

Weymouth Harbour Report

Harbours Advisory Committee
12th June 2024



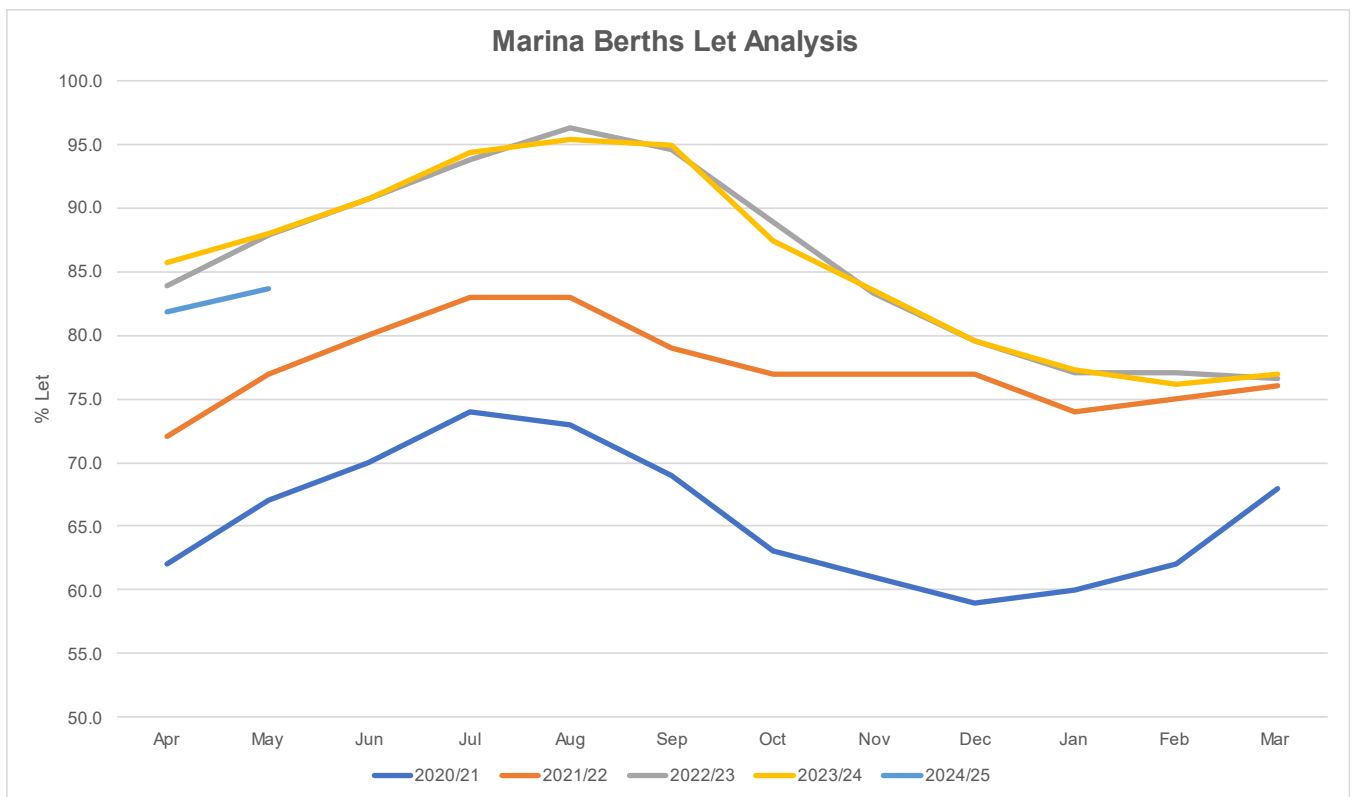
Ed Carter
Weymouth Harbour Master

Weymouth Harbour Let Analysis

Marina Berths

While the number of let berths in March very closely mirrored the past two years, during April, interest from new customers has not been as strong as previously seen. The small boat market (vessels around 6m LOA or less) has seen a decline in activity, with the majority of people giving up berths ahead of the coming season being small vessel owners. We are continuing to take enquiries however, and vacancies are being filled wherever possible, as can be seen from the positive trend below.

