

Thursday 14 July 2022

Dear Madam/Sir,

As some of you will already be aware following our quarterly meeting this week, I am writing to inform that the Environment Agency will be carrying out a major repair and maintenance project on the Sutton Harbour lock gates later this year.

The £3 million project is being funded by the UK Government and will see the replacement of worn lock gate cills and other key maintenance items. The work is necessary to provide flood protection to hundreds of homes and businesses in the area and maintain water levels in Sutton Harbour.

Once complete it will ensure the effectiveness of the tidal barrage for another decade.

Our guiding policies during the conduct of these works are:

- full transparency and regular updates
- "hand in glove" collaboration with the Industry to minimize the impact of the works and help us collectively "weather" the works to the benefit of all concerned;

The work is scheduled to take place from mid-September this year and will be concluded by early May 2023. The "impact" works on the lock gates will commence in October 2022 and last until the end of March 2023. The inner gates will be tackled first, between October and December, and the outer gates between January and March.

An access timetable is currently being drawn up between the Environment Agency, Harbour Master and the project contractors Kier to allow for vessels to pass through at certain times of the day dependant on tides. This timetable is being designed to minimise disruption to all harbour users to the greatest extent possible. It will be updated regularly, taking into account predicted weather conditions, tidal conditions, and the scheduled programme of works.

The contractors will start mobilising on site in September. Other maintenance works will continue until early May 2023, but these works will not impact on the operation of the lock. The pedestrian footbridge will continue to operate, with pre-planned and publicised temporary closures as necessary.

For the majority of the works the lock will function on freeflow. It is estimated that there will be no more than 15 24-hour closures over the planned 238-day duration of the works, and no more than 20 12-hour closures in the same period.

Access to the harbour will be subject to the agreed times as shown in a daily 'passage possible timetable' which will be provided weekly, in advance of each week. The lock keepers will also broadcast, on VHF Channel 12, on the hour, every hour, between 07.00 and 17.00 to advise the next passage permitted window.

Between now and work on the lock gates starting in October, we will be holding a number of workshops with the fishing industry, Environment Agency and Kier to hone the mitigation plans we are putting in place to minimise disruption from these essential works.

We are in advanced discussions with Cattedown Harbour Commissioners about temporary docking and tie up facilities, including truck access to the Fish Quay for catches when access to Sutton Harbour is restricted. We intend to enhance the facilities at Cattedown, particularly for smaller boats to make it easier to land, and are very aware of the need for sheltered tie up facilities for smaller boats in poor weather.

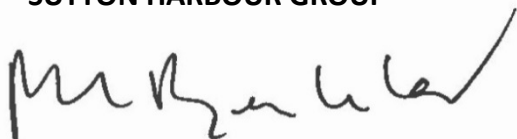
In addition, we are considering additional alternatives to address the requirements for smaller vessels.

Working with the Environment Agency, we have created a website, www.lockgates.info, as an information portal for the project. This is intended as a resource for all harbour users and will be regularly updated as the project progresses. There is a sign-up facility on the website through which you can register to receive up-to-date information.

We will shortly publicise the date of the first industry workshop and look forward to working with you to ensure the continued safe and efficient operation of the fishery while the Environment Agency completes these vital works.

Yours sincerely,

SUTTON HARBOUR GROUP



Philip Beinhaker
Executive Chairman