



TRINITY HOUSE

Minutes of Trinity House Lighthouse Board

28 May 2025 – Swansea

Present

Captain Lance Batchelor (Lighthouse Board Chair) (LB) by Webex (Item 2.1 onward)

Rear Admiral Iain Lower (Deputy Master/ Chief Executive) (IL)

Captain Andy Holt (Director of Operations) (AH)

Commander Nigel Hare (Director of Navigational Requirements) (NH)

Valerie Owen (NED) (VO)

Alan Moore (NED) (AM)

Curtis Juman (NED) (CJ)

Present (non-voting)

Damien Oliver (Director of Major Projects) (DO)

Michael Barnett (Interim Director of Business Services) (MB)

In attendance

Thomas Arculus (Head of Legal and Estates / Board Secretary) (TA)

Dionne Benfield (Interim Head of People Services) (DB) by Webex

(Items 2.5 & 2.5.1)

1. ADMINISTRATION

1.1 Welcome by Chair

The Board satisfied itself of its quoracy and elected VO to chair the meeting until LB was able to establish a stable remote connection.

1.2 Apologies

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Ton Damen (Director of Business Services)

1.3 Declarations of Interest

In anticipation of the discussion on the future of the TSL cottage estate, CJ declared his position as Chair of TSL.

1.4 Minutes of Lighthouse Board – 26th March 2025

With reference to item 2.2 on page 6 of the draft minutes AH confirmed that the intention is to review safe systems of work.

Regarding item 2.6.3 on page 9, the KPIs need to be aligned with the SIP and OAP going forward. The Board Secretary was asked to add 'linked to SIP' in this sentence.

[Action: Board Secretary – Update Minutes of 26 March 2025]

1.5 Log of Actions

The Board reviewed the Log of Actions and made appropriate updates to it.

2. PERFORMANCE

2.1 Chief Executive's Report

IL presented his report covering the topics of Safety, Marine Capital, Organisational Performance Objectives (OPOs), Formalisation of the proceedings of SMT meetings, progress with the Pay Business Case (noting that the ballot of members of the Unite and Prospect unions was to close that day), Futures Afloat (highlighting that the procurement documentation is awaiting approval from the Chief Secretary to Treasury (CST)).

The Chief Executive's report also covered the outcomes of the Staff Survey and the next steps, and proposals for topics to discuss at the Strategy Away.

The Board discussed the future of the TSL Cottage Estate (where TSL and the GLA are now looking at seamlessly and in good order, transferring the cottages back to the GLA), and the organisation's capacity to reabsorb the management of the TSL Cottage Estate.

Key risks highlighted in the report include:

-Health and Safety

-Recruitment and Retention, in relation to which there are now positive signs that the rate of turnover may be starting to reduce. The Board discussed staff turnover levels and the organisation's ability to sustain the current figure of 19%.

Emerging risks highlighted in the report include:

-The situation that might occur if the Unions do not vote to accept the Pay Business Case offer.

-Swansea wood dust.

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-CST approval for Futures Afloat.

-Avian flu is suspected on the Skerries where a major modernisation project is happening. [Post meeting note – test results confirmed that the virus was not present].

2.2 Health and Safety Committee Report

Presented by DO.

The rate for closing-out H&S investigations is unacceptably slow. DO and AH set objectives with relevant Senior Managers to improve alacrity. The aim is to close-out reports and agree recommendations and actions within seven working days. A lot of effort is being made to achieve these improvements.

The May H&S Committee meeting was postponed in order to focus on improving the conduct and closure of investigations and to allow a regular battle-rhythm of reporting closed-out investigations to be established.

The NEDs welcome the work which is being done.

2.3 LHB KPIs

NH presented the LHB KPI report and drew attention to the Directional Light Category 1 KPI which is slightly below target due to issues with Hurst Point Port Entry Light (now resolved), and Main Light Category 1 which is also slightly below target as a result of a recurrent fault on Eddystone (the faulty system has now been replaced).

The Board wished to know more about the nature and background to Value for Money Savings, and where else this gets reported. The Board Secretary was asked to investigate and report back.

[Action: Board Secretary to report to the Board on the nature and background of the VfM KPI and whether it is reported elsewhere]

2.4 Business Service Report

MB presented the 2024-25 budget outturn and a comparison of key elements of this year's budget, compared with the financial out-turn for 2024-25.

The total Financial Outturn for 2024-25 - an underspend of 13%.

Lower Capital spend largely relates to:

- (i) deferment of the Lightvessel Dry Dock and upgrade programme in order to focus resources on vessel reliability.
- (ii) overrunning Patricia Dry Dock and Refit which will have an impact on the 2025/26 capital programme, with work likely to be accounted for in the new financial year - work is currently ongoing to revise expenditure plans to enable the funding of the DD&R work within the current budget; and

(iii) the IT budget was underspent, in large part due to the emergence of Software as a Service, and some this utilised to fund the emerging work required on the Harwich Pier.

