

Weymouth Harbour Consultation Group (WHCG)
Wednesday 31st of January 2024 (WTC Chamber and Teams, 19:00-21:00)

Present

Andy Sargent	AS	Chair and RNLI Representative
Ken Buchan	KB	Head of Environment and Wellbeing
Ed Carter	EC	Weymouth Harbour Master
Cllr Mark Roberts	MR	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
Tim Day	TD	Clubs of Weymouth Representative
Will Holmes	WH	Weymouth Beach / Leisure Users Representative
Simon Kershaw	SK	RNLI Representative
Rob Gray	RG	Commercial Passenger Carry Vessels Representative
Cllr Colin Huckle	CH	Weymouth Town Council
Neil Bedwell	NB	Boatfolk Representative
Jamie Pullin	JP	Charter Boat Representative
Mary Harris	MH	Harbour Traders Representative Substitute and Weymouth Harbour Watch
Sarah Johnston	SJ	Minute Taker/Admin Support

1. INTRODUCTIONS, APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

AS opened the meeting and apologies received from Ali Roberts, who has now left the Dorset Marine Police Unit. **SJ** confirmed details received from the Sergeant of the unit regarding replacement representative. **EC** is going to follow up with Ali's successor to try and ensure continued Police representation and engagement at these meetings. **AS** introduced Simon Kershaw who is going to represent the RNLI going forward and thanked Neil for his contributions to the group as he is retiring from Boatfolk. He will ask his replacement to ensure that they attend this meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was agreed that everyone has an interest in the harbour. **SJ** to compile a list, this to be confirmed at the next meeting and then updated annually. If there are additional declarations of interest in matters or points raised, they can be noted in the minutes.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

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

- **DC** raised the ongoing issue of the drainage under the Town Bridge and lack of presence by a Highways representative. **EC** confirmed he is regularly chasing up Highways. **JP** asked why there is a Highways representative not present.

4. APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHAIR

AS – Confirmed that the only nomination received has been Tim Day. A vote was taken and unanimous. Tim Day welcomed as the new Chair of the Weymouth Harbour Consultative Group.

AS – Thanked everyone for their time and effort. His involvement with the group has been since 1999 in various forms and is pleased to see it become what it is today.

TD – First item was to thank Andy for his lead as Chair over the years and hoped he could do as good as job as he has.

MR – Thanked Andy for all his tenure and how well he has chaired the group, bringing it together allowing an exchange of ideas and information. They have modelled the other 2 harbour consultative groups on this one, a big thank you from the Harbours Advisory Committee.

AS – Out going point to be noted is the car parking charges at West Bay and Lyme. Their charges have come up to same as Weymouth and it is now affecting businesses around the harbours. This has been noted at both Consultative meetings. **MR** confirmed that there are car parking bands for various areas around Dorset. **JP** complained about the number of parking tickets he has received even though he has a Tramway/Loop permit. **MR** confirmed that he will speak to the Portfolio holder.

5. HARBOUR MASTER UPDATE

1.0 Harbour Use

1.1 The winter period has been characterised by some particularly fierce weather events, with extended periods of heavy rainfall and strong winds, broken by short but very cold spells, and with 10 named storms hitting the UK over the past few months.

Predominantly due to Weymouth's favourable position, damage and other weather-related issues have been confined to easily managed issues such as torn boat covers, vessels requiring pump-out, and older copper water supply pipes in the marinas freezing and bursting. Regular checks of all harbour areas, proactive maintenance, and adverse weather preparations all contribute to minimising the effects of these storm events.

Use of the harbour has been sporadic, with the fishing fleet confined to port during high winds, and very little in the way of recreational traffic movements, except on the occasional fine and sunny days. Temporary winter berthing has been popular, and our Moorings Officers already are busy behind the scenes preparing for the start of the season, working through our waiting lists to offer berths that have been recently vacated, and prepping to carry out the renewals process for all our returning customers.

