



THE HAYLING FERRY TRUST

21st June 2017

It feels almost unbelievable that this time last year there was no ferry operating between Hayling Island & Portsmouth! So much happened in such a short time but the most important thing is that now we have a reliable ferry service and the link is restored. This is without doubt a huge success story for the community in every way.

Since the company that previously operated the ferry went into administration the 'Pride of Hayling' had been put up for sale and Hampshire County Council had withdrawn their subsidy of the route. There was very little data to allow a future operator to understand the potential of the ferry and its return looked bleak.

In January 2016 Islander Sheila Mealy, along with Baker-Trayte (who had by this time purchased the 'Pride of Hayling', organised a meeting at *The Shades* public house on Hayling Island. There was huge attendance and the community's desire to get the service back up and running was obvious. Lots of positive solutions were suggested and during the meeting, Alan Vallis suggested contacting Richard Branson. A new Facebook group called 'Save The Hayling Ferry' had recently been created and following Mr Vallis's suggestion, local resident Mark Coates penned a letter which the Facebook group sent en masse by post, email, twitter & Facebook to Richard Branson and Virgin Unite.

Community momentum quickly gathered apace and Richard Branson responded to the hundreds of calls for help. Richard's love for the Island and his connections through his Kite-Surfing & The Virgin Kite-Surfing Armada (Dan Charlish has been a massive help throughout our journey), alongside our clear community passion, compelled him to offer some support. Virgin needed to donate to a community organisation (and not a business) so the principle of 'The Hayling Ferry Trust' (which had already been mooted, though without substantial backing) was born. Virgin's donation of £5,000 was a great initial boost and it was agreed with Baker-Trayte (the owners of The Pride of Hayling') that if further



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funds could be raised (to provide financial support when required, then the ferry service could restart imminently).

With Virgin attracting further funds from other local businesses such as Stonegate Pubs and the Southern Co-operative, a team of volunteers quickly started crowd-funding, selling advanced ticket vouchers, souvenir mugs and receiving generous donations from smaller local businesses; the crowd funding target of 15k was met in a matter of weeks. With all of this momentum and further back-up funds promised by Portsmouth City Council of 10k and a reserve of 5k from Havant Borough Council, Baker-Trayte agreed to restart the service.

The re-launch was scheduled for August 5th and community activist Mark Coates, his father Richard and Alli Wiltshire undertook the task of creating a launch fitting for the amount of community effort that had been poured into it. On Friday 5th of August, Dancer Wayne Sleep OBE, the adopted son of Hayling, pirouetted down the pontoon with the Mayor of Havant, Faith Ponsonby, to set The Pride of Hayling off on her first official crossing. It was quite an event, with pyrotechnics; the Portsmouth Football Club mascot Nelson & Portsmouth Legend Alan Knight joined the fun. On that day the Hayling Ferry carried over 700 passengers and over 1000 people turned out to celebrate. The Ferryboat Inn even provided children's entertainment and free champagne for onlookers, whilst a vintage aircraft flyover completed proceedings. Live music from hugely popular local starlet Chloe Anne provided the soundtrack and BBC, Meridian and Solent TV covered the event, along with local newspapers and radio stations, giving the Ferry complete South Coast coverage.

Once the launch was day was complete, normal service commenced. Baker-Trayte worked tirelessly to offer a full service and since their launch are very proud to have operated a full service for all but 8.5 hours (due to weather) in their ten months of operation. Colin Hill of Baker-Trayte was appointed managing skipper and his enthusiasm and dedication has contributed hugely to their success and reliability. He is



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now a very popular figure amongst day trippers and commuters and can never do enough for Ferry users.

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Since the relaunch of the Ferry under new owners Baker-Trayte, 'The Hayling Ferry Trust' has worked closely with the operator; one of the recent achievements has been to negotiate a ticket sponsorship deal with Portsmouth based coffee chain **The Coffee Cup**. This ongoing deal has saved the operator over £1000 to date and to keep things as simple as possible **The Coffee Cup** deal directly with the operator when tickets are required and purchase the tickets on behalf of the operator directly from the ticket printer.

In addition to those who have so generously donated there has been a huge amount of behind the scenes work carried out. This includes allocating and hand delivering vouchers, posting mugs, setting up and managing facebook pages and websites (none of which would have been possible without the constant support of Tim Owens). Community spirit runs through this projects blood.

'The Hayling Ferry Trust' was set up to receive donations and support the operators over the long term (initially a period of three years) and therefore these are still very early days. Throughout the process so far we have received legal advice and have been advised, amongst other things, to keep the operation as lean as possible. Currently the administration of finances is carried out by neutral party 'Hayling's Best' who have been raising money and managing community events for many people and for many years. As we currently have no adopted constitution, the only money paid out from funds to date has been mugs for crowd funding and monthly payments to the operator Baker-Trayte for 'Trust' vouchers, used to pay for travel in the previous month. Also now available are accounts which show money in and money out. Obviously very detailed records have been kept for all donations and where appropriate voucher allocations etc however, this information contains personal details of those that donated. Once a formal treasurer



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is appointed we will ensure everything is audited and the audit report published.

Many members of the community donated and received 'Ferry Vouchers' in return. These vouchers are valid for use until the **end of August 2017** (regardless of expiry dates printed on them) and voucher holders who are unlikely to use their vouchers by this date are advised to use them to purchase tickets from the ferry as tickets issued by the operator have no expiry. Once we pass this date we will have final figures of money held to support the future of the ferry.

With a year under our belts, it is time to hand over the running of the 'Trust' to a small team of enthusiastic experienced individuals. This team will be able to make decisions regarding remaining funds and support the operator Baker Trayte as required. We have a list of people who previously expressed interest, who we will contact and meet with later this month and we invite all volunteers who might be interested in committing their time to the support of the Ferry to express interest by emailing clare@tch.net or by calling 07703 185069. Thank you for everything you have done to make the Ferry Service a reality once again. I can say with absolute confidence that we are in excellent hands with Baker-Trayte at the helm and it has been a pleasure to work with them.

Clare Satchwell