Minutes of MSBA Business Meeting held on Tuesday, 29 September 2026 at Mid Kent College.

In Attendance:

Peter Norris	MSBA Chair
Charles Hessey	MSBA Treasurer, RCC, RYA
Diane Jury	MSBA Secretary
David Metcalfe	LHYC
Quentin Strauss	Medway Yacht Club
Bob Oakley	Medway Cruising Club
John Jameson	MCC
Derek Zobel	SYC, WSC, MWT
David Wraight	Kent Scouts
Isobelle Pheadona	Kent Police
Ashley Moa	Kent Police
Sarah Squire	BSC
Fiona Craven	BSC
Mike Ritches	Hollowshore CC
Sue Long	CA
David Long	CA
Christine Godber	Wilsonian Sailing Club
Lawrence McVeigh	RNSA
Liz McVeigh	Medway Towns Rowing Club
Tony Lavelle	MRUA
Royce Watchhorn	Strood Yacht Club
Martin Kuhn	Segas

Apologies:

Kelly Tolhurst	MSBA Patron
Philippa Dickenson	Faversham Creek Trust
Jane Male	Upnor Sailing Club
Martin Male	Upnor Sailing Club
Barry Hill	SE Tug Society

The meeting was opened at 19:03 by Peter Norris.

Peter opened by thanking everyone for attending, and thanked Charles for securing the meeting venu and asked for feedback as to if this is somewhere we would like to use in the future.

The apologies were read out by Diane Jury.

The minutes of the last meeting dated 23 June 2026 were read, and with minor corrections deemed to be a true record, proposed by Fiona Craven, seconded by Tony Lavelle.

Peter noted that we have had quite a few invoices paid – thank you. Please chase your Treasurer if you have not yet paid – Peter will be sending out an email to chase.

Treasurer

Coming up to year end, if there are any claims for anything please submit.

Bank balance is £10524.22.

Peel Ports Conservancy

Peter presented slides outlining the research that has been done regarding the Peel Ports Conservancy fee, and the issues of water quality.

Peter thanked Dave for collating the information, included here for information: Dave found some original paperwork about the Conservancy fee, it was on an MSBA newsletter from 1988, which set out the different costs. Under 15ft £5, over 5ft £15. Both Peter and Dave put this though a CPI and RPI calculator comparing to the cost today and discovered that the rise from 1988 was vastly over either CPI or RPI. The systems put it at £60, versus the over £100 we are paying.

It was noted during the process that services had been lost over the duration of the time the fees applied, eg No local VTS, no investment into the sector. Concerns over the introduction of electronic systems for commercial vessels which each time they wish to update their details costs them a fee, and in some cases ended up being more than they charged for the job.

If we are unable to amicable agreement we will refer to the Monopolies Commission. We will keep the members updated on this.

River Strategy

At the meeting in February it was noticed that there was a lot of anger around the lack of progress on the waste going into the river and the quality of the water. Both black/grey and storm water. Looking at other places it could have come from.

Peter, Quentin and Charles have been working on this It took some while to establish who was responsible for managing the waste, and who was responsible for the legislation surrounding that. It comes down to Port of Sheerness, and section 5 sets it out clearly. To change bylaws is not a quick and easy task.

Medway Council owns the Lower River strategy. The MSBA need to engage with this strategy and ensure they don't move away from it.

In February the Environment Agency declared that they don't grant permits for House boats. It was also clear waste should be stored in onboard tanks and then pumped out and disposed of properly, into the main network. There were a lot of questions around enforcement and responsibility.

We decided to set up a joint meeting with Port of Sheerness, the MSBA and the Environment Agency with a view to how we resolve the issues so the two organisations can work together. The Environment Agency passed it round and came to the conclusion that they would decline the meeting, as they are only responsible for the river above Allington Lock. We then did a lot of research, and sent this off to the Environment Agency who understood our frustrations. They sent back an eight page email that helped us to put together our framework of how we address sewage discharge. The Environment Agency had actually granted a permit for Port Werburg – 900 litres a day. There is no evidence of this being inspected etc.

