

Weymouth Harbour Report

Harbours Advisory Committee
4th March 2026



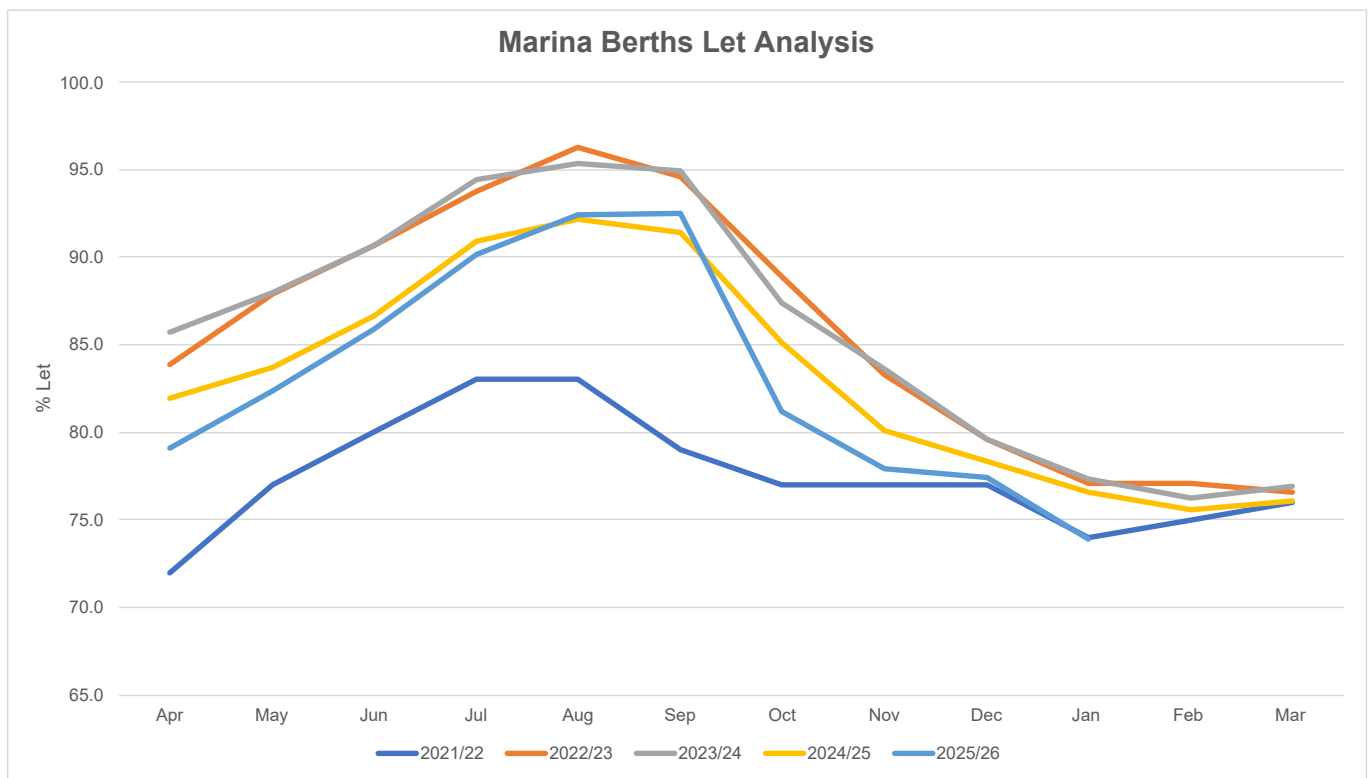
Ed Carter
Dorset Harbours Manager & Weymouth Harbour Master

Weymouth Harbour Let Analysis

Marina Berths

Marina occupancy peaked during September this year at 92.5%, a position slightly ahead of the 2024 season. While analysis of let berths in the marinas is following an established pattern, we saw a steeper drop in occupancy during October than in previous years, with occupancy in January down to the same level as in 2021/22. Currently, our annual renewals process is underway, new customers are applying for moorings, and we are seeing positive numbers of existing customers renewing for the coming season. As was mentioned in the last update to this committee, popularity of 6 month let agreements is still increasing, with more customers choosing to berth their vessels elsewhere during the winter.