The Christmas Day swim, and increasingly popular event, went off without a hitch, and around 350 intrepid swimmers took the plunge to swim across the harbour. The swimmers enter the water in small, tightly controlled groups, with each group being followed by kayakers and safety vessels and counted out of the water, before the next group is allowed in. The event is well managed, and the Harbour Office are involved in the Risk Assessment and event planning process, with harbour staff on hand on the day to assist the organisers should anything go awry. It all went to plan.

2.0 Incidents

2.1 The Harbour team have recorded 15 incidents since the last meeting, including:

- Partially sunken vessel in the Inner Harbour marina
- Some tables outside the Stone Pier café were blown into the water by high winds.
- Two vessels berthed next to each other on the chain and sinker moorings had tangled lines.
- A blown fuse at the Town Bridge meant that the safety barriers could not be lowered. The problem was quickly rectified, and the bridge was lifted with only a slight delay.

- Vessel covers suffering damage from high winds.
- An intoxicated person jumped from the Town Bridge into the Harbour. Police and Ambulance attended promptly, and the person had sustained no injuries.
- Minor 3rd party injury.

A notable incident occurred towards the end of the Weymouth Sailing Club Boxing Day race, where in light wind conditions a vessel was navigating into the harbour under sail. The vessel was unable to tack against the flow of the tide and a slow, relatively minor, collision occurred between the vessel and the harbour wall at Commercial Berth No3. In trying to fend off, the hand of a member of crew got caught between the bow of the vessel and the wall, sustaining a serious crush injury which required treatment at hospital. The incident has been reviewed by the sailing club and discussed with the Harbour Office. Upon investigation, nothing in the actions of the skipper of the vessel were unusual, negligent, or against regulations, and the incident has been put down to misadventure. The sailing club have reviewed their Risk Assessments in light of the incident. Advice is being held at race briefings and further consideration given to the planning of race routes in light wind conditions.

AA – thanks to be noted for Kelvin Moore, who jumped into the water to rescue the person in the water, they were clinging to a rope under the Town Bridge.

JP – raised the incident about a lad who climbed up a building during the night and managed to talk himself down. **EC** confirmed was not made aware of this and will make some enquiries. **AS** advised that the Coastguard as the co-ordinators for any incident.

3.0 Operations

3.1 Powers of General Direction

Further to protracted conversations with the RYA, we are still awaiting final confirmation that they are satisfied that their comments on the Directions have been considered, and that they endorse the adoption of the General Directions. The comments from other consultees that submitted responses have also been considered, and any amendments made to the Directions will be highlighted in a final report to the Harbours Advisory Committee.

The time it has taken to converse with the RYA over this matter has been frustrating to say the least. We are hoping that we will gain a positive response from them very soon, and that we will be taking the final set of General Directions to the Advisory Committee in March. At this point, upon formal adoption, the Directions will come into force, and at such time full notification in the change of harbour regulations will be made to harbour users.

3.2 Oil Spills & Response

No oil spill or pollution events requiring external notification, or the deployment of spill resources have been attended by harbour staff during this reporting period. One notification for a very minor diesel slick that upon investigation evaporated quickly, unable to identify the source.

3.3 Staff Training

A core requirement of the PMSC is the provision of trained and competent staff to effectively manage the wide range of duties of a Harbour Authority, and the safe and efficient management of a port. Refresher training is carried out on a regular basis. At the end of January, many the Weymouth team, joined by colleagues from Bridport and Lyme Regis and members of the Weymouth Town Council Beach Team, recently attending a Level 2P Oil Spill Response course delivered by our Tier 2 Oil Spill Response contractors, Adler and Allan.

Forming part of our Competent Harbour Authority compliance, regular oil spill response exercises are carried out throughout the year. The next one scheduled is a Tier 2 exercise, which will involve a test of the Weymouth Oil Spill Plan through the simulation of a spill event centred around the new fuel pontoon, which is being installed as part of the Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project works and will be operational in the Spring. In conjunction with Adler and Allan, we will carry out a full notification exercise, a tabletop exercise, and the deployment of containment and collection resources. Representatives from the MCA, Environment Agency, Natural England, the Dorset Council Emergency Planning Team, Harbours Advisory Committee, and Harbour Consultative Group, amongst others, will be invited by email to attend and observe. This exercise will form a large part of our next Oil Spill Response Plan review. A review and subsequent approval of the plan by the MCA takes place every 5 years and is scheduled for 2024. **JP** asked if the fuelling pontoon was going out to tender. **EC** confirmed that the HA will be running it during operating hours.