We focused on the Port authority and relevant bodies. We sent a formal request for information and investigation into unlawful discharge. The Port of Sheerness suddenly appointed lawyers. The fact they were investigating an investigation was a real game changer, more legal footing. The appropriate clauses (thanks to the EA) were laid out and the Port Authority responded on the 06 August. Thi.s was a big task as they put everything on the table.

Laid out bylaws, now taking very slowly, hopefully work forward with solutions.

No results as yet, there is a meeting on 01 October, we are waiting for this to take place before we chase. Peter will be seeking agreement of Port Werburgh to write to all House boat owners to find out how they

deal with human waste at the moment. Peter will then secure meeting with the Environment Agency to see if there is any new legislation.

There was a meeting on 10 September with Department of transport this was to set out where we are with Port Medway, what the bylaws currently say and how we can update them without taking four years.

Meeting dates have been set, 01 October, 13 January, 14 April. We are a member of the group and Peter will attend, these are Teams meetings. Scope out the objective, plan of action and timescales. Questionnaires to establish current state, and then a forum for continuing engagement. There will also be discussion and agreement on what is a vessel (Engine vs No Engine or something else).

The good news is that we now have a pump out facility at Chatham MDL. Peter put in a lot of work to get this going. There is an app that boat owners can download, they get free passage though the lock to use the pump out, which costs £10. Connect the boat, turn it on using the app, then turn it off using the app. The waste goes into the main sewage.

The river strategy itself has been redrafted in places and looked at again to get the wording right. We hold seats on the Business and Leisure group, Quentin has done a lot of work on this – a long slow process. Another version has been reworked which has gone back to the Council. Things like houseboat access has been omitted, we've asked for this to be clarified, along with pump out facilities.

People will be invited to the working groups in the next few weeks. It has been a lot of work and Peter thanked Quentin and Charles for helping with the lengthy process of replying to the solicitors' letters.

RYA

Chief Executive came to the Medway. Charles took her for lunch and showed her around. She was surprised to find a large marina with lots of boats.

RYA have launched strategy. Members will have the news letter with links.

Connected conference is in November, strategy will be flowed down to the clubs.

MRUA

Owing to the dry summer, Allington Lock is only operating at high water. Farleigh, Teston and Hampstead locks also have restrictions.

The lift bridge at Yalding has been repaired. (Same EA key operates the toilets and showers at Yalding and Tonbridge.)

Work has not started on the new waiting pontoon on the downstream side of Allington Lock.

Antisocial behaviour by local youths continues to be a problem.

Good news! The Malta Inn, which closed this month, is being taken over by Elite Pubs.

Cruising Association

There will be the usual Winter Warmer talks at the Dog and Bear in Lenham, the flyers will be sent out to the MSBA distribution list, please use the link to sign up. Next one is 08 October Mr Tim Bishop, and the next one is our own Peter Norris on 12 November. £3 entry fee applies, please pay on line.

Border Force

It has been a busy season, lots of boats out on the water. Please continue to be vigilant for luxury yachts behaving oddly or people wanting to purchase boats who want to pay in cash or are asking questions you wouldn't expect. Peter reinforced this by saying to be careful if you sell privately, brokers go though check and make sure everything is above board.

Kent Police

Please report anything that looks out of place, nothing too small.

AOB

Just a few dates to be aware of, 16 October there will be a quiz at RCC in aid of Serv blood runners (which Peter volunteers for). Teams of 6, £8 per head. There is a raffle with a lot of good prizes. Thank you to RCC for giving us the venue free of charge.

There are Wavely booklets, please take and distribute at your clubs.

If you have events going on up and down the river please communicate to other clubs so they are aware.

Our AGM will be in November, we are looking for new people to join the Committee. Peter has taken the decision to stand down as Chairman at the 2027 AGM.

Dates of Next Meetings

24 November 2026 AGM at Medway Yacht Club.

There being no other business Peter closed the meeting at 20:45.