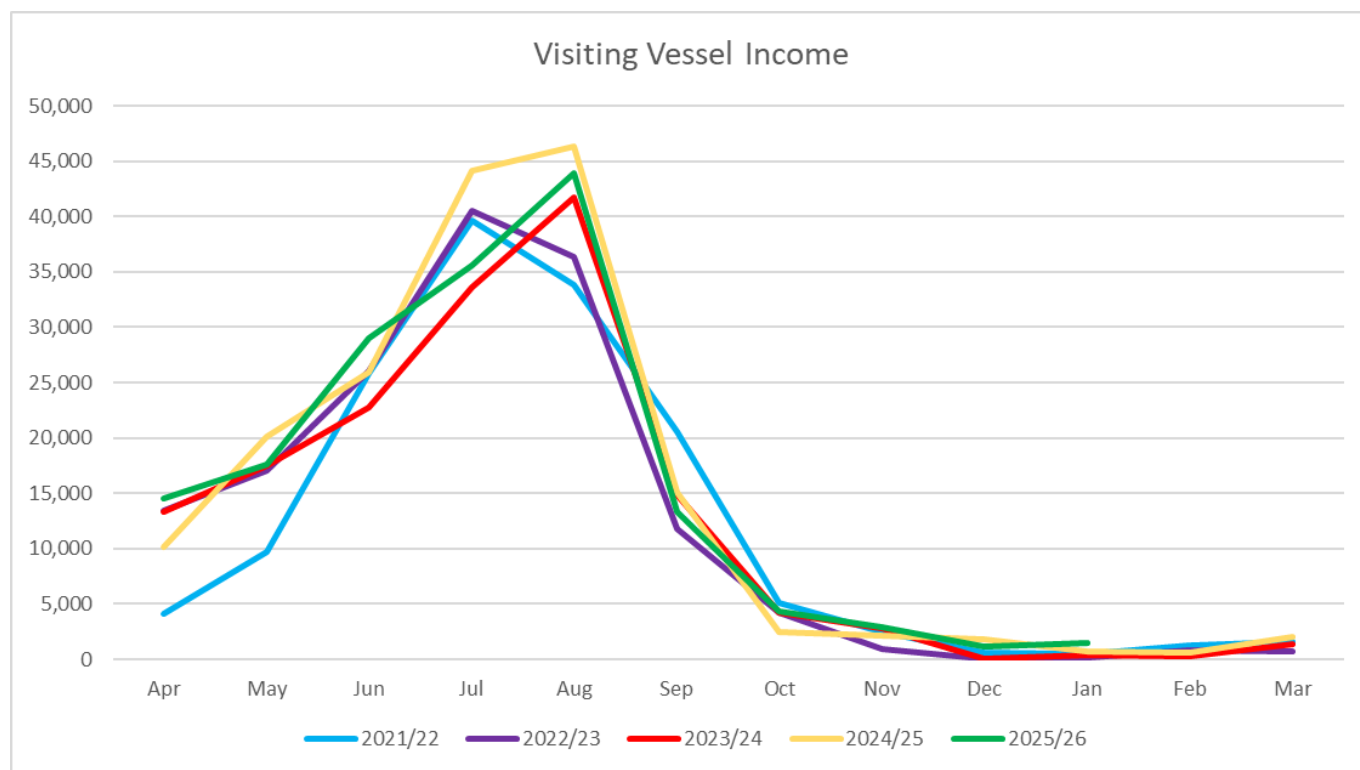
While interest in the largest vessel berths (12m LOA and above) remains strong, with a waiting list in place, we do have vacancies for vessels around 10m LOA. We are however already receiving enquiries for 10m berths of this size for the 2026 season.



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



	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 (up to 01 Feb)	Against Previous Year Profile
Visiting Leisure Craft Revenue (Berthing Fees)	£160,715	£162,974	£183,516	£163,892	-3.0%
Slipway & PWC Permit Revenue	£25,351	£21,382	£17,555	£18,784	7.7%
Number of Bridge Lifts	1,350	1,354	1,404	1,230	-1.4%
Number of Vessels Transiting Bridge	6,182	5,952	5,522	5,239	0.9%
Number of Non-resident Fishing Vessel Visits	48	78	165	149	1.4%
Number of Acts of Pilotage	0	0	0	0	-

Harbour Operations & Port Marine Safety – Quarterly Update

1.0 Harbour Use

- 1.1 While December remained calm and cold, throughout the Christmas period and early into the new year, January and February have seen several named storms with strong winds and sustained periods of very heavy rain. The harbour has borne the worst of the conditions without complaint, and we have seen no major damage to infrastructure or vessels.

