



14 April 2026

Ed Carter
Dorset Council
County Hall, Colliton Park
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XJ

Dear Mr Carter

As Director of National Historic Ships UK, the government funded advisory body charged with representing the interests of historic vessels, I am writing to request a review of the harbour fees paid by Coastline Heritage Cruises for the vessels *My Girl* and *Enchantress*, Weymouth Harbour's last operational historic passenger carrying craft. Both are listed on the National Register of Historic Vessels (NRHV) and have spent most of their working lives serving Weymouth. They are owned and operated by Coastline Heritage Cruises CIC, providing public tours of Weymouth's historic harbour and bay.

My Girl (NRHV No. 292) was built in 1931 as a pleasure launch before being requisitioned during the Second World War. She played a vital role operating from Weymouth and Portland carrying British and American troops, ammunition and supplies. Post service, she remained in Weymouth to provide pleasure trips around the bay – a role she continues to fulfil today. In 1994 and again in 2016, *My Girl* was awarded the Royal Artillery Pennant and remains the only vessel in the country to carry this Flag. She has featured in several TV programmes, articles and in the book 'Weymouth at War'.

Similarly, *Enchantress* (NRHV No. 3016), built in 1943 in Canada for Britain's Royal Navy, served Weymouth and Portland transporting troops and equipment. Her strengthened hull is evidence of her purpose-built role laying cables and chains, most likely for deploying barrage balloons. She remained in Weymouth to offer tours of the harbour alongside *My Girl*. She also has a significant Royal connection having been used by the Prince of Wales to complete his sea survival training in 2008.

Together, *My Girl* and *Enchantress* are the last surviving links of their kind to Weymouth's Second World War history and are considered both regionally and nationally significant. Historic vessels have huge potential to contribute to local public engagement and outreach programmes, attract tourism and investment to the area, regenerate waterfront spaces and create partnership opportunities. The recently formed CIC reflects the owner's commitment to operating the vessels for the benefit of the public, ensuring that Weymouth's wartime past is not forgotten.

My Girl and *Enchantress* have a proven track record as popular and unique attractions, selling some 3000 tickets a year to visitors and residents. However, the current sum of approximately £4,000 per annum, charged by the Council in harbour fees, represents a considerable threat to their survival as a fixed overhead. Whilst I recognise the current economic climate is difficult for all parties, I am asking the Council to revisit this fee with a view to removing it from their annual costs. This important gesture would demonstrate Council support for a unique heritage attraction.

With thanks for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely

Hannah Cunliffe
Director