
PETITION TO COUNCIL – MARGATE PORT

To: **Council – 24 April 2014**

By: **Mark Seed, Director of Operational Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Wards: **Margate Central Ward**

Summary: **A Petition to the Council has been received in relation to the smell of Margate Harbour.**

For decision

1.0 Introduction and background information

- 1.1 Under the terms of the Council's petitions scheme, members of the public may present petitions at ordinary meetings of Council; and if a petition has over 25, but less than 650, signatories, it will be referred to Cabinet or an appropriate committee without debate for report to Council within three ordinary meetings.
- 1.2 The petitions scheme also states that the total time devoted to the consideration of petitions at any single Council meeting will not exceed 30 minutes.

2.0 Current situation

- 2.1 A petition containing 207 valid signatures has been received from Mr Arthur Martin. Unfortunately, 103 further entries had to be disallowed on the basis that they did not contain all three of the name, address and signature of the petitioners. The petitions scheme requires that an entry on a petition must include, "the name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition".
- 2.2 The petition states:

"It is about our Margate Cinque Port Harbour that has for many years been allowed to build up with rotting, decaying mud rubbish, sediments and seaweed. This is creating a methane sewage emitting smell, that smells similar to urine and the stench is airborne because of the build-up of sediments over on-going years. It is putting people off from coming to our Heritage Cinque Port Harbour. The Council are advertising Our Town as a unique port and that Cinque Ports are to look after sailors when coming into Margate.

As the Council are in charge of maintaining our beaches which is included in people's rates, the smell that the harbour emits is putting people off coming to our town. The main problem seems to have started when the sluice arched part got bricked up on the outer side of the harbour wall which allowed water to pass through and clear the inner harbour of unwanted sediments, mud and seaweed. This would take it out to the sea. We the petitioners are disgusted that this has been allowed to happen over many years which would not bring prosperity to our town. The problems are easy to resolve, i.e re-open the sluice with a big gated gate to allow water pass through clearing the harbour of decaying debris. There was once a time when the harbour was full of vessels of all types, including yachts and cargo boats. Now only smaller crafts can enter our harbour as its been allowed

to clog up with debris of all kinds. This is putting off our holiday makers and people who visit our Turner Centre and some wouldn't want to come again. We the petitioners feel that businesses are suffering in the area. It is a disgrace for our Heritage Town. The Council have recently spent millions of pounds on steps and an Art Gallery. It is a small amount of money to re-open the sluice gate and would solve the problems for good. Under Maritime Law and Cinque Port Laws which the Council advertise this build up should never have happened as sailors cannot get boats in any more, as the sand has built up over the years. How is this neglect helping sailors and our ports? That is why Cinque Ports were made, many years ago to look after sailors mainly.

We hope that our petition will sort this problem out for Margate. We hope our Port will be a better attraction for all in the future once this sluice gate is re-opened."

- 2.3 Mr Martin, as petition originator, has confirmed that he will present the petition at this meeting; he will, under the petitions scheme, have up to three minutes in which to speak.

3.0 Corporate Implications

3.1 Financial

- 3.1.1 The cost of reopening the sluice has been estimated to be in the region of £17k. Further works to install a lift gate (as existed when the sluice was last open) may be required costing approximately £55k. The likely annual cost of maintenance would be £10k.

3.2 Legal

- 3.2.1 This petition relates to an executive function. As such, and because of the number of signatories, it must be referred to Cabinet.

3.3 Corporate

- 3.3.1 In accordance with the Council's petition scheme if a petition has over 25, but less than 650, signatories, it will be referred to Cabinet or an appropriate committee without debate for report to Council within three ordinary meetings

3.4 Equity and Equalities

- 3.4.1 There are no specific equity and equalities issues arising from this report.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 That the petition is referred to Cabinet without debate for report back to Council within three ordinary meetings.

5.0 Decision Making Process

- 5.1 Under the Council's petitions scheme, Council is required to refer the petition to Cabinet or appropriate committee for report back to Council.

Contact Officer:	Mark Seed, Director of Operations, ext 7742
Reporting to:	Dr Sue McGonigal, Chief Executive and S. 151 Officer, ext 7002

Annex List

None	
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Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	<i>Matthew Sanham - TBC</i>
Legal	Steve Boyle – Interim Legal Services Manager