

Weymouth Harbour Report

Harbours Advisory Committee
7th June 2023

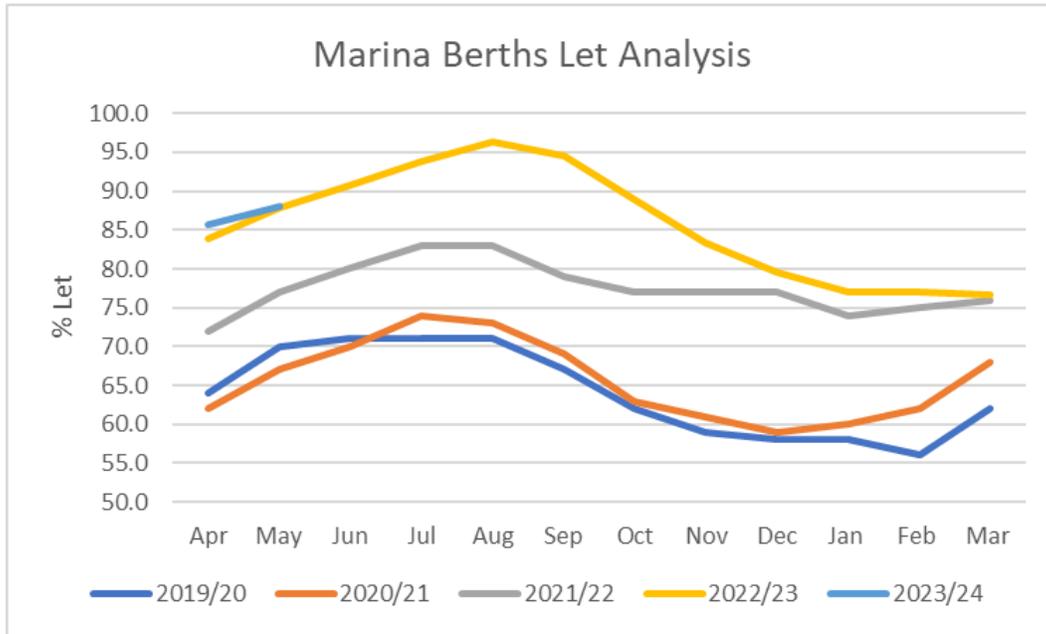


Ed Carter
Weymouth Harbour Master

Weymouth Harbour Let Analysis

Marina Berths

Interest in recreational berths remains strong. While the winter period saw the usual period of turnover, it is hoped that another year of high let will be achieved. However, uncertainties in the economy, primarily the current Cost of Living Crisis, make predictions difficult.



Commercial Berths

Available commercial berths are at almost 100% let, with the remaining spaces being less popular due to access issues (mid-stream pontoon) or size restrictions at the berth.

We are conducting a review of our commercial berths, and the way these berths are managed, considering maintaining a safe channel width, the operational requirements of the berth holders, and the commercial operator waiting list.

Weymouth Harbour Statistics

	2020/21*	2021/22*	2022/23	2023/24 (to 01 May)	Against Previous Year Profile
Visiting Leisure Craft Revenue (<i>Berthing Fees</i>)	£53,485	£138,276	£150,804	£13,389	-0.68%
Slipway & PWC Permit Revenue	£22,940	£19,868	£24,598	£4,159	-43.87%
Number of Bridge Lifts	926	1,383	1,193	126	-4.55%
Number of Vessels Transiting Bridge	6,151	7,251	5,915	474	-9.20%
Number of Non-resident Fishing Vessel Visits	193	96	42	7	250.00%
Number of Acts of Pilotage	0	0	0	0	-

**Years impacted by Covid restrictions*

The unpredictable weather at the start of the 2023 season has had a noticeable impact on recreational boating activity. While there have been many sunny days, these are often accompanied by 'fresh to strong breezes'. In between the sunny days periods of very heavy rainfall has kept all but the hardiest of mariners in doors.

While visitor revenue and Town Bridge traffic are only just behind profile, the slipway at Cousens Quay is much quieter than usual. Revenue from PWC permits is down, with 9 PWC docks currently vacant (compared to 100% let this time last year), which accounts for over £1,000 of the shortfall seen so far this season.