To further their qualifications, experience, and personal development, the Assistant Harbour Masters at Weymouth, accompanied by colleagues from Bridport and Lyme Regis, attended a Harbour Masters course in Southampton in February, run by IDG Maritime. The 3-day workshop-based course features lectures, discussions, and practical exercises, as well as participation by the MCA, the MAIB, the MMO, marine legal experts, environmental specialists from the UK's leading port operators and from security advisers. The course covers the Port Marine Safety Code, the National Occupational Standards, marine legislation, and environmental issues.

Ahead of the 2024 season, the Weymouth team attended a full week of training in February including:

- Risk Assessments, Operating Procedures, and administrative refresher training
- Accident Reporting and Manual Handling
- Towage Training
- Scenario based First Aid
- Conflict Resolution and De-escalation
- Evidence gathering and statement writing.
- Enforcement training, including the Weymouth Harbour General Directions, effective patrolling, the issuing of formal cautions, PACE training, and the use of Body-worn Cameras.

With the new general Directions shortly to come into effect, this comprehensive training week provides the harbour team, both on and off the water, the tools and skills required to carry out their duties effectively and safely.

A full Emergency Exercise, involving multi-agency cooperation, is planned for later in the year. Further details of this will be brought to the Committee as plans develop.

3.4 PMSC Audit

Dorset Council has contracted ABPmer to provide Designated Person services for the Council. Part of this service includes the provision of auditing to establish if the Harbour Authority is compliant with the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC). The scope of the audit includes a review of Harbour Authority performance against the standard laid out within the latest edition of the Code. Any aspects that do not comply with, or fully address, the requirements of the Code will be identified, and recommendations for improvement will be made.

The first PMSC audit of Weymouth Harbour by ABPmer is scheduled for the 19th of March. The results of this audit will be presented at a future meeting of this Committee.

5.0 Harbour Works

5.1 Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project

Work continues to progress well across the site. Foundations for all the major elements of the project, such as the fish landing quay, loading dock, cold storage and ice making facilities, and fuel tank, have either been completed or are well underway.

At the time of writing this report, in the immediately preceding weeks the ducting across the site was almost complete, the bases for the davit cranes were laid, and the demolition of the last remaining ferry terminal building had taken place. Scheduled during February were repairs and replacement of sections of the water main, completion of the fuel tank and separator slabs and associated drainage, completion of the fish landing slab, the eastern ramp of the public walkway, light and CCTV columns, and void repair.

As expected in a project of this size, some delays have pushed the completion date towards the end of April, however this is still within acceptable parameters. Upon completion, the commercial areas will be opened first to allow the fish landing operations and commercial berth holders to settle into the site. It is hoped that the new public realm area along the quay will be opened towards the end of May.

The Steering Group, initially intended to work on further beautification of the Pleasure Pier, was expanding in scope to encompass the public realm developments of this project, and to assist in aligning the proposed public realm aspects of the future repair works to Walls F & G around the wider Peninsula site. Meetings of this group have been very productive, and Phase One of the plans for the area will involve the setting of street furniture (seats and bins) and lighting on the Pleasure Pier. **JP** asked about CCTV in this area. **EC** confirmed the cameras will cover a larger area but with restrictions in public areas. **AA** asked about who is operating the cameras, **EC** confirmed that the HA will be managing them. **AA** asked about the camera at the Slipway regarding footage required for issues on vessels and items there as he is unable to

obtain who has the footage when reporting incidents. **EC** will raise the issue with the Council. **JP** advised that they are reporting issues but unable to provide CCTV footage to prove it.

