

Bridport (West Bay) Harbour Consultative Group (BHCG)
Meeting 11 May 2026 The Salt House 18:00

Present

Amanda Anderson (AA)	Resilient Communities Coordinator
Johnathan Bourbon (JB)	Town Council
Emma Bourne (EB)	Non-Boating Water Activities Rep (HCG Chair)
David Boyland (DB)	Non-Commercial Moorings Sub
Keston Bracey (KB)	Harbour Traders Rep
Gavin Brooking (GB)	Non-Commercial Moorings Rep
Ed Carter (EC)	Harbours Manager – Weymouth Harbour Master
Mark Cornwell (MC)	Commercial Fisherman Rep
Roger Guppy (RG)	West Bay Sea Angling Club Rep
Sam Hanbury (SH)	Harbour Traders Sub
Ben Harvey (BH)	Assistant Harbour Master
Roger Higham (RH)	West Bay Seas Scouts
Jason Matthews (JM)	Gig Club Sub
Becky McGowan	Admin Officer – Note Taker
Simon Miles (SM)	Commercial Passenger Carrying Vessels Rep
James Radcliffe (JR)	Harbour Master
Andrew Taylor (AT)	Residents Rep
Emma Teasdale (ET)	Litter Free Dorset
Andy Turtle (ATu)	Citizens in Policing Manager

1. Welcome & introductions				Action
EB – Welcomed everyone to the meeting, round the room introductions were given.				
2. Apologies				
Cllr Rob Hughes - Dorset Council Harbours Advisory Committee Chair				
Adrian Best – Maritime Policing Team, Marine Tactical Advisor				
3. Minutes of the previous meeting				
No comments.				
4. Outstanding actions from previous meeting				
ID	Action	Assigned	Date of completion	
28/04/2025 14.	Meet to discuss dog signage. The redesign works are still in progress. It was agreed that any new signage should be put on hold until arrangements are finalised. Existing signage will remain in place in the meantime.	EB - JR	Ongoing	
18.	Speak with Wildlife Trust re crab line bins	EB	See agenda item 8.	
3/11/2025 7.	Speed watch group, discuss with interested parties. Responsibility has now been handed over to the Town Council.	EB	No further action from HCG	
2/2/2026 7.	CCTV Integration with central monitoring stations. JB reported that CCTV cameras are in place around the Town Centre, including South Street and East Street. If an incident occurs, a request can be made for the cameras to be interrogated. Ongoing financial costs associated with running and monitoring the cameras were considered not to be warranted at the time.			

	It was noted that Bridport Town Council previously paid a fee for camera monitoring but later withdrew from this arrangement.			
7.	ATu advised that in other towns, CCTV systems are connected via a live link to a central monitoring centre. For example, Dorchester can view cameras in Wimborne and Blandford as they are linked back to the central system. These systems operate continuously. There are plans to introduce live links where possible. ATu will make enquiries regarding Bridport, as it is currently unclear why cameras there are not operating continuously. It was noted that Blandford uses vetted police volunteers to monitor the town centre and there may be opportunities to recruit volunteers to support monitoring in Bridport. EB Thanks were extended to the Police. Police presence has been noted recently, including patrol vehicles and a speed enforcement trap observed in the area.	JB AT	Ongoing	
7.	Update on Harbour Watch statistics. There has been no increase in membership since the last meeting. Current membership stands at approximately 900, with around 400 members registered to a home address rather than the harbour location. Members were encouraged to re-register using the harbour postcode to ensure they receive relevant alerts. The group will look at ways to increase membership, including improved communication and awareness. It was agreed to arrange an event to promote re-registration and membership sign-up.	AA		
9.	Reef monitoring feedback on identified effects. EC reported that discussions took place with Natural England (NE) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) in February regarding future plans. Water-injection dredging was trialled as a cost-effective approach. The first contractor did not achieve the expected results; however, a second contractor performed very well, dredging to a depth of approximately 1 metre. The work is being undertaken in liaison with	EC		

