Sinking Hebble Sand dredger is re-floated

By **ALISON COMYN**

The Hebble Sand has been re-floated but it could be weeks until it is re-located.

The floundered Hebble Sand vessel has been stabilised and refloated, but it will be several weeks until any possible re-location process can begin.

The owners of the 60-year-old vessel and crews were on site at Drogheda Port from early on Wednesday morning to carry out remedial work on the ship.

A crane was also erected to assist them in carrying this out. Water was pumped out of the boat into IBC's and divers were sent down to assess what repair has to be done.

Current Harbour Master Martin Donnelly was in attendance to oversee the operation, with his replacement Laurence Kirwan.

Mr Donnelly is retiring from the position in October.

"From what we understand the damage to the boat was a hole where the rudder is attached. Their aim is to refloat the boat, stop it taking in water which should ultimately stop any further oil residue getting into the river," said Louth TD Fergus O'Dowd, who received information from Louth County Council-Environmental Compliance Section.

"From the port's investigations, the oil is not a fuel leak but residue oil around engine room and ancillary equipment which is mixing with the river water as tide comes in and out," said a spokeswoman.

"We have been informed that any residual fuel will also be removed".

The area around the ship was double boomed with oil sorbent booms initially. They have since replaced the booms and added a third boom.

"A number of samples have been taken along the Boyne, preliminary results do not indicate any deoxygenating conditions," said Deputy O'Dowd. "Additionally, no evidence of impacts on fish and wildlife have been noted however, Inland Fisheries Ireland have been notified".

Meanwhile a spokesman for Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) told the local TD that they were keeping a close eye on the situation.

"We understand that Drogheda Port Company Limited is responsible, under Irish statute, for the management, control, operation and development of its port and for the provision of such facilities, services and accommodation and lands in the port for ships, goods and passengers as it considers necessary," said Brian Beckett, Director IFI. "We further understand from our own enquiries that Louth County Council and Drogheda Port Company are working to address this situation in respect of pollution control. In order to avoid duplication of effort, we will maintain regular contact with Louth County Council in respect of this matter."

The operation is expected to last a number of days and there is no indication as yet if or when the Hebble Sand will be removed.

The vessel has been moored and immobile since 2014.

Vessel to be disposed of in Scotland

Cllr Kevin Callan thanked Louth County Council for its handling of the sinking Hebble Sand dredger at Drogheda Port at Monday's Council meeting.

The vessel was re-floated after it started to take on water during heavy rain and high tides, leading to the spilling of diesel into the River Boyne last week.

The vessel is expected to be moved and disposed of in Scotland.

Asking for an update on the vessel, Cllr Callan asked if an indication could be provided from the board on when the ship will be moved out of Drogheda Port.

CEO of Louth County Council, Joan Martin said this was a matter for the port company.

However, Cllr Callan said the responsibility falls on the council to ensure it is done correctly.

He said he understands permission is needed from the Department of Marine, but the EPA had informed him that it ultimately falls back on the Environment Section of the Council.

Mrs Martin said she understands it has been dealt with by the port, noting that she would check up on it.

More education needed around active travel measures

Mayor of Drogheda and Labour Councillor, Michelle Hall *(pictured)* has said it is not enough to have bike week or walking week, which is highlighted once a year, it is needed all year round.

At this month's County Meeting, Mayor Hall raised concern at the lack of education centring around active travel measures, asking that the council build awareness on the positives and cycling and public transport throughout the county.

She said, "I think as Councillors, we're going to have a hard job in bringing people with us with the change of infrastructure."

Continuing, she added, "we need to combat where the traffic is going to go, where people are going to park if they are coming into town and are expected to walk. This needs to be planned in coexistence with the cycling facilities. There needs to be a plan for parking and cycling facilities located close to each other."

Additionally, Mayor Hall highlighted the importance of campervan camping facilities in Drogheda.

Having attended Vantastival, which is located ten minutes from Drogheda, Mayor Hall highlighted the number of campervans and tourists the festival brought to the town.

She added that the council are not moving quickly enough to ensure tourists stay in the town and need to provide facilities for campervans.

She said, "Drogheda is already limited in accommodation choices, but hopefully next year campervans will be prompted to remain in Drogheda in conjunction with the festival."

Catherine Duff, Director of Services for the Council said the approach to behavioural change is a national issue and the whole nation has to change how we approach to not using cars.

She added that the same goes for campervans, which is an issue that needs to be recognised nationally.

An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

NOTICE OF DETERMINATION

The Minister of State, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage with special responsibility for Planning and Local Government ("the Minister") hereby gives notice that he has determined an application dated 1st of April 2021 for a Licence under Section 3 of the Foreshore Act, 1933 (as amended) made by North Irish Sea Array (NISA) Limited, Building 4200, Cork Airport Business Park, Co. Cork, T12 D23C ("the Applicant") in respect of site investigations necessary to establish the optimum location for, and design of, the export cable(s) to shore and to establish the most appropriate landfall location(s) from the proposed North Irish Sea Array (NISA) offshore windfarm, located off the coasts of Dublin, Meath and Louth. (Application Reference Number FS007358)

The full Notice of Determination was published on the Iris Oifigiúil website on 20 September 2022 and can be viewed at: **http://www.irisoifigiuil.ie/**

All documentation in regard to the application including the Notice of Determination can be viewed on the website of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government at:

https://www.gov.ie/en/foreshore-notice/c7c0a-fs007358-statkraft-north-irish-sea-array-nisa-site-investigations-for-export-cable-route/

This material may also be inspected free of charge by appointment at the following office of the Department:

Foreshore ORE Section
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Newtown Road, Wexford, Y35 AP90

Tel: 1890 20 20 21
Email: **foreshoreORE@housing.gov.ie**

REVIEW PROCEDURE

An application for leave to apply for judicial review shall be made within three months from the date when grounds for the application first arose under Section 21(1) of the Order 84 of the Rules of the Superior Courts as amended by S.I No 691 of 2011. The time-limit for such a review commences from the Date of Publication of the full Notice of Determination. Further information on the review mechanism can be obtained on the Citizens Information Board website: **www.citizensinformation.ie**

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

Dated this 21st of September 2022