

Weymouth Harbour Report

Harbours Advisory Committee
29th June 2026



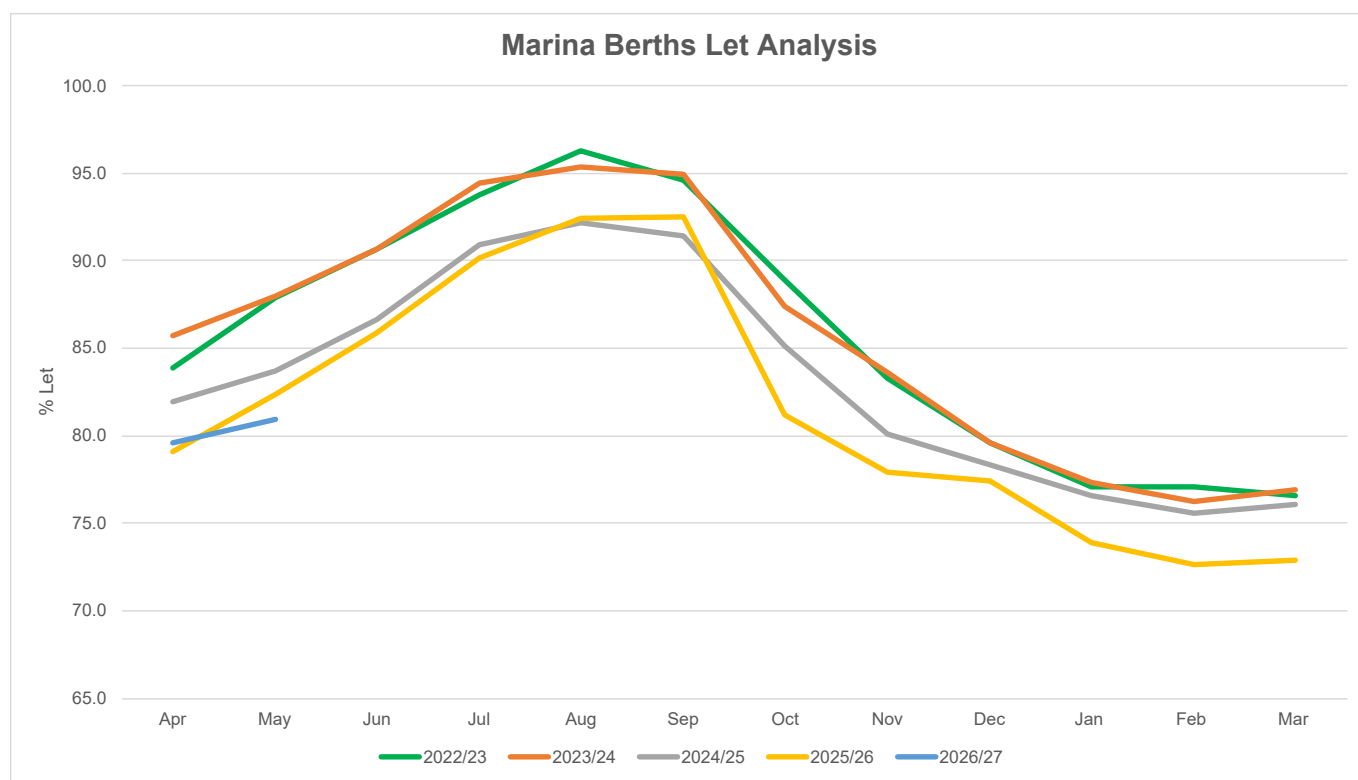
Ed Carter
Dorset Harbours Manager & Weymouth Harbour Master