AH explained that the Marine Operations Department did not have capacity to deliver three LV Dry Dockings last year but steps are being made to get back on track.

MB and CJ met John Kanes (GIAA-Head of Internal Audit) recently to agree the Audit programme for this year, sized appropriately.

MB reported that, with the objective of further strengthening cyber security, work is ongoing to obtain Cyber Accreditation.

The Board **NOTED** the 2024/25 end of year financial results.

2.4.1 Procurement, Inventory and Contract Management Policy

The Policy has been updated to reflect the advent of the Procurement Act 2023. It has previously been reviewed by ExCo and is now recommended for approval.

The Board **RESOLVED** to approve the Procurement, Inventory and Contract Management Policy subject to the addition in paragraph 4.2 of words to the effect, 'Contract Manager will reach out to IT to ensure that security updates are always included where IT solutions are procured'.

[Action: MB to add text to Procurement, Inventory and Contract Management Policy in paragraph 4.2 of words to the effect, 'Contract Manager will reach out to IT to ensure that security updates are always included where IT solutions are procured']

2.5 People and Culture Report (at this point DB joined the meeting remotely).

The Board was invited to note that the 2024/25 Pay Business Case was sanctioned by Government on 23 April 2025. The pay offer is now with all three Unions and is expected to have balloted responses by 30 May 2025; the HRIS project has now been awarded to IRIS Cascade; the 2024/25 appraisal/performance cycle has now been completed with a 99.3% return rate, and bonuses will be paid to eligible colleagues within the May payroll. The all-staff bonus increased from last year; and shoreside pay progression is expected to be applied (backdated 1 April 2025) within the June 2025 payroll, subject to the outcome of the ballot, with the focus being on lowest paid colleagues.

The Board discussed the degree to which H&S is reflected in bonus awards. This will happen to a greater extent next year.

DB outlined the status of the Union Consultation and ballots in relation to the Pay Business Case. Contingency plans have been developed in the event that the outcomes of the ballots is unfavourable. The bonus pot was agreed with DfT, 0.5% was moved to the pay progression fund. The rest will be paid to staff in the May payroll.

2.5.1 Staff Engagement Survey

The SMT have held dedicated listening sessions with staff in relation to the results of the 2024 Staff Engagement Survey, and an action plan has been developed focussing

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on pay and benefits, communications and engagement, the benefits package, communication and trust in senior leadership.

The Board **NOTED** next steps in relation to the Engagement Survey outcomes.

2.6 Navigational Requirements Report

The Annual Report on Inspections of Local AtoN and Offshore Structures will be circulated to the Board out of committee for comments before being submitted to the Secretary of State.

[Action: NH to circulate the Annual AtoN Inspections report to Board prior to submission]

MCA have been requested to inform IMO of the changes to routing at Royal Sovereign. NH confirmed that there is no issue with navigational safety at the Royal Sovereign buoy station.

The Board noted gapped posts within the department and the reassignment of the Local AtoN Auditor to become a second Inspector of Seamarks, representing a doubling of capacity in that role.

The Director of Navigational Requirements and Policy recruitment process is proceeding well and there should be an opportunity for there to be a comprehensive handover period.

2.7 Operations Directorate Report

AH reported on the challenges resulting from the relatively high levels of sickness absence in the directorate.

The West Coast Work Boat contract has been awarded, restoring capacity to deliver BSL.

The DD&R of THV Patricia has overrun significantly but the ship should return to service this week. Work will be done to capture the cost of delays.

The Engineering Plan is on target. The Wolf Rock mandate has been agreed by ExCo.

A preliminary scope has been created for Harwich sea wall repairs.

Marine Capital has been restructured for 2025-26.

The 20 year Engineering Plan is being finalised for inclusion on the Corporate Planning round.

Avian flu is suspected on the Skerries, confirmation is awaited. We are working closely with the RSPB on contingency planning. [Post meeting note – laboratory test results were negative].

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The Board discussed reported problems with bow thrusters on THVs Patricia and Alert. The issues on THV Alert have been resolved.

The Board believes that it would be beneficial to capture the contingency in the 2026-31 Corporate Plan, in relation to what would happen if a vessel went out of service.

[Action: AH/MB capture the contingency in the 2026-31 Corporate Plan, in relation to what would happen if a vessel went out of service].

Generally, the ExCo was asked to demonstrate in directorate reports in future, the value/benefits of work done – the ‘so what’ element. DNR is excused from this request.

[Action: AH/MB - Align the Finance and Ops Reporting around capex including highlighting the key takeaways. Use the same reports for ExCo and LHB]

2.8 Futures Afloat

The NEDs and Futures Afloat team had met the previous day at The Village Hotel, Swansea, with the CEO, to review the Futures Afloat procurement pack. A number of actions were developed for the Futures Afloat team to take forward.

