

Weymouth Harbour Consultation Group (WHCG)
Tuesday 03 September 2024 (WTC Chamber and Teams, 19:00-21:00)

Present

Tim Day	TD	Chair and Clubs of Weymouth Representative
Ed Carter	EC	Weymouth Harbour Master
Cllr Rob Hughes	RH	Chair of the Harbours Advisory Committee
Dave Caddy	DC	Vice Chair and Harbour Traders Representative
Andy Alcock	AA	Commercial Fishermen Representative
Alan Hale	AH	Boat Owners Inner Harbour Representative
Colin Thomas	CT	Substitute for Boat Owners Inner Harbour Representative
Will Holmes	WH	Weymouth Beach / Leisure Users Representative
Simon Kershaw	SK	RNLI Representative
Cllr Kate Wheller	KW	Weymouth Town Council
Jamie Pullin	JP	Charter Boat Representative
Jamie Thornton	JT	Dorset Marine Police
Joshua Kennedy	JK	Minute Taker/Admin Support
Julian Wain	JW	Strategic Property Advisor, Dorset Council

1. INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

TD opened the meeting and apologies received from Ken Buchan, Mary Harris, Callum Seggie, Jamie Thornton, Dan Bell and Amanda Anderson.

Julian Wain was introduced in the meeting as a Strategic Property Advisor from Dorset Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

TD asked if anyone had any points from the previous minutes.

Issues were raised including, the poor condition of the toilets and showers in the North Quay block, the narrow pontoon which was causing concern with users disembarking their vessels and the lack of safety ladders. **EC** responded stating that a contractor had been contacted to provide a quote for work on the shower block, ladders had been ordered and the delay was due to needing a bespoke size, and that the pontoon would need fixing to the wall which would require a marine license and so alternative solutions were being investigated.

4. HARBOUR MASTER UPDATE

1.0 Harbour Use

EC delivered an update on Weymouth harbour, in relation to the usage since the last meeting. He noted that the mooring occupancy remained high, especially with vessels over 10m, however there were some vacancies in 8m moorings. Commercial

berths were strong with a nearly 100% occupancy rate. Due to the weather improving during the summer months, the number of visiting vessels had been high.

2.0 Incidents

2.1 The Harbour team had recorded 65 incidents since the last meeting, including:

- Alcohol related incidents.
- Vessels weaving in and out of bathing buoys.
- Reports of potential theft.
- A seagull caught in a fishing line.
- A sunk vessel that was successfully refloated.

Changes had been made over the past year to the incident reporting system to streamline the system and gain better insight into where incidents were happening and the frequency of them. There were no oil spill incidents that required external notification, however due to some instances of visible sheen on the water, harbour users had been encouraged to report any instance of oil spillage to the Harbour Team, so that it can be dealt with.

3.0 Operations

3.1 Oil Spills & Response

Following an oil spill response exercise, a full review on the oil spill contingency plan had been conducted, which had been validated by the MCA until 2029.

3.3 PMSC Audit

The Port Marine Safety Code audit had been carried out in March, which found that Weymouth Harbour were fully compliant with the Port Marine Safety Code. The result of the audit would be brought to the next Harbours Advisory Committee meeting in September.

4.0 Harbour Works

4.1 General Works

EC Delivered an update on the general harbour works, which were on going or recently completed. Successful repairs had been undertaken to the harbour bridge and a local notice issued to ensure users are aware of any operational changes to the bridge whilst works were ongoing. Repairs to Harbour Wall 4 were ongoing and were lasting slightly longer than expected, however, were having minimal impact on operational functions.

The Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project had been delayed due to grid connections and the Harbour Manager was currently working with the Legal Officers at Dorset Council to ensure the work is completed. Concerns from Natural England about the installation of the fuel pontoon had been addressed by an ecological appraisal.

In response to a question **EC** confirmed that they were doing all they could in regard to putting pressure on SSE to complete the grid connection and had been in touch with senior Dorset Council officers about the issue.

5.0 Weymouth Future Development and Open Port Duty

EC Provided a summary of the paper presented to the Harbours Advisory Committee in March of this year, and explained that through obtaining a new Harbour Revision Order and restricting Weymouth's Open Port Duty to 24 metres, it would remove the legal obligation to provide potentially costly services for larger vessels wishing to enter the harbour and give the harbour the choice over which vessels over 24m that it takes in.