Weymouth Harbour Let Analysis

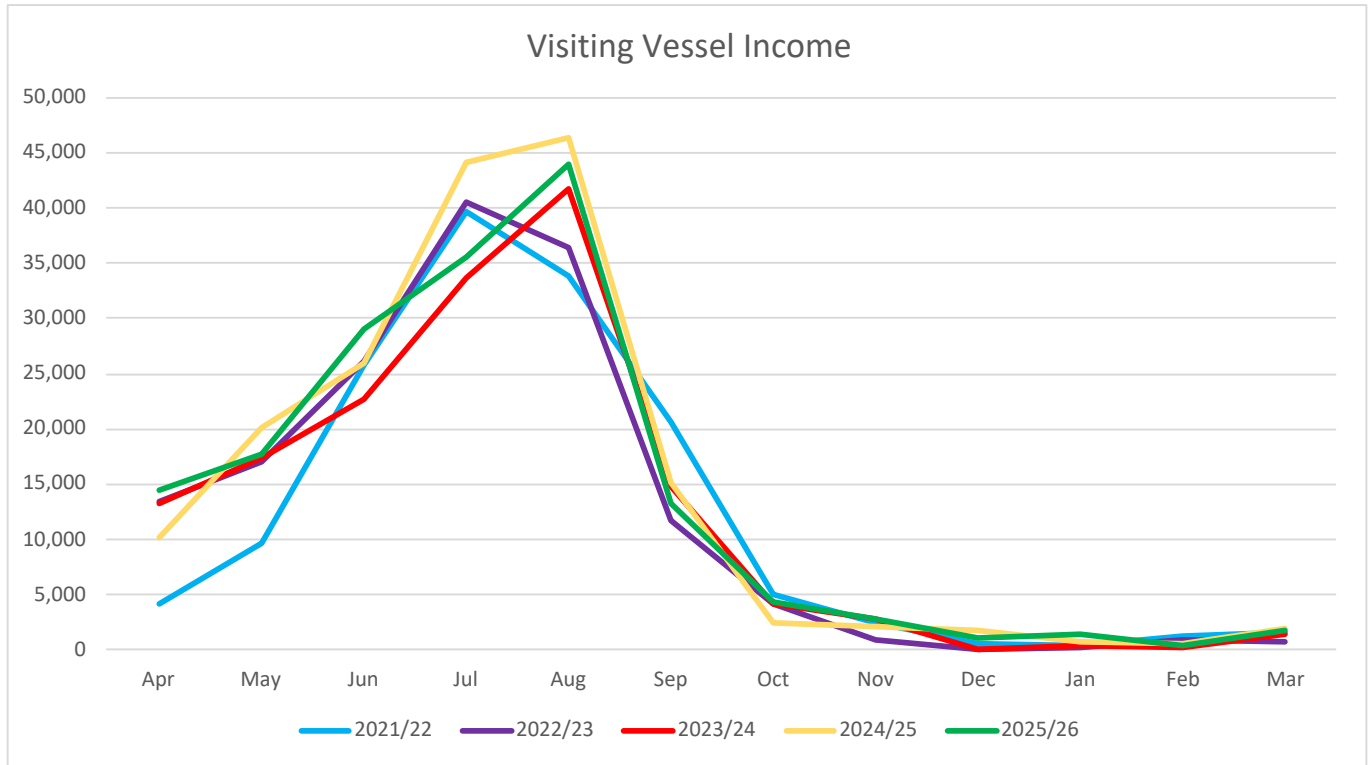
Marina Berths

Marina occupancy reached a seasonal high of 92.5% in September, marginally outperforming the same point in the 2024 season. As anticipated, occupancy reduced during October, with the year ending at a lower level than in recent years. This movement largely reflects a continuing shift in customer behaviour, with an increasing number of berth holders opting for six-month summer agreements and relocating their vessels during the winter period. This pattern is being seen more widely across the recreational boating sector and mirrors the broader economic pressures currently influencing discretionary leisure spending.

Since the start of the year, officers have continued a proactive approach to optimising occupancy across both leisure and commercial berths. Customers on the waiting list have been contacted and berthing opportunities offered where available. While some have indicated that their vessels are currently on the market or that they are deferring decisions in light of the current economic climate, engagement remains ongoing. There is currently some availability within the leisure marina for vessels up to 10 metres, and commercial berths continue to be actively marketed to suitable customers on the waiting list. These trends are reflective of the wider market environment rather than any reduction in demand specific to Weymouth Harbour and continue to be monitored closely.



Harbour Statistics



END OF YEAR 2025/26	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Against Previous Year Profile
Visiting Leisure Craft Revenue (<i>Berthing Fees</i>)	£160,715	£162,974	£183,516	£177,126	-3.5%
Slipway & PWC Permit Revenue	£25,351	£21,382	£17,555	£19,159	9.1%
Number of Bridge Lifts	1,350	1,354	1,404	1,366	-2.7%
Number of Vessels Transiting Bridge	6,182	5,952	5,522	5,539	0.3%
Number of Non- resident Fishing Vessel Visits	48	78	174	206	18.4%

Harbour Operations & Port Marine Safety – Quarterly Update

1.0 Harbour Use

1.1 An early Easter, combined with frequent cold and windy weather conditions, has resulted in a slow start to the season. However, activity is building as we head into summer, and our visitor berths are seeing steady traffic. Sail training vessels are making regular visits, with Sea Cadets, Challenger Yachts, and Rona Trust vessels frequenting the harbour.

While April was quiet from a yacht rally perspective, in early May we had several large rallies visiting, the biggest group being around 25, and the first May Bank Holiday weekend saw over 50 visitors from organised rallies.