[Action: DO to take forward with the Futures Afloat Team ten actions from The Village Hotel meeting on 27 May]

VO recommended the evaluation panels provide sufficient challenge to potential group-think.

Trinity House is currently awaiting feedback from the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (CST). If the result is favourable it will go for scrutiny by officials in the Cabinet Office and then we will be ready for the tender to be launched. [Post meeting note, the CST approval has been received.]

The ‘*substantial*’ opinion awarded by the GIAA Audit on Futures Afloat governance was **NOTED** with satisfaction.

2.9 Outturn on Organisational Performance Objectives (OPOs) 2024-25

AH presented the results of the 2024-25 OPOs at year end. The majority were completed. Others were at around the 80% mark where priorities had changed.

The Board noted the good work done across the organisation, and the volume of it and discussed the importance, next year of crafting objectives which will give everybody the best chance of changing the health and safety culture in the positive ways that the Board wants to see. This should also enable quantification of this performance. Work is ongoing with the SMT on the best way to do this.

The Board **NOTED** the outturn on the 2024/25 Organisational Performance Objectives.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Risk Deep Dive Options for Strategy Away Day

MB proposed that risks from the World Economic Forum and National Risk Register are looked at in the context of our own risk registers to look at how they could stimulate consideration of our own risks.

The Board felt that Resilienceneeds to be examined in depth.

The session will be externally facilitated and will be used to question whether the current risks are right, whether they are actually risks (or whether they are symptoms) and to identify whether there are any gaps. It is important that it is not over-intellectualised. It needs to remain practical and relevant. CJ explained the benefits of looking at the inherent risks derived from the National Risk Register and their effects on the organisation.

AM warned of the risk of losing our ability of deliver our statutory responsibilities resulting from observing our own risks when actually they may be deteriorating gradually.

[Action: ExCo to develop a programme for the risk review session at the away day]

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1 CRR Dashboard

There have been no major changes to CRR since the last Board meeting in March.

The Government-led Arm's Length Body review needs to be monitored closely.

MB, surveying the CRR with fresh eyes, feels that ownership of action to manage risks could be expressed more clearly, work is in progress to clarify this.

4.2 JSB Update

AM (JSB Chair) reported on the outcomes of the JSB meeting 29-30 April and the genuine spirit of co-operation between the GLAs.

Consideration is being given to how to get the best value out of the Government representatives who attend part of the meeting.

Immediately after the JSB meeting a session was held at which the DfT briefed the JSB on the development of the new Maritime Strategy.

4.3 Chief Executive Committee 1-2 April 2025 Notes

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Noted.

4.4 Nominations & Governance Committee 29 April 2025

The Board noted progress with the recruitment of a new NED, a new DNRP and the appointments of the new DPC and Interim DBS. The minutes of the meeting on 29 April were noted.

4.5 High Level Stakeholder Relationships

The Board wishes to consider how best to conduct further engagement with local MPs in constituencies where TH depots are located and how to mobilise support in the House of Lords to best effect.

[Action: Board Secretary – add Local MPs and Elder Brother peers to the Government Engagement Matrix].

4.6 TSL Cottages Estate Review Update

The Board received and **NOTED** an update on the management of the TSL cottage estate.

Advice has been sought by TSL on unravelling the leases so the cottages can be handed back to GLA management. TSL recognises it will need to spend money to comply with lease terms. A discussion ensued on the requirements of the leases, the extent of dilapidations, the capacity of the GLA to resume management of the cottages, and expected timelines for lease termination formalities.

The Board Secretary was asked to form a cross-functional working group to make recommendations on future GLA management of the cottages.

[Action: Board Secretary to form a cross-functional working group to make recommendations on future GLA management of the cottages.]

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 Meeting Dates 2026

The Board noted the proposed meeting dates for the calendar year 2026.

[Action: Board Secretary to liaise with CEO and propose venues for some meetings to be held outside of London]

5.2 World AtoN Day (WAND) Update

NH provided an outline of events to mark WAND on 2-3 July.

The Board noted with appreciation that HRH The Master and the Maritime Minister, Mike Kane MP have each confirmed their attendance on 1 July.

Record of Decisions

2.4	The Board RESOLVED to approve the Procurement, Inventory and Contract Management Policy subject to the addition in paragraph 4.2 of words to the effect, 'Contract Manager will reach out to IT to ensure that security updates are always included where IT solutions are procured'.
2.4	The Board NOTED the 2024/25 end of year financial results.
2.5.1	The Board NOTED next steps in relation to the Engagement survey outcomes.
2.8	The Board NOTED the substantial opinion in the GIAA internal audit report on Futures Afloat.
2.9	The Board NOTED the outturn on the 2024/25 Organisational Performance Objectives.
4.6	The Board NOTED the update on the management of the TSL cottage estate.