	NE and MMO to determine the most appropriate approach going forward. No formal licence is currently needed, but operations are being carried out in line with best practice. Monitoring to ensure that the sediment is non-toxic, and the sediment plume is not having a negative environmental impact. The Harbour Team can be equipped with a GoPro camera to take photographs of the reef bed and liaise with MMO. Sediment sampling is undertaken every five years, with annual photographic monitoring of the reefs proposed to observe changes in marine life. It was noted that photographs should always be taken: • At the same locations • Using geo-referenced positions • Within the same tidal window This will ensure consistency and accurate comparisons over time. GB asked when the last successful dredge took place. EC confirmed this occurred in February, focusing on the East Basin. JR clarified that the East Basin works were a trial, with a full dredge anticipated in a few years' time. Dredging was carried out approximately 5 metres from the wall to prevent undermining and bed collapse. It was noted that dredged material initially began to move out of the harbour, but storm conditions made this difficult. Within the inner harbour, the works performed well. It was asked if there were plans to review dredging in the West Basin. These were discussed; however, this is challenging at present. A likely timeframe is 2–3 years, aligning with when the chains need to be removed again. No dredging works are planned for next year. The Sea Angling Club raised concerns about tenders on the East Basin, noting difficulties getting them off.			
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	It was explained that dredging deepens the centre channel first, with side areas slumping naturally over time. AT highlighted that water ingress at the sides of the harbour is a significant long-term issue. Historically, stonework was regularly repointed. Measures such as applying concrete wash to the wall were used. Long-term protection solutions need to remain a consideration. It was confirmed that Wall A and Wall B works are currently underway, with future works planned. Engineers are monitoring conditions on an ongoing basis, and the Highways Team will be responsible for pointing the walls.			
5. Representatives and Substitutes				
October renewals are due for Andrew and Sam. The Kayaking Club has not attended meetings since before 2024. SM to contact the club to discuss future involvement. A representative from the Sea Scouts attended this meeting on an ad hoc basis to gain a better understanding of what is involved. The Sea Scouts are not currently listed as formal representatives; however, they have expressed an interest in attending meetings going forward. The relevant paperwork and application process will therefore need to be completed.				SM
6. Harbour's Advisory Committee Chair's updates				
No update.				
7. Marine Police update & Harbour Watch				

AB reported that the main issue remains the thefts of Suzuki outboard gearbox legs in the Portland area, which has been raised at the previous meeting.

To their knowledge, no further thefts have been reported since the last update.

AB also reiterated the importance of Operation Kraken and encouraged continued reporting of any suspicious activity.

ATu advised that while the number of thefts is lower, the value of stolen equipment is higher than for the whole of last year. AT highlighted concerns around high-value kit being targeted.

Marine marking events were noted, with 3–4 events held around Poole, using Selecta DNA / forensic marine marking. These markings are highly visible and act as a deterrent; however, it was emphasised that incidents must be reported, as apparent low reporting does not necessarily reflect reduced activity.

8. Litter Free Dorset

ET discussed opportunities for improved signage and environmental messaging around Bridport, working in partnership with the West Bay Office, building on the *Love Weymouth Harbour* campaign delivered last year.

Single-use packaging was identified as a key issue, with limited opportunities for reuse. This was noted to contribute to increased litter, attraction of gulls, and potential impacts on water quality. While new bin housings have been successful in reducing litter, it was felt that better promotion and clearer waste separation could improve effectiveness further.

A potential crab kit hire scheme was discussed, although this would require at least one participating local business to act as a delivery partner.

EB suggested a bringing in a crabbing code, suggesting this could be displayed on litter bins. Concerns were raised about crab kit hire due to high levels of snagging, resulting in lost equipment and wasted money for users. Any hire scheme would require dedicated disposal bins for crab lines and nets.

It was noted that recycling initiatives are resource-heavy and expensive. Hire schemes could potentially offset costs by hiring equipment but not lines.

SH while crab kits themselves are inexpensive, processing and logistics particularly during busy periods present challenges.

ET expressed an understanding that the products are cheap however there is a plan to make this cost-comparable with initial investment funding to reduce start-up costs.

ET asked SH whether there was any interest among traders for reusable items.

SH advised that there is currently limited consumer acceptance, with compostable packaging being more popular.

ET noted that compostable packaging is still single use and is often incinerated when disposed of in general waste.

