

Weymouth Harbour Report

Harbours Advisory Committee
6th March 2024

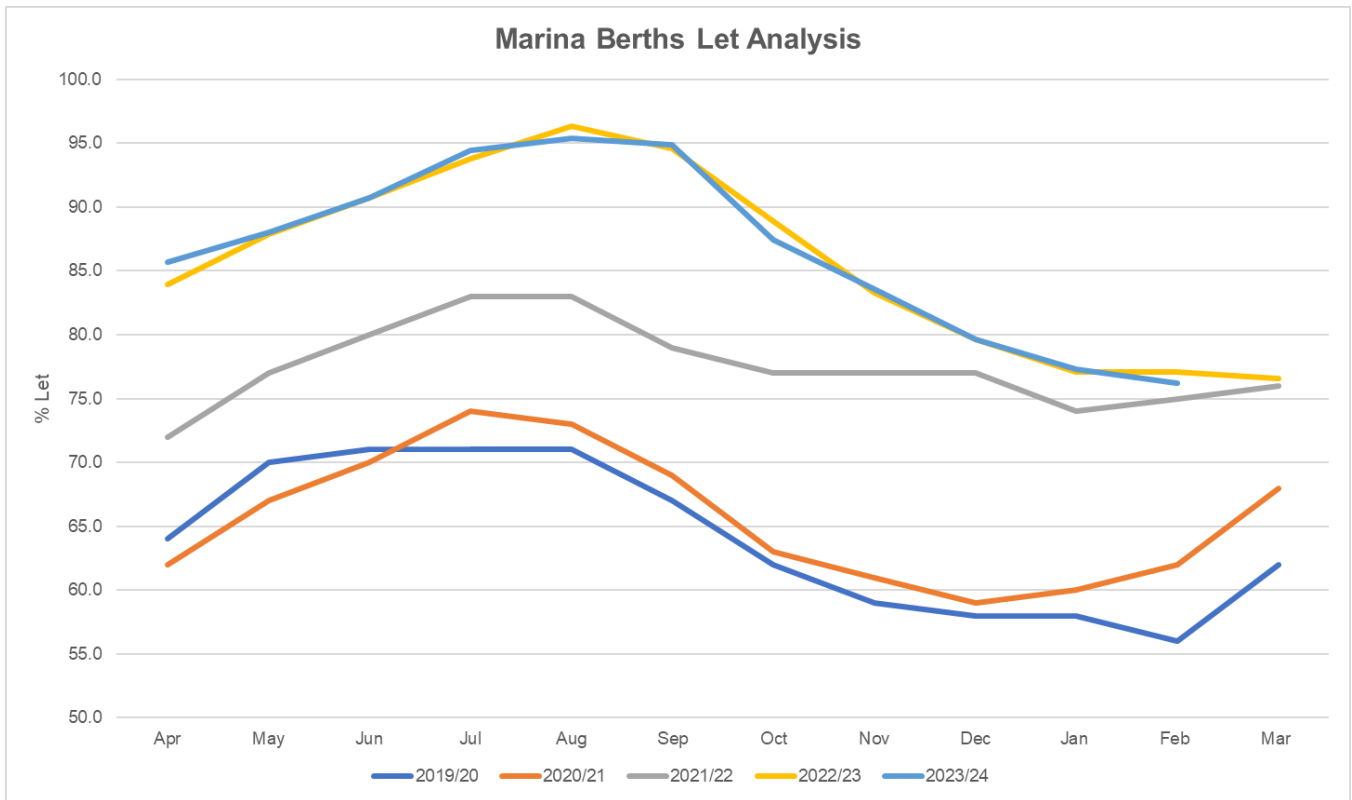


Ed Carter
Weymouth Harbour Master

Weymouth Harbour Let Analysis

Marina Berths

The profile of berth letting continues to follow the usual pattern, with this winter being an almost carbon copy of winter 2022/23. Interest in berthing for the upcoming season is already strong, with the annual renewal process scheduled to take place prior to the start of the season.



Commercial Berths

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

Weymouth Harbour Statistics

	2020/21*	2021/22*	2022/23	2023/24 (to 01 Feb)	Against Previous Year Profile
Visiting Leisure Craft Revenue (Berthing Fees)	£53,485	£140,501	£152,372	£151,121	0.21%
Slipway & PWC Permit Revenue	£22,940	£20,094	£25,351	£21,234	-14.90%
Number of Bridge Lifts	926	1,383	1,350	1,205	-0.99%
Number of Vessels Transiting Bridge	6,151	7,251	6,182	5,667	-4.77%
Number of Non-resident Fishing Vessel Visits	303	167	48	71	16.39%
Number of Acts of Pilotage	0	0	0	0	-

*Years impacted by Covid restrictions

Harbour Operations & Port Marine Safety – Quarterly 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 of 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.

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.

3.0 Operations

3.1 Powers of General Direction

Consultation with the RYA on the Weymouth Harbour General Directions has been recently concluded, with the RYA confirming that they are satisfied that their comments on the Directions have been considered, and that they endorse the adoption of the General Directions.

A full report on the General Directions is being presented to the Committee today.

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.

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 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.

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.

3.5 Trinity House Audit

Weymouth Harbour, as a Local Lighthouse Authority, provides and maintains Aids to Navigation within the statutory harbour area. Trinity House, the General Lighthouse Authority, inspected the Aids to Navigation on 6th February, and found them to be in good and efficient order.

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 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 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 and lighting, with 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.



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 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.

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 – 1st/2nd June

- Weymouth Carnival
- Seafood Festival
- Ironman

- 14th August
- 7th/8th September
- 14th/15th September