There were concerns raised by several attendees about the fact that this may discourage larger vessels from attempting to enter Weymouth Harbour and that this may have a detrimental impact on incoming revenue. In response to this **EC** gave assurances that clear signage would accompany any implementation of the HRO, to make sure that incoming vessels larger than 24m, know that they are still able to enter the harbour in certain situations.

It was also explained that the Harbour Revision Order would go through an extensive consultation process and that any comments made at the Consultative Group Meeting would be fed back to the Harbours Advisory Committee to consider.

In response to a question **JW** explained that as far as they knew, no viable solution for a ferry service from Weymouth had been presented to Dorset Council since the departure of Condor Ferries in 2025, and that the HRO was a reaction to the fact that a viable ferry service hadn't been presented rather than Dorset Council wanting to avoid a ferry service.

KW raised a question about the possibility of a ferry service running between Weymouth and Portland. **EC** confirmed that he had been in touch with Portland Harbour, however had been informed of difficulties for the ferries docking in Portland. He stated that he would try and reopen the conversation, as it is felt that it would be a positive benefit to the harbours.

6.0 Upcoming Events

EC Provided an update on upcoming events that were coming to Weymouth Harbour, this included the Seafood Festival and Ironman event. It was also noted that harbour patrols had been out for every fireworks night.

6. CONSULTATIVE GROUP UPDATE

- **SK – RNLI.** Over the summer there had been 45 launches of RNLI vessels that were reacting to a variety of incidents including missing people and the service remained busy going into Autumn.
- **AH – Boat Owners Inner Harbour Representative.** Raised concerns over the lack of CCTV coverage on the pontoons and noted that there had been incidents of young people congregating on the pontoons at night and potential anti-social behaviour. In response **EC** confirmed that the Harbour

Team would look into getting CCTV coverage in the area, although with so many pontoons to cover, and the view-blocking effect of large vessels, it would be very difficult and expensive to get complete coverage.

AH Also raised questions about storage boxes being stored on the pontoon, which were blocking access and bike storage, to which **EC** confirmed that it would be investigated, and bicycles would be tagged and non-claimed bikes removed.

AH Also raised concern about young people in charge of dinghies within the harbour and the potential of them causing damage to other vessels. **EC** Explained that they would look into it and potentially speak to the people in question if they were doing anything unsafely. **EC** Also noted that the mechanical gate would be looked into to see whether installing an automatic gate would be a viable option.

- **TD – Clubs of Weymouth.** There was an end of term regatta planned for the Weymouth Sailing Club. There was also an issue raised of people using the Sailing Club's private pontoon and that if this continued, they may ask the Harbour Team to help inform users that it is a private pontoon and not for public use.
- **WH – Weymouth Beach / Leisure Users Representative.** Reported that there had been 5 successful fireworks displays over the past season.
- **AA - Commercial Fishermen Representative.** Raised an issue with parking bays being occupied, which was preventing fishermen from being able to park their vans. This issue had also been reported to the police as fishermen had also received abuse over the issue.
- **DC - Harbour Traders Representative** Reported that trading over the summer had not been at the highest level and noted that people had questioned why the Waverley vessel hadn't visited Weymouth Harbour this year. **EC** Confirmed that he had spoken to the operators of the Waverley, however with the ongoing WQRP works it was decided that as a berth could not be guaranteed to fit with the sailing schedule and would look to arrange for them to visit next year.
- **RH – Harbours Advisory Committee.** Informed the group that he had been appointed Vice-Chair of the SIFCA Board and attended a meeting of the Association of IFCA. He noted that **KW** had also joined SIFCA. Phillip Thicknesse had stepped down from the Harbours Advisory Committee meaning there were now two vacancies for Co-optee roles that would be filled in the coming months.
- **KW – Weymouth Town Council.** Reported that they were in contact with the new Cabinet Member to represent the Harbour within Dorset Council.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FROM MEMBERS

There were no other agenda items from members.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business raised at the meeting.

8. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Harbour Consultative Group

- Wednesday 13th November 2024
- Tuesday 11th February 2025

Harbours Advisory Committee

- 25 September 2024
- 4 December 2024
- 5 March 2025