Discussion followed on identifying “five key problem products”, including coffee cups. Consumer resistance and cost pressures on businesses were noted.

Suggestions included trialling plastic-free bottles or condiments and working with the Town Council to set agreed targets or deadlines, noting that once changes are established, public acceptance tends to follow.

SM asked whether the Harbour Authority could introduce bylaws or make recommendations linked to kiosk rents.

EC advised this could be explored but with cautioned against duplicating existing legislation (e.g. littering offences). Writing requirements into leases had previously been deemed difficult.

A further suggestion included a voluntary “traffic-light” system for priority products, with public transparency encouraging compliance.

EB concluded that clearer, more concrete guidelines would help encourage behaviour change.

Concerns were raised regarding plastic waste outside the HM Office, particularly material washing into the harbour and accumulating in the rock armour.

BH confirmed that plans are in place to clear this, and that a clean-up had taken place prior to recent storms.

Issues relating to dog fouling and dogs on the beach were discussed.

AT noted a lack of enforcement by dog wardens and suggested that banning dogs on West Beach could be considered.

Counter arguments highlighted the potential impact on tourism and confusion arising from seasonal restrictions.

It was noted that biodegradable crab lines and doggy bags can be purchased.

Feedback from the meeting will be taken away for further consideration.

9. Harbour Masters update

Following the significant easterly storms earlier this year, the harbour experienced an unprecedented ingress of sand, which rapidly reduced available depths and posed a risk to harbour operations. In response, we mobilised a crane equipped with a grab to undertake dredging works. This allowed us to maintain harbour operability while longer-term solutions were being organised. Over a five-week period, from the 2nd of February through to the 13th of March, approximately 10,000 tonnes of sand were removed using this method. This ensured that the commercial fleet could continue their daily operations with minimal disruption. During this same period in February, we also carried out water injection dredging within the inner harbour, specifically in the East Basin, which successfully removed nearly one metre of accumulated silt. In parallel, we began the process of securing the necessary consents for a larger-scale dredging operation. A cutter suction dredger was mobilised to site on the 20th of April. Dredging operations commenced on or around the 26th of April and were successfully

Post-dredge surveys are scheduled to take place this week to confirm depths, however we are confident that we have achieved close to the maximum target depth of -2 metres below Chart Datum across most areas.

With the dredging works now complete, and the dredger along with its pipeline currently being removed from site, the pontoons are expected to be reinstalled by the weekend.

East Basin mooring chains were removed in October, inspected, and overhauled. Any worn sections were replaced, and the system was fully reinstalled during March.

GB asked to clarify external funding.

EC Emergency Flood Fund funding was released following a successful bid. The total cost of dredging this year was just under £300,000. Not all costs were covered by the funding, £200,000 was met through the Emergency Flood Fund which encompassed the cost of the crane and extra cutter suction dredging. The WiD dredging was funded from the harbour as planned.

The railing section of the new inner harbour steps, including the access gate, has now been installed.

A further site meeting is scheduled to take place this week, with the expectation that the full installation of the new steps will be completed in June.

External renovation works commenced on the kiosk last week. Upon completion of those works, attention will then move to the Black Hut, which will be a full rebuild rather than a refurbishment.

Looking ahead, during May we intend to go out to advert to recruit a team to operate both the kiosk and the Black Hut. Our aim is to have both units open and operational by July, in time for the peak season.

NHS cabins currently on the slipway are long-term loan units and will be used as temporary office accommodation. These units may be required to facilitate staff relocation during the works and rebuild of the Harbour Office. Plans are currently progressing and are expected to be submitted for full planning later this year.

GB asked where the funding will come from for the office rebuild?
JR responded central Council.

AT requested an update on progress with storage negotiations with the Golf Club. JR the proposal was turned down as planning permission was refused. The Golf Club is planning to submit a new planning application shortly.
The space is intended to be used for storage.

SH reported the condition of public toilets and the fact that some are currently not open. Clarification was sought on where responsibility for maintenance and operation sits. JR it sits with Property Services. The toilets located on the Green were installed as part of the scheme associated with the wall works.