We are exploring options for chargeable short term trailer storage in the commercial area of the port, to encourage trailered vessels to make longer stays as visitors, while keeping the area around the Cousens Quay slipway free and clear for daily use.

Bookings for visitor berths are looking promising, with some big rallies making good use of the new pontoons. With luck, the weather will continue to improve, and we hope to have another busy, and successful season.

Harbour Operations & Port Marine Safety – Quarterly Update

1.0 Harbour Use

1.1 The harbour has seen a slow start to the 2023 season. Periods of very windy and wet weather, coupled with an early Easter, have held things back.

1.2 Visiting yacht numbers are slightly down, most likely due to the continued unsettled weather. A big decrease is noticed at the slipway this year, where launches are down by almost 50% for the comparable period in 2022.

2.0 Staff Changes

2.1 Liam Rowland has been appointed to the position of Berthing Officer and took up the post on 01 May. Following this appointment, the Harbour Team is operating at full strength going into the 2023 season.

2.2 Paul Cook has returned to join the team as a Seasonal Assistant.

3.0 Operations

3.1 Powers of General Direction

Powers of General Direction have been assessed by specialist maritime solicitors and a final draft has been produced. The recommendation is now that the Brief Holder permits Weymouth Harbour to conduct a 6-week public consultation on the Directions, in accordance with Section 22 of the Weymouth Harbour Revision Order, prior to them coming into force.

3.2 Oil Spill Contingency Plan

A Tier One Oil Spill Exercise was conducted in early March. The exercise was very successful and provided a good test of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan regarding the Notification, Deployment, and Table-Top training requirements put on Harbour Authorities by the MCA.

Further oil spill training was carried out in May with Oil Spill Response Limited. Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Training, deployment of booms around a static vessel, and the deployment of booms in the harbour entrance to simulate deflection and collection techniques were attended by members of the Harbour Teams from Weymouth, Bridport, and Lyme Regis.

3.3 Oil Spills

We have had a couple of recent spill response events; one where oil was placed in a waste bin on Custom House Quay, and one where a slick was discovered in the Inner Harbour.



On both occasions the OSCP has been put into action.

The recent spills have been discussed with the Harbour Consultative Group, and we urge all persons to be vigilant and responsible in their practices, and diligent in reporting to the Harbour Office.

4.0 Incidents

4.1 The Harbour team have attended the usual mix of incidents over the last quarter:

- Life rings thrown into the Harbour
- Missing tenders
- Pier jumpers
- Minor collisions between vessels
- Broken trailers at the slipway
- PWC user refusing to pay
- Report of graffiti
- Reports of fly-tipping
- A trapped Swan

4.2 An incident occurred where a member of the Harbour Team slipped and fell on steps at the Pleasure Pier, while investigating reports of a missing life ring. A step-plate was partially loose, and when stepped upon it moved, and the team member lost their footing. The team member received cuts and bruises during the fall. The incident was reported under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). The team member recovered quickly and returned to work after a couple of days recuperation.

The steps at the Pleasure Pier have been deemed as 'off limits' to all members of staff, and access is only to be made in an emergency with two staff now required to attend should access below the pier be necessary. The steps have been pressure washed and the loose plate repaired.

4.3 No other notable marine incidents have occurred since the last meeting.

5.0 Harbour Works

5.1 Dorset Harbours Strategy

Strategic Goal 1 of the Dorset Harbour Strategy is to maintain safe working harbours and provide high quality infrastructure and facilities. The following harbour works are all being carried out in pursuit of this goal.