Phase Two linking the area with existing public trails such as the Heritage, Arts, and Sculpture trails. Information boards will provide the public with details of adjacent historical elements such as the Nothe Fort and Weymouth's part in the D-Day landings. Information will also be provided on commercial fishing activities, what catch is being landed, where is it going, and educational material for the Seahives at the Pleasure Pier, and the flora and fauna that can be found. **AA** advised that he has previously asked for a memorial for the fishermen who have lost their lives over the last 35 years at sea. Could something be included at the new Fish Landing Quay. A piece of Portland Stone had been given free of charge and Weymouth College had agreed to design a stone and engrave the names, but this was never taken up. **EC** confirmed that he will pick this up liaise with **AA** to get this done.

5.3 Wall 4

Works to repair and strengthen Wall 4 (North Quay) have experienced some issues. During works to repair the foot of the wall in January, the wall was observed to be moving, evidenced by a slight slump, hairline cracks in the capping beam, and a widening of the gaps between pavement slabs. This movement of the wall has of course resulted in further engineering problems that need resolving on top of the original planned repair works. Upon the discovery of movement in the wall, the public footpath and one side of the carriageway were closed to ensure public safety by moving the footpath away from the quay edge. The carriageway will be re-opened mid-February once the demolition of the council offices is finished, and the footpath can be moved to the other side of the road without posing risk to the public from demolition works.

The programme is being adjusted to encompass the extra work required. At the time of writing this report, it was expected that the project would finish before the end of March.

5.4 LUF Proposals

As you are aware Weymouth was successful in securing LUF money, which is essentially an enabling fund to make repairs and improvements to areas around the Harbour that will then allow further development to take place.

The harbour has had some early discussions with the LUF team around the potential development of Peninsula. In the light of these discussions, we are now considering the harbours position and the relevance to harbour operations of the car park, and potential changes that may be required to the HRO to enable developments to take place which would be of mutual benefit to all.

Once the harbours position relative to these developments has been confirmed, the Harbours Advisory Committee will develop a view and present their discussions to the Consultative Group for comment, prior to any decisions being made. **MR** confirmed that at Cabinet agreed procurement should start for the tendering for the replacement of walls F & G at Peninsula. The total of 21 million for all of Weymouth with the bulk going to the walls – new sheet piling will be put in and back filled to the

existing wall. **EC** confirmed early discussion are happening to ensure that the harbour is in the forefront of these meetings. Workshops will be going on to formalise the position before being presented to the group for consultation. The fund is to be used by Spring 2025.

5.5 Town Bridge Maintenance Works

Maintenance works to the Town Bridge were completed on schedule by the end of November 2023. The works were carried out as planned, and the Town Bridge is fully operational. No more works planned in the immediate future. **MR** mentioned how beneficial it was to have the engineers here and local knowledge regarding the individual leaf lifts.

6.0 Commercial Port Berths & Notable Traffic

6.1 Commercial Port Berths

Our commercial berths continue to be well used by current berth holders. During the delivery of the WQRP, as access to the usual commercial berthing areas became limited, the commercial vessels in port for the winter have been berthed alongside the Alpha and Bravo visitor pontoons. The vessels will return to their usual berths upon completion of the WQRP works. There has been no other notable commercial traffic during this reporting period.

7.0 Pilotage

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

8.0 Significant Events Relevant to Harbour Operations and/or Access

- 200th Anniversary of RNLI
 - Parade of Sail – 14th May
 - Other Events – TBC
- 80th Anniversary of D-Day Landings – Events TBC
- Fayre in the Square – Date TBC, likely 25th/26th May
- Wessex Folk Festival – Date TBC, likely 1st/2nd June
- Weymouth Carnival – 14th August
- Seafood Festival – 7th/8th September
- Ironman – 14th/15th September

EC thanked AS for his help and assistance to EC in his first year in the role and is looking forward to continuing their friendship and working with him in the future.