Harbour activity has remained quiet, as is the norm for the time of year, and our team have continued their programme of winter maintenance. Harbour vessels have been cleaned and serviced, a full clean of all pontoons has been conducted over the winter period and works to refurbish the Westway Marina gatehouse are underway.

- 1.2 In December, the Christmas Day swim coincided with strong easterly winds and very cold conditions. On Christmas morning, the swim organisers were in discussion with the harbour team early in the day, assessing whether things could go ahead. Although windy and cold, conditions in the harbour were calm and it was decided that the first group to enter the water would comprise of experienced and strong cold-water swimmers. It was clear very quickly that people were struggling with the temperature and with the west to east flow of the tide, and several people had to be helped across by the kayak safety team. The safety teams, both kayak and vessel, reported that conditions were making it difficult to get to persons in the water quickly, and the decision to cancel the swim was made. For the 2026 swim, the process for monitoring weather conditions ahead of the event will be reviewed, and the thresholds for advance cancellation of the event will be examined.

1.3 Staffing Changes

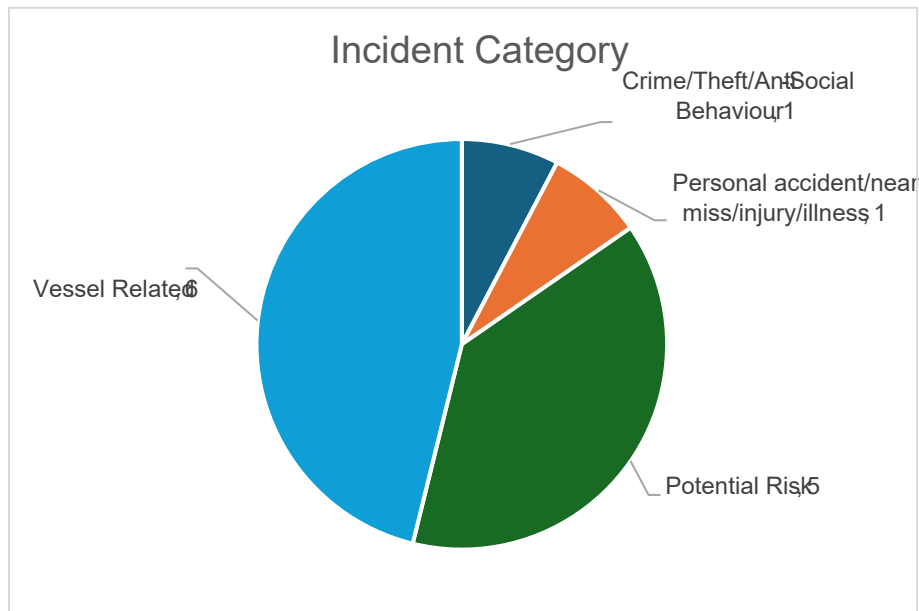
Advertisement of the Assistant Harbour Master post over December and January received over 50 applications. 6 very strong applications were shortlisted, made up of both internal and external candidates, and these were invited to attend a formal panel interview, written knowledge assessment, and a practical boat skills test.

After this thorough process, I am delighted to announce that the successful candidate was Liam Rowland, who is moving from the position of Weymouth Harbour Berthing Officer to take up the role. Liam brings directly relevant experience through his current work within the team, along with a strong understanding of our operations, safety management systems, and the standards set out in the Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code. Throughout the recruitment and interview process, he demonstrated the skills, professionalism, and commitment required to step confidently into the role.

Further recruitment is taking place in the run up to the start of the season. We will be advertising for a new permanent Berthing Officer to replace Liam's previous position, and for a new Moorings Officer to work with the Berthing Office team, a post that was vacated in November 2025. A verbal update will be given to the Committee at the March meeting should further recruitment have concluded.

2.0 Incidents

- 2.1 At the time of writing this report, the Harbour team have recorded 13 incidents since the last meeting:



Within each category, incidents have comprised of:

Crime/Theft/Antisocial Behaviour:

- Harbour staff encountered a member of the public sleeping on harbour premises.

Personal Accident/Near-miss/Injury:

- Drunken persons were found climbing onto a vessel berthed alongside the waiting pontoon.

