

HARBOURS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2025

Present: Cllr Rob Hughes (Chair), Cllr Sarah Williams (Vice-Chair), Cllr Ray Bryan, Peter Dickenson, Lee Hardy, Mark Roberts, Mark Saxby and Richard Tinsley

Apologies: Cllrs Mike Baker and Sally Holland

Also present: Cllr Les Fry

Also present remotely: Cllrs Jon Andrews and Belinda Bawden

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Lara Altree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory), Ed Carter (Weymouth Harbour Master), Claire Connolly (Harbours Business Manager), Joshua Kennedy (Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Penny (Service Manager - Flood & Coastal Erosion), Matthew Piles (Corporate Director - Strategic Director - Weymouth 2040), James Radcliffe (Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Master) and Louis Wicks (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice)

138. Minutes

In reference to the Monitoring and review of the Marine Safety Plan item, Lee Hardy commented that part of the discussion had not been fully recorded, involving a question that was asked to legal services about whether the Harbours Advisory Committee should be making formal recommendations to the Duty Holder for reports from the Designated Person going forward and it was agreed that this would be explored and an answer would be provided at a later time.

139. Declarations of Interest

Mark Roberts declared that he held a mooring in West Bay.

Richard Tinsley declared that he no longer held a mooring in Weymouth.

140. Public Participation

There were no public questions.

141. Chair's Report

The Chair delivered a verbal report to the committee. He thanked the Vice-chair for covering the last meeting in his absence and noted that he had recently attended the harbour consultative group meetings, the 30-year celebration of the Dorset Coast Forum and a committee workshop to discuss the economic review of

the harbours. He also thanked the teams working within Dorset's harbours for their work throughout the year.

142. Harbour Consultative Group Minutes

The Bridport Harbour Consultative Group minutes from the meeting held on 03 November were presented by Emma Bourne, the Bridport HCG Chair.

The Lyme Regis Harbour Consultative Group minutes from the meeting held on 09 October were presented by Nick Marks, the Lyme Regis HCG RNLI representative.

The Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group minutes from the meeting held on 13 November were presented by Tim Day, the Weymouth HCG Chair.

The committee noted the minutes from the three harbour consultative groups.

143. Provision of Designated Person Services

The Harbours Manager presented the report for the provision of Designated Person services. He explained that the current Designated Person had been appointed in 2022 and had carried out an audit on each of the three harbours and that continuing the contract for another three years would allow for two audits to be carried out in total by the Designated Person.

In response to a question from a committee member about the process for appointing the Designated Person, legal services confirmed that the committee could note the continued provision of Designated Services by ABPmer and following the meeting officers would ensure the process had been followed correctly and if not the decision could be brought back to a later committee.

The committee noted the continued provision of Designated Person services by ABPmer for the next three years.

144. Designated Person PMSC Annual Update

The Designated Person provided a verbal update on the Port Marine Safety Code. He provided an overview of the most recent version of the code and outlined the areas of best practice that had been identified through the audits of Dorset's harbours, as well as the improvement opportunities.

In response to question from a committee member about the communication between the Designated Person and the harbour teams, it was confirmed that the Harbour Masters and Designated Person meet monthly online. One committee member expressed that they thought the committee could undertake annual training that was available through the British Ports Association.

The committee noted the update.

145. Harbour Master Updates

The Bridport and Lyme Regis Harbour Master delivered the updates for Bridport and Lyme Regis harbours. The most recent statistics for both harbours were provided and it was noted that water injection dredging had been trialled in Bridport, however it was not known whether it had been a success at the time of the meeting. Details of the upcoming events in both harbours were provided.

One committee member made a comment about the new incident and accident reporting system and asked that its usage be continually reinforced by the harbour team, for example by emphasising its importance at the Harbour Consultative Group meetings.

The Harbour Manager presented the updates for Weymouth Harbour. He provided the up-to-date statistics for the harbour and noted that a trend had been identified towards 6 month berthing agreements rather than 12 months. There was a decline in visiting vessels in September, attributed to the abrupt end of summer towards the end of August. There had been 23 incidents since the last meeting, including personal accidents, a report of a swimmer near fishing gear and several small oil spills. One of the oil spills was attributed to a vessel with an engine issue, which was now undergoing maintenance. Another incident occurred at the new fuel pontoon during final commissioning, where a pipe underneath the pontoon had worn through, resulting in diesel being spilled into the harbour. The systems were quickly isolated and steps were taken to deploy containment booms to contain the spill.

It had been confirmed that the Weymouth Harbour Revision Order (HRO) was able to be combined with the HRO for Bridport and Lyme Regis, bringing the expected enforcement date forward to early in the new year. In response to a question the Harbour Manager clarified that the expected date for laying the combined order was January 2026.