6. CONSULTATIVE GROUP UPDATE

- **RG - Commercial Passenger Carrying Vessels Representative.** NTR – getting ready for the season.
- **NB – Boatfolk Representative.** Concerned about out-of-date flares being taken now that Quality Time Training no longer operating. **EC** advised about Ramora UK can take them at a charge. Previously, flare amnesties have been successful at events such as Open Days. The attendance of a company such as Ramora will be looked into for future events, however the cost of attendance, which is typically born by the event organiser, can be prohibitive. **DC** advised that if they are out of date, they

cannot take them. **AA** advised that flares have to be changed every 3 years and come in packs of 7. **EC** suggested contact from relevant bodies such as the Solent & Southern Harbour Masters Association and the South West Regional Ports Association would be prudent and may provide some political pressure on the MCA to look further into the issue. **EC** will raise the item with other Harbour Masters at the next round of Association meetings. **AS** advised that the RNLI listed advice as contacting the supplier, as a group to contact Ramora but would be expensive or contacting your local MCA office for assistance. **NB** confirmed that he will introduce his replacement.

- **AH – Boat Owners Inner Harbour Representative.** Talking on the pontoons and via social media to inner harbour users has enabled the gathering of points to be covering in the agenda items.
- **JP - Charter Boat Representative.** Most enjoying down time at the moment. Concerned about mooring fees increase. **EC** confirmed no increase has been levied on Commercial berths this year.
- **TD – Clubs of Weymouth.** Confirmed that the gentleman involved in the incident has recovered. Assistance from HM office in November to recover a vessel that sank, thanks and appreciation for the support.
- **WH – Weymouth Beach / Leisure Users Representative.** Nothing much very quiet and planning for the summer season underway. The contractor for the 5 Monday night firework displays has been appointed. D-Day celebrations has been discussed with the Nothe Fort and Councillors – **EC** and **WH** to discuss separately.
- **AA - Commercial Fishermen Representative.** Thanks for the ladder being put up on the Sand Jetty. The water pump on Commercial Road pontoon. Water but no pressure. **EC** confirmed that a defect has been running for some time, apologies for the delay but it should be repaired at the end of next week. **JP** asked about signage for the water at the taps along the pontoon. **EC** to check with the AHM regarding legionella and the water provision on the Commercial pontoon.
- **DC - Harbour Traders Representative.** Peaceful around the harbour at the moment with a lot of restaurateurs on holiday.
- **MH – Weymouth Harbour Watch.** NTR – speaking to Amanda Anderson, Dorset Police Resilience Communities officer, she has been invited to this meeting. She is currently busy setting up the Harbour Watch at Bridport and using the same logo. Will be liaising with her and the harbour office for more marking events in the Spring.
- **CH – Weymouth Town Council.** Will not be standing for re-election this year.
- **MR – Harbours Advisory Committee.** Congratulations to Ed on his promotion to Dorset Harbours Manager. He will remain as Harbour Master at Weymouth but will now also take on a more strategic role assisting at all 3 Dorset Harbours. The revised charges go to full council on the 14th of February. Harbour Watch is being launched at Lyme on the 13th of April and at West Bay on the 20th of April. A long-term licence for dredging from the MMO/Natural England has been agreed for both Lyme and West Bay and will start in the next couple of weeks, should be finished by Easter. The HM office and walls at West Bay hope to be established with sheet piling for the summer season. The Cob at Lyme requires more funding to cover the cost of repairs, the funding from the Environment Agency does not cover it. Surveys should that it is not currently at further risk of deterioration so whilst additional funding is resource it has been delayed for another year.
- **AS – RNLI.** Apart from the incident just spoken about last Monday, a few kitesurfers and windsurfers not much happening. There was a Boxing Day night incident where 3 red flares were being let off from Preston/Littlemoor area. 200 years of the RNLI this year so lots happening, and the refurbishment is on course for the end of the year.
- **TD –** asked about the dredging at Radipole lake – any updates. advised that he had received no updates on a potential dredge. **AH** confirmed that he contacted the HA office when he heard that the new Chair of the Angling Society on Radipole

Lake had booked an excavator to dig it out with no research. **EC** confirmed that it was followed up when reported, and that no dredging, unauthorised or otherwise, had taken place.