10. User Representatives reports

Non-Commercial Mooring Holders

1. There have been several harbour users complaining that the harbour is not ready for the season and yet mooring holders are being charged fully

Harbour readiness has been an ongoing issue. A dedicated meeting be held to clearly define what constitutes a "*harbour ready*" position, including any mitigating circumstances, to avoid future misunderstanding.

2. One mooring holder felt rushed into having their boat lifted in when the harbour

wasn't ready – no pontoons etc

3. Responses from the "harbour" are defensive and claim the harbour is fully open when it clearly isn't
4. Many harbour users question the dredging planning/timing and frequency
5. Several mooring holders think that an April refund would be appropriate
6. One user asked that if the harbour isn't full (mooring on north side), could more space be made available?

JR advised that spreading moorings is not feasible, as adjusting positions would result in loose moorings that may not be recoverable once moved.

7. Could minutes of meetings do not use abbreviations and refer to historical issues without references to more info

BM acknowledged.

8. More cleats on pontoons?

JR advised that additional cleats will be available shortly. A back delivery has recently been received, and the bolts are currently on order, with installation awaiting their arrival.

9. When referencing areas of the harbour in reports could there be an accompanying plan to illustrate?

JR confirmed that a planned approach to newsletters and reports has been prepared and has already been produced.

10. What plan of improvement is in place to improve the overall customer survey score of 3.2 out of 5 or is this considered adequate?
11. Copy of correspondence directly to harbour of mooring holders issues was supposed to be shared with reps but hasn't happened

EC advised that a separate meeting will be required to discuss this matter in detail, to ensure that any approach is appropriate, clearly defined, and correctly applied.

Commercial Passenger Carrying Vessels

SM advised that tripping activity was shut down over the winter period, with little reported during that time. SM has spoken with users, and feedback received was consistent with issues raised previously by GB, particularly relating to the perception that the harbour was not ready.

It was noted that traders generally complete all preparations by 1 April, in line with the harbour's seasonal readiness. While there was recognition of the setback caused by recent storms, concerns were raised that licences and approvals still need to be obtained in advance, and clarification was sought on whether there is a defined process to manage this.

EC confirmed that all licences and permissions required are already in place and advised that he would be happy to discuss the matter further outside the meeting, including extending discussions if necessary.

Members commented positively on the crane operations and dredging works, noting these had been carried out effectively.

Harbour Traders

KB Concerns were raised following the Easter Bank Holiday period, with traders reporting upset and frustration in relation to theft incidents. Although it was noted that, despite reports being made, little visible action has followed. It was highlighted that there has been a limited police presence, and although the police were contacted, no attendance has occurred to date.

ATu will follow this up.

ATu reported that there were 7 theft reports in March.

In addition, a total of 53 reports relating to more serious crimes were recorded during the same period. Officers are prioritised according to demand and severity of incidents, which impacts response times for reported matters.

It was asked whether the Police could use WhatsApp or similar messaging platforms for communication.

ATu advised that WhatsApp cannot be used due to concerns around evidence integrity and evidential standards.

It was asked whether a Crime Prevention Officer is available.

ATu advised that he will contact the Bridport Sergeant to request an update and clarification on crime prevention support and communication options.

It was asked if police could be contacted via email?

ATu responded, yes via our website.

11. Q&As

12. AOB

A resident and visitor complaint was raised regarding the seating adjoining Margaret's Kiosk, which needs repainting.

JR to refer this to Property Services.

Concerns were raised regarding ongoing anti-social driving ("boy racer" activity). It was noted that the situation was quieter while police patrols were in place but resumed once patrols ceased.

A resident reported that despite living in the area for 32 years, they have never known the issue to be this severe, stating that activity is occurring every night.

It was acknowledged that police deployment is subject to incident grading and prioritisation, which affects officer attendance. The need for an increased police presence was reiterated.

ATu the use of Operation Snap through Dorset Road Safe was highlighted. The scheme enables members of the public to submit information and video evidence. Initial offences typically result in a warning letter, with repeat offences progressing to prosecution.

EB raised concerns regarding bins, tables and the bike rack, in the Bridport Arms car park, noting that the current bike rack is in a potentially dangerous position, with a risk of bicycles being struck by vehicles turning into the car park. Bins and tables do not fit into the space provided and adjustment.

Meeting concluded 20:00