With cost-of-living pressures continuing, it is likely that interest in berthing for small vessels will remain low. Interest in berths for larger vessels remains strong, with vessels of 10m LOA or more joining our waiting list.



Commercial Berths

Out of our 84 commercial berths, the let remains high at 91%, with the remaining 7 spaces being less popular due to access issues (mid-stream pontoon) or size restrictions at the berth. We have recently been adjusting some berths and providing extra mooring points, to make best use of the space available.

Weymouth Harbour Statistics

	2020/21*	2021/22*	2022/23	2023/24	End of Year
Visiting Leisure Craft Revenue (Berthing Fees)	£53,485	£140,501	£152,372	£162,974	1.40%
Slipway & PWC Permit Revenue	£22,940	£20,094	£25,351	£21,382	-15.60%
Number of Bridge Lifts	926	1,383	1,350	1,354	0.30%
Number of Vessels Transiting Bridge	6,151	7,251	6,182	5,952	-3.70%
Number of Non-resident Fishing Vessel Visits	303	167	48	78	62.50%
Number of Acts of Pilotage	0	0	0	0	-

*Years impacted by Covid restrictions

	2021/22*	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25 (to 01 Jun)	Against Previous Year Profile
Visiting Leisure Craft Revenue (Berthing Fees)	140,501	152,372	162,974	£29,525	-4.30%
Slipway & PWC Permit Revenue	20,094	25,351	21,382	£5,324	-27.50%
Number of Bridge Lifts	1,383	1,350	1,354	277	-8.80%
Number of Vessels Transiting Bridge	7,251	6,182	5,952	1,101	-16.20%
Number of Non-resident Fishing Vessel Visits	167	48	78	14	133.30%
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 beginning of the year has again been characterised by periods of heavy rain and strong winds. With Easter coming so early this year, activity in the harbour remained low, with the fishing fleet making the most of any weather window that presented. Reports from all three Dorset harbours show that business for the charter and trip boat sector and shoreside harbour traders is generally quiet, and while there are plenty of visitors around on sunny days, with the continued cost of living pressures, people are being economical with their money.

As the weather has slowly improved and turned warmer, we have hosted some very large yacht rallies. Of particular note, in mid-April a rally of 54 vessels from the Junior Offshore Group took up almost all of our visitor pontoon space in one go. The rally organisers commented that *“Weymouth is the best organised and with the best radio etiquette of all the harbours we visit. We love coming here as everything is carried out with such efficiency, and we look forward to coming back next year”*. High praise indeed, and I am immensely proud of my team to hear such a glowing review.



On May 14th, to mark the 200th Anniversary of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a parade of sail was held in the late afternoon. The parade was attended by all manner of craft, with over 60 vessels taking part, including the Weymouth Lifeboats, classic sailing boats, modern power and sail craft, and a host of smaller vessels. Crowds lined the harbourside to watch the parade, and it was fantastic to hear the applause and cheers of support for the lifeboat crews.

We worked closely with the Weymouth Lifeboat to organise the event, and things went without a hitch. Things did get a little cramped towards the end of the parade, with vessels not keen to move out into a very choppy Weymouth Bay. However, with two harbour patrol craft keeping an eye on things, and all vessels manoeuvring with caution and showing courteous seamanship, all vessels returned safely to berth with not a single incident recorded.



2.0 Incidents

2.1 The Harbour team have recorded 25 incidents since the last meeting, including:

- Vessels towed due to mechanical failure
- Report of potential theft and anti-social behaviour
- Report of graffiti on safety signage
- Reports of diesel on the water
- Missing life ring
- Report of excessive wash

Over the period, the harbour staff have been alerted to a higher number than usual of reports of diesel in the harbour, 9 in total. In all cases, the amount of diesel observed, if any, has been very small, no source has been identified, and no response action has been taken. It is believed that in some cases pollutant has entered the harbour from storm drains during periods of high rainfall. Outfalls in the harbour are being monitored and are now the first places to be checked if there is no known vessel involvement.