6. AGENDA ITEMS FROM MEMBERS

- **EC** - Proposed dates for the meetings for the rest of the year. (which are three weeks before the Harbours Advisory meetings):
 - Wednesday 22nd May 2024
 - Tuesday 3rd September 2024 (EC away but could dial in to attend)
 - Wednesday 13th November 2024
 - Wednesday 12th February 2025
- **DC** – Highways. Since Covid there has always been an issue with no information being provided regarding the roads around the harbour. The latest closure of the lane at North Quay and the suspension of the bus lane, the HM was not aware of. Covid was used as a reason for closing roads as and when, harbour users and businesses should be informed. The HA should be told in advance and able to then email it onto the harbour users and businesses. Information on the drainage repair, festivals closing roads, parades going further than expected and cruise liner passenger bus all blocking the roads making it difficult for the RNLI crew, residents and businesses. There was communication that worked for a bit and then it's all stopped again. It all affects the harbour. **MR** and **KB** acknowledge that there needs to be better communication from Highways and a member of the team present at the meeting. **SJ** confirmed that Dawn Heath had been invited and had advised of another member of the team that would attend the meeting. **MR** agreed that their attendance is required, and they need to provide notification of forthcoming projects to the Harbour Office to circulate. **WH** offered a schedule of dates and times for cruise liner passenger arrivals that may help with awareness of potential bottlenecks around the back of Hope Square. **AA** suggested that the North Quay car park once completed should be used to drop the cruise liner passengers there, providing more space for coaches and an area where they could turn around easier. **DC** reported speeding vehicles along Custom House Quay at night and recently snapped off 2 wooden bollards and would traffic calming measures be considered? **MR** and **EC** confirmed that it was a Police matter and will be passed on. **TD** reported a hole that appeared in the road by the WSC.
- **AH** – Items raised by NQ & WW Rd pontoon berth-holders:
 - Concerns regarding the increase in mooring fees – members believe that we are one of the cheapest marinas on the South Coast. They are arguing that the facilities do not match what is on offer in other marinas. This includes sub-standard toilet and shower facilities, no storage ashore, no car parking, discount on labour & lift out costs and free nights in other marinas. **EC** confirmed that significant and careful consideration, supported by an extensive benchmarking process, underpinned the reasoning for the increase in fees. A report presented to the Dorset Harbours Committee in November 2023 contained a lot of information that would help customers understand the thinking behind the latest increase. EC detailed to members that the recently

adopted Dorset Harbours Business Plan 2024 – 2029 outlines plans for over £4 million of investment in the Harbour over the next five years. **MR** highlighted that historically, price increases, especially in the recreational sector, have been below inflation and modest. **EC** urged all Consultative Group members take time to read the publicly available minutes from Advisory Committee meetings in future, and referred everyone to the Business Plan that was also detailed in the meeting minutes from the Harbour Advisory Committee's November meeting. **AH** is interested to know which harbours were used in the benchmarking exercise.

- Trolleys on the pontoons. Current ones are old and heavy, **EC** confirmed replacements will be coming for the new season.
- Water issues on Commercial Road pontoon. Already covered. **EC** will monitor.
- Additional pontoon at the Slipway. A narrow pontoon to enable safer launching and recovering of vessels at the Slipway. **EC** advised that, following this suggestion, a test of this idea with some Versa-dock pontoons will be trialled for the 2024 season. If this proves successful, we will investigate the possibility for a more permanent solution.
- **AS** - Measuring of boats and the increase in size from 'official' paperwork held by owners. Advised that it has increased their monthly payments. **EC** confirmed that there is a standard and clear methodology that all staff follow when confirming the length overall of a new vessel coming into the harbour, and that this methodology is applied fairly and equally to all vessels. Part of this methodology is to revisit and re-measure with the customer if they have concerns. **AS** to provide **SJ** with the details of a situation that was recently reported to him, so that this can be duly investigated.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **MR** confirmed that Highways will be followed up for participation.
- **MR** mentioned that there is an election due, if not re-elected this would be his last meeting.
- **CH** advised that his term at WTC is also coming to an end, but he will not be standing for re-election. **SJ** to contact Jane Biscombe for a new WTC Representative to join the group.

8. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Harbour Consultative Group

- Wednesday 22nd May 2024
- Tuesday 3rd September 2024
- Wednesday 13th November 2024
- Wednesday 12th February 2025

Harbours Advisory Committee

- 6 March 2024
- 12 June 2024
- 25 September 2024
- 4 December 2024
- 5 March 2025