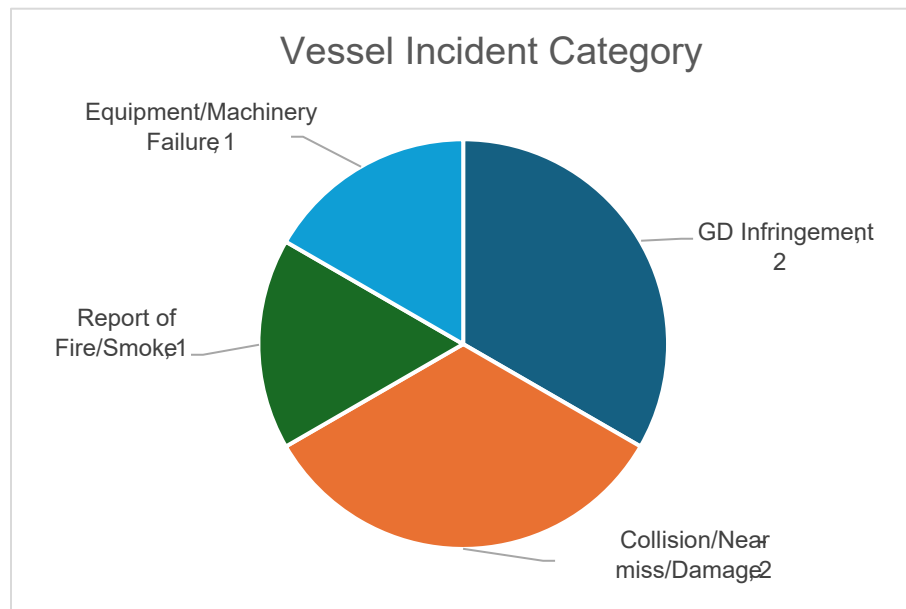
Potential Risk:

- Needle found sticking out of a storm drain on Commercial Road.
- Roadworks barriers had been thrown into the harbour.
- Obviously drunken person near an unguarded drop into the harbour.
- Temporary failure of bridge lift machinery.
- Very large number of spam emails sent to a harbour office email address.

Vessel Related:

- 2 instances of mooring lines snapped during high winds, one of which resulted in the vessel knocking against the vessel on the adjacent berth.
- GRP covering torn loose from a coach house roof during high winds.
- Smoke issuing from an engine being serviced prompted a call to the Harbour Office from a passer-by.
- Vessel speeding within the harbour creating excessive wash.
- Vessel illegally moored/berthed without authorisation.

Two incidents involving speeding vessels within the harbour are currently being investigated with a view to pursuing legal action and potential prosecution under the Weymouth Harbour General Directions 2024. Further detail on these incidents will be provided at a later date.



3.0 Operations

3.1 Oil Spills & Response

There have been no oil spills or other pollution incidents in Weymouth Harbour during the period.

In compliance with regulations, Annual Oil Spill Returns have been made to the MCA, summarising and reporting on all spills, exercises and training conducted during 2025.

Further oil spill response exercises will be conducted during 2026, in compliance with regulations and to maintain and test our Oil Spill Contingency Plan, our state of readiness and overall ability to respond quickly and efficiently to pollution incidents.

We are currently liaising with Dorset Fire and Rescue service to plan a larger multi-agency emergency exercise in 2026. The execution and planning of this exercise will help to formulate a response plan and MoU with Dorset Fire and Rescue, to encompass all three Dorset Council harbours. It is planned to hold this exercise towards the end of the coming season, most likely in late September, and further details will be brought to this committee as they develop.

3.2 Bathymetric Survey

The annual Bathymetric Survey of Weymouth Harbour in 2025 was brought forward by a month, following the brief grounding of a large fishing vessel, the Jacoba Maria (36m LOA, 4m Draught), exiting the harbour at low spring tide in October.

Annually, we assess all depths in the harbour to assess the requirement for any dredging. In the Harbour Entrance, the tidal flow around Weymouth Bay slowly moves sand from North to South past the end of the Pleasure Pier, and the last time this area was dredged was in March 2022.

An initial review of the depth and residual change survey results has indicated no major change in the harbour entrance topography, or within the Inner Harbour, Town Bridge, and marina areas. Generally,

access to Weymouth Harbour at all states of tide remains unchanged with no requirement for further navigational advice or immediate dredging. Some further work is being carried out to assess the extent of the sea grass beds in the harbour entrance, and to provide accurate data on the 'least depth' in the harbour entrance over the last 10 years, to better understand the future requirements for dredging and the maintenance of port access.