3.0 Operations

3.1 Powers of General Direction

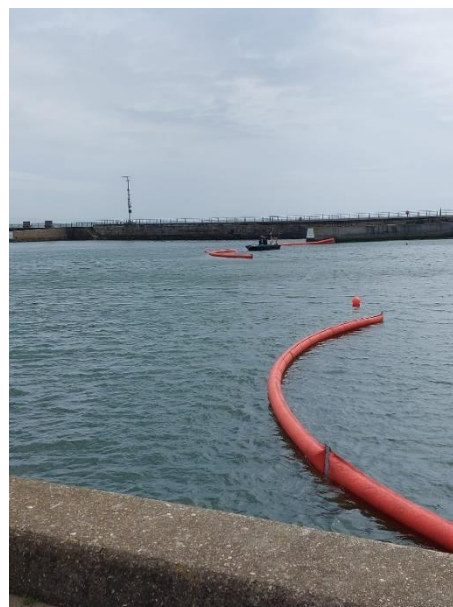
Following the adoption of the Weymouth Harbour General Directions 2024 at the March meeting of the Harbours Advisory Committee, the Directions came into force on Monday the 25th of March. The General Directions have been given for the purpose of promoting or securing conditions conducive to the ease, convenience or safety of navigation, the safety of persons and the protection of property, flora and fauna in Weymouth Harbour as prescribed in article 21 of the 2021 Harbour Revision Order.

In compliance with section 23 of the Harbour Revision Order, formal notice of the General Directions coming into force was published in physical locations around the harbour, online, and in the Dorset Echo. As well as being available on the Weymouth Harbour website, a physical copy of the General Directions is available to view at the Harbour Office.

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.

On Tuesday 14th of May, an Incident Management Exercise took place, in conjunction with Adler & Allan, our Tier 2 Oil Spill Contingency contractors. The exercise simulated a Tier 2 level spill of Diesel fuel (approximately 10,000 litres), coming from an external source and predicted to impact on Weymouth Harbour. The exercise comprised of a full test of the harbour's Oil Spill Contingency Plan (OSCP) including the notification of relevant bodies, a tabletop of various aspects of pollution and waste control, and a deployment of containment booms.



Alongside harbour staff, the exercise was observed by representatives from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency, Dorset Police, Dorset Fire & Rescue, Weymouth Town Council, Dorset Council Emergency Planning & Resilience Team, and the Chairman of the Harbour Consultative Group.

The exercise proved a good test of the OSCP and of the harbour capabilities. While, as always, learning points have been taken away, in general the exercise was a success and the harbour team conducted themselves in an exemplary and professional manner, covering off all requirements of the exercise.

The OSCP is now being reviewed and will shortly be put out for consultation with key stakeholders, prior to sign off by the MCA.

3.3 PMSC Audit

A PMSC audit of Weymouth Harbour was conducted on the 19th of March by our Designated Person James Hannon, of ABPmer.

While we have seen a draft copy, the full report on the audit is in the final stages of preparation. I am happy to report that the harbour was found to be fully compliant with the PMSC, with only a small number of observations being made. James Hannon will present his report on the findings to members at the meeting in September.

4.0 Harbour Works

4.1 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.

4.2 Pontoon and Access Gangway Maintenance

Following the failure of one of the commercial pontoons in early 2023, where the pontoon became jammed on a rising tide and tilted at a severe angle, increased inspection regimes have identified further areas requiring immediate repair, in particular the waiting pontoon to the east of the Town Bridge

While the ongoing maintenance and repair of pontoons and related infrastructure is included in detail in the Asset Management Plan, some repairs are being accelerated to ensure continuous safe operation, none of the repairs are predicted to have a notable impact on harbour reserves.

As part of this accelerated repair programme, four access gangways around the harbour have undergone various repairs over the winter period, and all six gangways are now in an excellent condition.

4.3 Weymouth Quay Regeneration Project

At the time of writing this report, the construction works are in the final stage on the Quay. A handover of the site is planned for 22nd May, with only any remaining snagging works to be agreed.