It was explained that a workshop had been setup to discuss the Dorset Harbours Economic Review and following that workshop, quotes were being sought for a stand-alone sector analysis, as it was considered that with there being many developments still in their early stages, it was too early for a full economic review.

Details of recent and upcoming harbour works were provided, including rectifying slumping in the Cosens Quay Car Park and the replacement of Stone Pier railings.

In response to a question the Harbour Manager confirmed that in his statement about compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code he was referring to all three harbours, not just Weymouth.

The committee noted the updates.

146. Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Engineering Update

The Development Manager for FCERM presented the FCERM updates for the three harbours. Inspections for all three harbours were nearly complete and repairs had been scheduled, with health and safety repairs taking priority. Any

remaining programmed repairs had been scheduled with Highways and were expected to be completed by March 2026.

In Bridport the works to harbour Walls A & B were expected to commence in Spring 2026 and work had been completed to stabilise Wall B in the meantime.

Temporary works had been carried out on the Cobb in Lyme Regis, with the permanent repair being delayed due to adverse weather conditions. An update was provided on the Lyme Regis Environmental Improvement Scheme Phase 5 and it was noted that a public engagement session was held for residents to provide their views on the current design, which had largely positive responses.

Updates were provided for the Weymouth Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Scheme Phase 1 and the works on harbour Walls F & G. It was noted that planning approval had been secured for the work on the harbour walls and that sheet piling would commence once the pre-commencement conditions from the Marine Licence had been discharged.

In response to a question the Service Manager for FCERM stated that the existing sheet piling would be effectively buried when the sheet piling was installed, however it wouldn't destabilise the structure as it corrodes.

The committee noted the updates.

147. Harbours Budget Monitoring Report 2025-26

The Harbour Business Manager presented the budget monitoring report for 2025/26. The current budget positions for three harbours were provided and it was noted that there had been higher costs than expected in the form of the pay award and in Weymouth Harbour due to long term sickness during the peak summer months. Bridport's surplus was reported as being lower than anticipated due to some projects being funded from the revenue budget rather than from the reserves and Lyme Regis was expected to return a small surplus of approximately £4000. The budget position for Weymouth Harbour was favourable, however this was largely due to the works which had been delayed.

The committee noted the budget monitoring figures and reserve balances for the three harbours.

148. Harbour Budget and Setting of Fees and Charges 2026/27

The Harbour Business Manager presented the report for the budget and setting of fees and charges for 2026/27. It was explained that benchmarking exercises had been undertaken to determine which charges ought to be adjusted and that the fees and charges had broadly risen in line with Dorset Council's expectation of 3.4%.

An overview of the budget forecasts for the three harbours was provided, with a positive outlook, including Lyme Regis being expected to operate on a cost neutral basis.

In response to a comment from a committee member the Harbour Manager confirmed that all teams involved in the upcoming works to the harbour walls were intending to keep disruption to a minimum to limit the lost parking revenue. The Harbour Manager also stated that they would explore the option of increasing engagement with the Designated Person, in particular increasing the amount of time they visit the harbours in person, however noted that this would come with an increase in costs.

Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Bryan.

Decision: That the Harbours Advisory Committee recommend that Cabinet asks Full Council to

1. Approve fees and charges for Bridport, Lyme Regis and Weymouth Harbours for 2026/27.
2. Approve the forecasted budget for Bridport, Lyme Regis and Weymouth Harbour for 2026/27

149. **Dorset Council Harbours Marine Safety Plan Review**

The Harbour Manager presented the report for the harbours Marine Safety Plan review. He explained that the purpose of the report was to ensure continued compliance with the PMSC, following a reviewed and updated Marine Safety Plan.

One committee member made a comment welcoming the review of the Marine Safety Plan and noted that the actions identified will keep the plan more aligned with the PMSC. In response to a question, the Harbour Manager clarified that although the harbours are all compliant, he used the term 'broadly' as it is an ongoing process, where improvements can always be made.

Proposed by Mark Roberts and seconded by Cllr Williams.

Decision:

1. That the Harbours Advisory Committee recommend that the Cabinet Member for Place Services approves the adoption of the Dorset Council Harbours Marine Safety Plan 2026 – 2029.
2. That the Harbours Advisory Committee, in agreement with the Designated Person, notify the Duty Holder that the three Dorset Council Harbours are compliant with the Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code

150. **Forward Plan**

The Harbour Manager presented the forward plan, in addition to the standing items an update on the economic analysis was expected to be brought to the next meeting.

151. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

152. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.10 - 11.53 am

Chairman

.....