3.3 Weymouth Harbour Revision Order

Following Cabinet approval in November 2024, the Weymouth Harbour Revision Order (HRO) was submitted to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). To assist in expediting the process, in late 2025, we received confirmation that the MMO had agreed to combine the Weymouth HRO with the Bridport and Lyme Regis HRO into a single amalgamated order.

We have received and responded to several questions from the MMO during January and early February. However, at the time of writing this report, no further obstacles had been presented, and the combined HRO is due to come into force on the 20th of February 2026.

3.4 Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code Compliance Exercise

The national three-yearly MCA PMSC Compliance Exercise for 2026 has now been completed for all three Dorset Council Harbours. As part of this process, we have formally reviewed and evidenced our adherence to the Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code, supported by recent audits and the Designated Person's ongoing reports. These confirm that Weymouth, Portland and Bridport Harbours continue to operate in accordance with the Code.

A separate paper on this compliance exercise is being presented to the committee today. A copy of the completed PMSC Compliance Statement is provided alongside that paper for members to view.

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 Cosens Quay

Further to concerns raised by a member of the Harbour Consultative Group, investigation works took place in November 2025 at Cosens Quay car park in two locations where changes have been observed in the surface level. In both locations it was found that the slumping had occurred due to fine material being washed out by ground water, and repairs were easily made. No significant holes or evidence of further change were discovered, and the area will continue to be monitored by engineers during the course of their duties.

4.3 Stone Pier Railings

Through a regular programme of inspections, the railings surrounding the Stone Pier have been identified as needing replacement work in certain areas. Some railings are showing severe signs of rust deterioration, and temporary fencing has been affixed where necessary to prevent accident.

The railings along the perimeter of the Stone Pier serve to protect members of the public from falling from height into the sea and harbour entrance. Rocks surrounding the concrete base of the pier become exposed at low tide, significantly increasing the risk of serious injury or drowning in the event of a fall.

The condition of the Stone Pier railings has progressively deteriorated due to prolonged exposure to harsh coastal weather. Undertaking the works now will prevent continued deterioration of the railings. If the condition is allowed to worsen, refurbishment may no longer be viable, and full replacement could become necessary. This would incur substantially higher costs, create greater operational disruption, and result in unnecessary material waste.

The works to replace rotten, damaged, and old railings, and to refurbish and repaint the posts and remaining railings is expected to cost £90,800 ex VAT for the full 500 metres of railings, which is a saving of over £100,000 when compared to a complete replacement and by retaining the existing railings will help to preserve the character of the Stone Pier. Funding for these works is already identified within the Asset Maintenance reserve.

Procurement for this project is currently being undertaken, and it is planned that these works will be completed before the peak summer season.

4.4 Sand Jetty

The architecture and engineering consultants Ramboll are being commissioned to assess the structure and condition of the Sand Jetty. Procurement is currently being undertaken, and it is planned that the survey will take place in early summer, at a cost of £8,888.00.

Given the age and utility of the Sand Jetty, it must be routinely inspected to confirm whether it is structurally sound and safe for use. Ramboll carried out a structural assessment and options study in 2013, after which a damaged pile was repaired and restrictions placed on vehicle loading. Given the time lapsed, it is necessary to undertake a high-level structural assessment to determine whether any deterioration has taken place and confirm the condition and life expectancy of the structure.

The outcome of the assessment will provide guidance on whether:

- the structure is still acceptable for use under its current conditions and utility,
- any additional restrictions or precautions should be taken, or
- a detailed structural assessment and updated option study will be required.

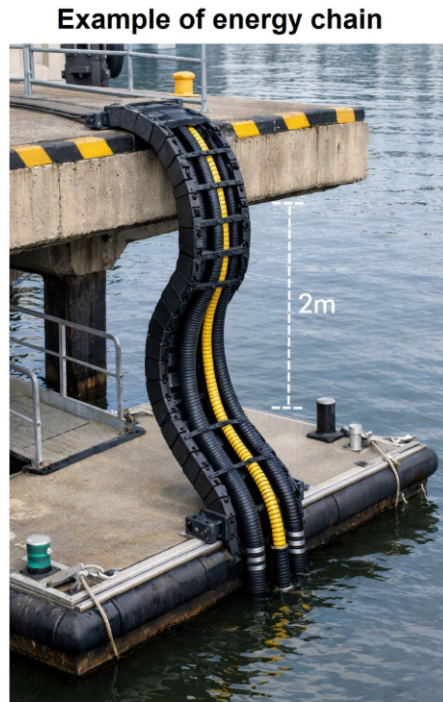
Failure to identify potential risks, such as structural failure and collapse, can result in substantial financial and reputational damages as well as risk to life.