Delays to the completion of the project have primarily centred around the provision of electrical infrastructure, and the connection to the main grid. The installation of the Fuel Pontoon will also be delayed, pending approval of the MMO certificate. Work is being undertaken with Natural England to

consider the installation, and any potential effects on nearby designated protected areas. The marine consultancy company ABPmer were commissioned to conduct an Ecological Appraisal following the queries raised by Natural England. The completed appraisal was submitted to the MMO on 15th May. The contractor will return to oversee the installation once all permissions have been obtained.

Now that the major re-surfacing works have finished, line painting has taken place across the site, delineating areas for vehicle movement, and providing extra parking spaces in the Peninsula car park. CCTV and lighting columns have been installed, and the ancillary structures such as power sub-stations and switch room, ice making facility, and chilled catch and bait storage have all been completed.



Prior to the installation of a Solar Panel array, it was identified that the original location contained Asbestos within the roof tiles of the building. Through further in-depth building surveys, it was ascertained that none of the existing harbour buildings (either due to Asbestos contamination, or concerns around the ability of roof areas to support the panels) were suitable for the installation. To keep costs down, and to ensure the inclusion of the panels within the project, it is now planned that the panels will be installed on the ground within the secure commercial port area. The panels will be re-sited in future when further development takes place. The installation of the solar panels will provide a source of power that will be offset against the costs of operating the Catch and Bait stores, and the ice making facility, to work towards further reducing costs to fishermen.

All works to date have been carried out to a high standard by the contractor. The interface between the contractor and Dorset Council has worked very well, with all parties communicating regularly. This has contributed to an overall feeling of successful teamwork and partnership working.

Fence lines around the project have been upgraded to enhance public safety, and to provide a more secure commercial port area. Automated gates are being utilised on the one-way system that enables vehicles to move through the fishing port area. CCTV coverage has been reviewed and following a change of placement at the design stage, better coverage using less cameras has been achieved.



An additional fuel pump has been added to the fuel facility, to ensure that services are able to satisfy demand at busy times. It is hoped that the fuel pontoon will not only provide a much-needed service for vessels already berthing in Weymouth but will also attract more visiting vessels to the port, and subsequently increase visitor spend in the town.

Once the site has been handed back to us, work will immediately begin to complete items such as health and safety signage, a waste reception area (to include an increased size area for the Weymouth and Portland Marine Litter project to operate). Work will also take place to install public realms items such as benches, information boards on the Nothe Fort, the Fish Landing Quay, the history of the Pleasure Pier, and the Sea Hives, low-impact lighting for the Pleasure Pier, and a memorial for fishermen lost at sea. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Weymouth Town Council, who have been working with us, and are leading on matters relating to sponsorship, memorialisation, and maintenance of the benches, along with financial contribution for the installation of the 18 benches across the site.

4.4 Wall 4

Works to repair and strengthen Wall 4 (North Quay) are continuing. While a full report is being presented today by my colleague Matt Penny, I can report that there has been no effect on harbour operations, or prevention of access to the North Quay marina during the works. We welcome the reinstatement of the car park at the old Council Office site, as this provides much needed and convenient parking for our marina customers.

5.0 Commercial Port Berths & Notable Traffic

5.1 Commercial Port Berths

Our commercial berths continue to be well used by current berth holders. The tug KINGSTON, owned by Aquatic Towage, recently suffered catastrophic engine failure while working away from Weymouth. Consequently, the vessel is no longer in operation, however Aquatic Towage are nearing the end of the procurement process for a new-build vessel, and we look forward to welcoming them back to Weymouth in due course.

During the delivery of the WQRP, as access to the usual commercial berthing areas became limited, the commercial vessels in port for the winter were berthed alongside the Alpha and Bravo visitor pontoons. While the completion date of the WQRP has been put back, the commercial vessels have

been able to move back to berths at the far eastern end of the Alpha pontoon, freeing up space for visiting vessels. There has been no other notable commercial traffic during this reporting period.



6.0 Pilotage

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

7.0 Significant Events Relevant to Harbour Operations and/or Access

- 200th Anniversary of RNLI
 - Parade of Sail
 - 14th May
 - 25th/26th May
- Fayre in the Square
 - 1st/2nd June
- Seafood Festival
 - 7th/8th September
- Ironman
 - 14th/15th September