilotage information not currently available.
- Establish through hydrographic surveys, cruising destinations around the Wash offering secluded and sheltered anchorages which can be enjoyed over a given tidal cycle. As tidal constraints prevent timely cruising from one river to another, anchorages offering destinations over a low water period would be a convenient way of making local waters more user friendly.
- *Sutton Bridge*. Reconfiguring Cross Keys Marina, through the provision of 32 additional permanent berths and a dedicated visitor and short-term mooring facility. The Town Quay has the additional scope to provide occasional berthing for feature vessels of the 'Tall Ships' type. This in turn makes for significant visitor attraction.
- *King's Lynn*. Create an additional 57 metres of short-term mooring provision to that existing on South Quay. This provides sufficient berthing at times of peak demand. Due to the planned configuration, vessels of deeper draft than can currently be accommodated will be able to visit without tidal constraint.

King's Lynn also seeks to add permanent berths to its offer but conventional marina, pontoon berths are not easily configured in the river. As a solution to this issue, the Sail the Wash project seeks to lay six swinging moorings in the River Ouse upstream of the Town Quay including one mooring specifically for the use of a locally based feature vessel.

5.4 *Job Creation*. The mooring development in the Wash has resulted in 6 direct and 15 indirect jobs comprising marina management, operation and administration, marine trades working out of the boat yards in Wisbech and Fosdyke, and secondary retail jobs adjacent to Fosdyke Yacht Haven, linked to and dependent on the marina.

5.5 In King's Lynn and within the borough council there is 1 FTE management and administration role as a result of the Town Quay mooring. There are 7 direct and 16 indirect jobs which are at risk if the Wash wide product is not nurtured and developed.

While marine industry data (British Marine, Federation as was) suggests that for every one (1) direct marina job, 12 are created in the vicinity, it is thought to be an unrealistic extrapolation for an area where the 'base line' of boating activity is low.

5.6 However, it is known, for example, that local business of various complexions have begun stocking marine products as a result of increased boating led demand. Therefore if a ratio of 1:4 was applied it would be reasonable to claim that there are 24 indirect jobs across locations within the study area.

5.7 This project seeks to create from the outset:

- 1 further FTE in the Sail the Wash marketing role
- 1 FTE for King's Lynn in mooring management.
- Through links created in support of growth and performance of the wider retail sector, by promotion to water and land borne visitor economy, a further 15 FTE throughout the project area over the CCF funding cycle 2019/21.

It is further estimated that as activity increases, a multiplier closer to the 1:12 British Marine could be applied. On that basis, the Sail the Wash project could reasonably be thought to be the progenitor of an estimated 12 FTE marina related jobs; double the current number and with a multiplier of even 1:6, 72 indirect jobs could be the outcome.

5.8 Some of these jobs could have a seasonal component but it cannot be overstated that the Wash ports, in terms of leisure boating, are starting from a low base. However, without the public sector intervention and the Sail the Wash project taking it to the next level, there is a real risk of losing ground.

In terms of jobs that directly and indirectly result from the project, their longer term prospects beyond the CCF sphere of interest are deemed good.

5.9 Jobs so far created on the back of small craft activity are sustained by income from the very activity that has sprung up. It is firmly believed that the same principle can apply to job creation resulting from CCF intervention.

5.10 The FTE post/s out of King's Lynn, while supported financially over the life of the project will, from the increase in small craft traffic, be a continued operational requirement. They will be sustained from income generated and from within budgets of the project partners, existing and additional.

6. Project Resources.

6.1 The project comprises:

- Construction of additions to existing mooring infrastructure
- Recruitment of full time Marine Officer
- Hydrographic surveying
- Laying of swinging moorings
- Establishment of Sail the Wash website

The anticipation is that these will be delivered and or overseen by the specialist resources within the existing project partner teams:

- Construction by Fenland DC Assets and Engineering.
- Recruitment through King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council HR.
- Hydrographic Surveying by Nene Ports Authority.
- Moorings laying by King's Lynn Conservancy Board.
- Sail the Wash website design and development by outside contractor, managed by King's Lynn Marine Officer on appointment.

6.2 All relevant policies (e.g. Health and Safety), are established local authority policies and will apply as appropriate.

The job description for the new post supported by CCF funding is attached.

7. Project Costs.

Project costs are identified in the attached cost plans and quotation files.

8. Joint Funding.

8.1 The application is for whole funding support.

8.2 The exception is pontoon equipment already procured for the proposed extension at Cross Keys Marina, Sutton Bridge. This comprises 8 x 11.5 metre pontoon sections which if included in the funding bid as an additional cost would add approximately £84,000.00 to the capital requirement. This therefore represents a contribution by way of joint or own reserves funding.

9. Financial Appraisal.

9.1 Direct income sources are principally mooring fees from permanent berth holders and visiting boats. The mooring locations relevant to the project are:

- King's Lynn South Quay
- Cross Keys Marina Sutton Bridge

9.2 Since inception, the King's Lynn visitor pontoon has generated approximately £11k in mooring fees. However, by applying British Marine multiplier, the economic benefit to the local economy from visitors over the same period is approximately £72.7k

Cross Keys Sutton Bridge, since inception, has generated approximately £58k in permanent mooring fees. The British Marine multiplier for permanent berth holder economic impact gives in the region of £108k to the local economy. This excludes mooring fees and from visitors, £4.6k over the same period.

9.3 Extrapolating over the duration of the project and achieving projected increases in permanent berth holder occupancy, visitor nights and local spend, suggests for King's Lynn a further £16.5 in visitor mooring fees, £109.07k local impact from visitor spend, £3.37k from permanent berthing fees and £18k local impact.