A high-level structural survey by visual inspection of all the structural elements of the Sand Jetty will be completed, both above and below water. An external professional dive team will be utilised to undertake and record the underwater inspection, which will be appointed and managed by Ramboll and the cost of which is included in the fee proposal.

The results of the assessment, and any further required works, will be reported to this committee at a future meeting.

4.5 Weymouth Quay Fuel Pontoon

Further to the spill of fuel during commissioning of the fuel pontoon, reported to this committee in December 2025, works are planned to install a re-designed system (energy chain) for the securing of the fuel pipes from where they exit to quay wall to the connection to the pumps on the pontoon.



The cost of this re-design and installation is being met by Knights Brown, the contractor for the Weymouth Quay Regeneration works. Installation by is planned for mid-March, with the intention of having the systems finally commissioned and ready for the serving of fuel at the start of the 2026 season.

5.0 Commercial Port Berths & Notable Traffic

5.1 The harbour welcomed the motor yacht MOSAIQUE in January, a Cayman Islands-flagged pleasure vessel. As a large luxury yacht, MOSAIQUE represents higher-profile leisure traffic and contributes to the visibility of Weymouth as an attractive port of call for premium private vessels. Her visit supports the continued growth of the harbour's leisure sector, demonstrating ongoing appeal to international yachts and reinforcing the harbour's role in serving a diverse mix of marine users throughout the year.



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

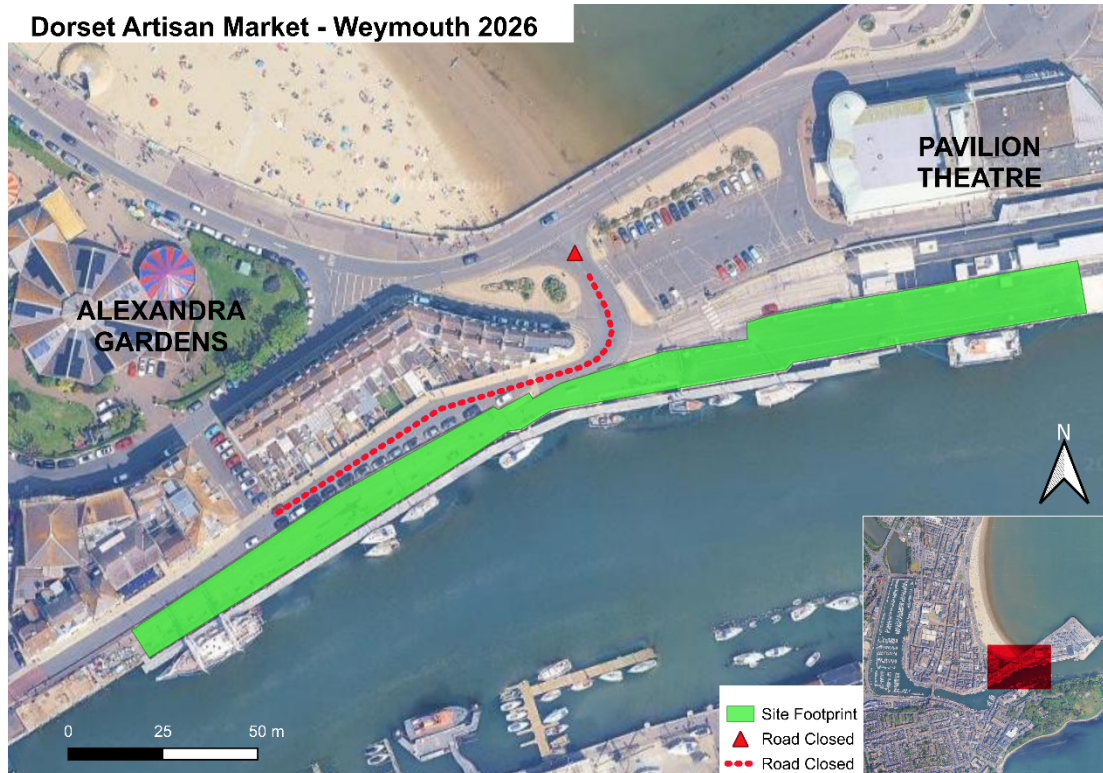
Alongside the usual annual harbour events, some further large events are also planned. Attracting events to the harbourside directly supports Dorset Council's Harbours Strategy, which identifies the development of leisure and tourism activity as essential to making Weymouth a “premium destination” and strengthening the local and blue economy. The strategy also emphasises integrating the harbours with the community and enhancing their cultural offer, aims that are well met by hosting vibrant, high-footfall public events. In addition, Weymouth is already recognised for its year-round events programme, with the harbourside serving as a key venue for major festivals and community gatherings, further demonstrating the value of bringing high-quality markets and cultural activities to this important waterfront location.