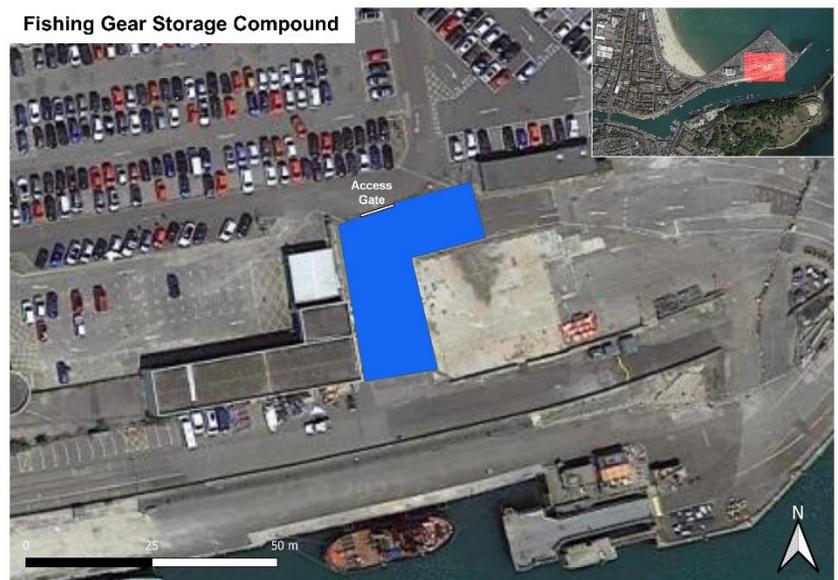
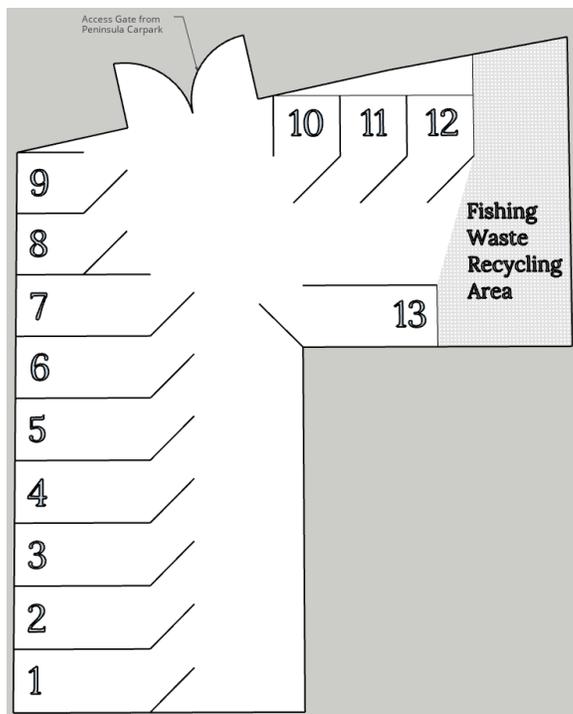
5.2 Visitor Pontoons

Work is on schedule to replace the Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie visitor pontoons. At the time of writing, Alpha pontoon was complete, with Bravo due to be ready with services available by Thursday 18th May, and Charlie scheduled to be finished by the first week in June.

Due to a delay in the supply of electric bollards, the services on Bravo have been held back by a couple of weeks, but contractors are now catching up. The pontoons are robust and very high quality, we are very pleased with them.

5.3 Fishing Gear Storage Area

A 24-hour access compound has been created within the commercial area of the port. Commercial fishermen that have a berth in Weymouth, can hire either a 6 pallet or 12 pallet storage area, which they can secure with their own padlock.



Within the storage area, a facility has also been created (in partnership with the Weymouth & Portland Marine Litter Project) where fishermen can leave their plastic waste (old nets, buoys, fish boxes etc) to be sorted and taken for recycling.

Uptake and response to the facility has been positive. The use of the storage area will help to inform decisions for the new areas planned through the Quay Regeneration Project and the assistance we are able to give with the provision of these facilities helps to strengthen relationships with our stakeholders in the commercial fishing community, as outlined in Goal 2 of the Harbours Strategy.

5.4 Custom House Quay Commercial Pontoon

Further to the partial capsize of the commercial pontoon at Custom House Quay earlier in the year. Repairs have been conducted and the pontoon is fully operational. The gangway for this pontoon has also been repaired.

Further to an inspection of the pilings along Custom Quay by a diver, it was found that several the pilings are due for replacement. Discussions are being had with the Flood and Coastal Risk teams to tie in the piling replacements to quay wall repairs. The area is being closely monitored by harbour staff.