At Sutton Bridge over the project duration, increasing permanent berth capacity and providing short term mooring facilities demonstrates an estimated additional income of £24k permanent berthing fees, additional local impact from permanent berth holders of £45k and visitor local impact £6.08k.

9.4 While direct income is important as a means of offsetting operating expenses, from a local authority standpoint, being a catalyst for regeneration is to a large extent the rationale for local marine leisure development.

Colvill Consulting in their Nene Marine (Cross Keys Marina) business plan showed the improvement to public realm which resulted from the establishment of Wisbech Yacht Harbour. (Pages 6 and 7). While the residential build out of adjacent land has been slower than originally anticipated, developers have been unequivocal that without 'masts in the river', they would not have looked favourably on the sites.

10. Marketing and Communications.

10.1 After 'product' development, communication to target markets is the main thrust of the project. In the main this will be via the Sail the Wash website. However, there are other targets and marketing objectives and therefore media to employ.

The establishment of Sail the Wash as an entity has to be communicated to the boating fraternity. This will be achieved variously by:

- Articles and press releases submitted to national and regional yachting and boating publications.
- Articles and press releases submitted to regional consumer publications. Such as KL Magazine and The Fens.
- Direct mail to regional yacht and boat clubs.
- Press releases to north European boating publications.
- Notification to coastal marinas and within the range Ramsgate to the Scottish border.
- Liaison with other Norfolk tidal havens.
- Notification to inland marinas throughout the Eastern and East Midlands regions.
- Liaison with publishers of nautical reference publications.

- Liaison with the Royal Yachting Association Eastern and East Midlands regions.

10.2 The benefits of participation in, and membership of, Sail the Wash will be directly communicated to relevant businesses and bodies throughout the region by mail, press releases and direct visit. Targets will include:

- Marine and marine related businesses and suppliers of marine products.
- Businesses in coastal locations who would regard visitors by boat as potential customers.
- Other regional tidal havens.
- District council tourism and leisure teams throughout the region.
- The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Authority.
- The Environment Agency.
- The Canals and Rivers Trust.
- Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire tourism and leisure officers.
- Visit East of England.

10.3 The Sail the Wash dedicated website will be the principal medium of communication with the boating fraternity. This will give topical, up to date information on:

- Ports and anchorages
- Marinas
- Passage making from the north, south and near continent.
- Notices to Mariners
- Weather
- Distances and timings
- Tides and tide tables
- Reference books
- Local tourism attractions
- Local transport links
- Inland waterways links
- Marine trades and services
- Local charts
- Places to eat and shop
- History
- Advertisements of members' businesses

11. Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks.

11.1. Indicators exist as means of monitoring performance at all project locations. These variously include permanent berth occupancy, visitors, boatyard services, income, enquiries, advertising effectiveness, and maintenance of service standards in accordance with The Yacht Harbours Association code of practice for marina operation.

In addition, qualitative information is gathered through written and oral enquiry of visitors to King's Lynn, in Wisbech via the berth holders' association and at Sutton Bridge, through the permanent berth user group.

11.2. Provision will be made on the Sail the Wash website for user feedback. The Marine Officer will have regular liaison with Sail the Wash business members both marine and non-marine.

12. Risk Analysis.

12.1 SWOT

Strengths:

- Network of moorings of modern standard with good levels of support services.
- Attractive destinations with shore-side access for visitors by boat.
- Good regional attractions for land and water based visitors.
- Developing programme of marine events.
- Inland waterways links.
- Good transport links to regional centres.
- Established working partnership ethos across borders.
- Extensive experience of marine infrastructure development and operation.

Weaknesses:

- Tidal constraints preventing easy day sails.
- Bad reputation as a cruising ground.
- Outdated pilotage and navigational information and guidance.

Opportunities:

- Re-develop a culture of boat owning, use and awareness.
- Regenerate boatbuilding and marine trades.
- Encourage small boat activity amongst the young with RYA support.
- Encourage small boat activity amongst people with disabilities. RYA Sailability Scheme.
- Leisure boating as a catalyst for wider regeneration.

Threats:

- Further delay in landside development.
- Depressed economic conditions as a barrier to progress.
- Lack of inward investment.
- Historic status as area of deprivation going unchecked.

Risks.

Achievements of the project and targets could be jeopardised by:-

Risk and Type	Element	Level	Minimised by
Organisational	Framework for partnership.	Low	Successful partnership exists covering decision making, funding sources, ownership, governance and project management. Partners' existing resources are supported by external specialists as necessary. Project MoU drafted.
Planning and Environmental	Failure to obtain planning consents.	Nil	Main capital proposals are extensions of existing structures. Project aligns with local plans and policies. Application process in train.
Land and Marine Use	Failure to acquire other key consents.	Nil	Preliminary consultations undertaken with statutory consultees. Acceptance exists in principle. Formal consents to be obtained before commencement.
Funding	Funding shortfall. Cost increase.	Low	Funding confirmed before commencement. Inflation allowance built in.
Construction delay	Late funding decision. Seasonal constraints over being on site. Scope for slippage by 12 months.	Medium	Completion could still be achieved within duration of CCF project.
Market	Lower than forecast demand/income shortfall.	Low	Demand projections based on existing successful developments and experience gained. Good management. Dedicated marketing programme as part of project plan. Commitment by project partners to support beyond project duration.
Legislative/Policy	Change in public policy	Low	Project aligned closely with long term public policy objectives.