Dorset Artisan Market

The Dorset Artisan Market is a well-established monthly curated market showcasing the best of local artisans, craftspeople, food producers and small independent businesses from across Dorset and Somerset. Running successfully in Sherborne since 2019 and now a major attraction in Dorchester, the market typically features over 100–200 stalls offering handmade goods, local produce, art, vintage items and unique craft creations. Recognised for its strong community focus, it supports local traders and draws significant footfall, making it a popular and vibrant event for residents and visitors alike.

The market will be coming to the harbourside on three dates during the coming season. On one Friday each month in June, July, and August, the market will take place from 3pm to 8pm and will be situated along the Cargo Stage and Weymouth Quay.

Dorset Artisan Market - Weymouth 2026



SeaFeast

The Dorset Seafood Festival, branded in recent years as SeaFeast, returns to its harbourside home in Weymouth on 4–5 July 2026. Free to attend, the festival showcases Dorset's outstanding seafood, bringing together top local chefs, artisan producers, market stalls, live entertainment, family activities and opportunities to learn about sustainable fishing and ocean health. Now in its 17th year, the event has previously attracted tens of thousands of visitors and is widely recognised as one of the country's leading culinary festivals, contributing millions to the local economy. Its 2026 homecoming, supported by Dorset Council, marks an important milestone in re-establishing the festival at the heart of Weymouth Harbour.



iQFoil Championships – Portland & Weymouth

The 2026 iQFoil World Championships will be hosted by the Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy from 4–12 September 2026, bringing around 250 of the world's top Olympic-class windsurfers to the area. The majority of racing will take place in Portland Harbour and Weymouth Bay, which offer the consistent and high-quality sailing conditions that make the venue internationally renowned.

The medal races, determining the World Champions, will be held on Saturday 12 September, with finalists sailing from the race area into Weymouth, coming ashore at a dedicated Race Village in front of the Pavilion Theatre to enable public viewing and engagement. This event marks the first time the UK has hosted an Olympic-windsurfing world championship since 2009 and reinforces Weymouth and Portland's reputation as a premier international sailing venue.



NATIONAL FISHING REMEMBRANCE DAY

10 May, 2026

**Come along to our service of remembrance and
reflection - All very welcome**

**Each year, fishing communities
around the UK hold services to
remember those fishermen
who have lost their lives
bringing home the catch.**



Midday

Sunday May 10th

On the Fishermen's Quay, opposite The Pavilion, Weymouth

Service includes: Sea Shanties performed by the local group Dorset Wrecks, readings, poems and a silence. Bring flowers if you wish.



National Fishing Remembrance Day is created in partnership between the Fishermen's Mission, The Seafarers' Charity, Stella Maris, Seafish and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Any queries please contact - **Hayley on 07827965243** hayleyhamlett@fishermensmission.org.uk

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Event Calendar:

Month	Event	Date(s)
May	Fishing Remembrance Day Service Fayre in the Square Wessex Folk Festival	10 th 23 rd – 24 th (Bank Holiday) 30 th – 31 st
June	National Mixed Gig Championships Offshore RC Model Racing Lifeboat Week Dorset Artisan Market	6 th – 7 th 13 th – 14 th TBC 19 th
July	SeaFeast Dorset Artisan Market	4 th – 5 th 17 th
August	Dorset Artisan Market	14 th
September	P/S Waverley P/S Waverley iQFoil World Championships P/S Waverley Ironman	3 rd & 4 th 9 th 4 th – 12 th 13 th 20 th
October	Beach Motocross	10 th
November		
December	Christmas Day Swim	25 th