5.5 Repairs to Gangways

Repairs have been made to the gangways to the commercial pontoons adjacent to Custom House Quay and Cousens Quay. Repairs are now being planned for the gangway to access the pontoons in The Cove. These gangways are used constantly by berth holders and members of the public accessing charter vessels and ferries. The repairs were much needed to provide safe access and contribute towards the Strategic Goal 1 of the Dorset Harbours Strategy.

5.6 Commercial Berth Holder Concerns

Further to concerns raised about broken glass and unauthorised persons on pontoons outside The Anchor & Rendezvous, we have spoken to the Dorset Council Licensing Team.

The Licensing Team have spoken to the owners of the premises in question, and fencing is now going to be deployed during 'music festivals' to prevent people accessing the sea wall with glasses, and security personnel will be in place at the gangway head to prevent access by unauthorised persons.

Concerns have also been raised regarding the lighting in this area of pontoons. During the night, the pontoon area is dark, and theft of items has been reported. We are speaking to Planning Officers to ascertain whether we can put extra lighting in this area, and whether planning permission is required.

5.7 Pleasure Pier

A contractor has been appointed to carry out a replacement of the railing surrounding the Pleasure Pier. The old railings are being removed, and the new railings (black Marshalls Ferrocast) are being sited slightly in from the old, as the wooden beams on the outer pier edge are deteriorating.

The contractor believes that it will not be necessary to close the pier while works are taking place. They will work on a section at a time and secure the working area from the public with Heras fencing.

The railings will continue right across the top of the stepped areas. These steps will remain usable, cleaned, and maintained, but out of bounds for all accept emergency access.

Signage is being refreshed around the pier, providing compliance with current safety standards and warning of the prohibition of, and the hazards presented by, jumping from the pier. ASB persists in this location. We are working local police and the Community Safety Team to tackle issues, and we are

arranging Conflict Resolution Training for Harbour Staff, which we are hoping will be run by PC Ali Roberts from the Dorset Police Marine Engagement Team.

6.0 Commercial Port Berths & Notable Traffic

6.1 Commercial Port Berths

The vessel LECHLADE, berthed in Weymouth Harbour for almost 16 years was towed away on the 4th of April.

VICTORY, the last remaining tug of the Griffin Towage fleet was confirmed sold in April. While her departure is imminent, we are waiting on final confirmation from the new owner.

The tug KINGSTON remains berthed in Weymouth and is now operated by the company Aquatic Towage.

6.2 El Galeon

The Tallship 'El Galeon' is visited Weymouth from Thursday 18th to Monday 22nd of May. The vessel was berthed alongside the ALPHA visitor pontoon, where she remained for the duration.

The vessel was open to the public (charges applied) where they could view the ship, and the displays and exhibits onboard.

Upon her safe arrival on Thursday, the vessel immediately started to generate a lot of interest from the public, with many people arriving to view her from the quayside. Initial reports from the operator showed a high uptake of pre-booked tickets to view the vessel. Interest remained high throughout her stay, with many people commenting to Harbour staff how great it was to see a vessel like this in Weymouth.

The vessel left Weymouth safely early on Tuesday morning, a slight delay to the scheduled departure time due to forecast headwinds on her route to Southend.

'Foundation Nao Victoria', the vessel operators, reported the following visitor numbers (tickets sold) over the four days:

- Adult – 2,686
- Child – 352
- Family – 264

Assuming the family tickets averaged 2 adults and 2 children, then overall total number of persons amounts to 4,094.

Again, referencing the Harbours Strategy, the visit of El Galeon has provided great interest and attracted many visitors to Weymouth that will provide valued contribution to the local economy.



7.0 Pilotage

7.1 No acts of pilotage have taken place during this reporting period.

8.0 Upcoming Events Relevant to Harbour Operations

8.1 Fayre in the Square & Wessex Folk Festival

These two large events are taking place on back-to-back weekends on the 27th/28th May and 3rd/4th June.

Road closures will be in place during the events, all berth holders in the area have been notified. We have specified with the event organisers that clear, safe, and unrestricted access to the pontoons is to be always maintained.

8.2 Racing & Regattas

- Weymouth Rowing Regatta – 27th May
- SQUIB National Championships – 23rd to 30th June