Overall, activity over the start of the season has been steady, although visitor numbers in April were slightly lower than last year, likely influenced by the timing of Easter. Short-stay visits remain consistent, and marina berth occupancy is broadly in line with last year, with the identified shift toward short-term lets. Commercial berth occupancy remains strong, despite some operational changes among users, and fishing vessel activity is widely unchanged. The slipway experienced a quieter month, while demand for PWC permits continues to show modest growth. Overall, performance remains stable across most areas.

1.2 Recruitment

Further to a Berthing Officer position being freed up by the promotion of our new AHM, since the last report to this committee two other long-standing members of staff have also left the Berthing Office team. Both Richard Drabwell and Simon Powell have given many years of dedicated service to Weymouth Harbour. We thank them for their commitment and hard work and wish them well in their future endeavours.

Recruitment for the three vacant positions of Berthing Officer has now concluded, with three excellent internal applicants from our seasonal pool, Freya Lewis, Hollie Nash, and James Ashington. taking up permanent positions.

In turn, to replace the vacated seasonal posts, we also welcome Bill McCarthy and Graham Cooper to the team. From a strong pool of candidates, Bill joins us from a background in the Navy and commercial marine operations, with Graham bringing extensive leisure boating experience.

Carrie Swan also joins us to take up the role of Seasonal Moorings Officer. Carrie joins the Berthing Office from a background in teaching and law, with hand-on experience of sea-going roles including commercial ferries and recreational sailing.

1.3 Weymouth Harbour Highlighted Among UK's Leading Marinas

Weymouth Harbour has received national recognition in the *Navily* 2026 UK Marina Rankings, which is based on more than 300,000 reviews from a global community of over one million boaters.

Navily is a widely used international cruising guide and mobile app, often described as the "TripAdvisor for boaters", where users share reviews, ratings, and practical information on marinas and anchorages worldwide. Weymouth Harbour is highlighted among the UK's leading marina

destinations, with users praising its attractive setting, high-quality facilities, and excellent access to the town centre, beach, and local amenities.

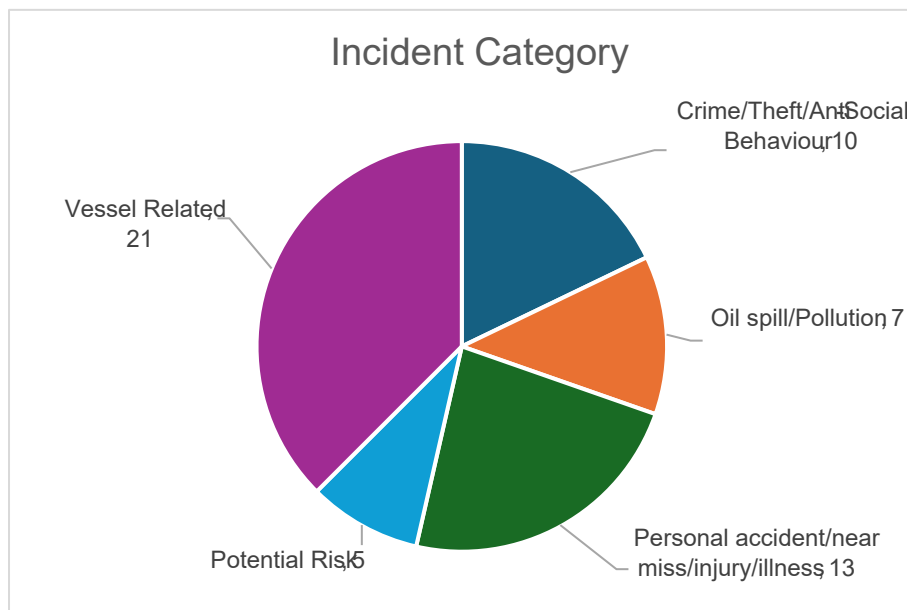
This recognition reflects Weymouth Harbour's reputation as a welcoming, well-managed destination for both visiting and resident vessels. It also demonstrates the positive impact of continued investment in harbour infrastructure and services.

Importantly, this aligns closely with Dorset Council's wider priorities, supporting a thriving local economy, enhancing the visitor experience, and ensuring the harbour environment is well maintained for future generations. The recognition provides further external validation that Weymouth Harbour is delivering against these objectives, helping to position it as a key coastal asset for the area.

2.0 Incidents

2.1 While overall harbour activity has remained relatively steady, the number of recorded incidents has increased during this period. This is likely attributable in part to improved reporting processes, which are now capturing a broader range of lower-level and routine incidents that may not previously have been formally recorded. In addition, the data reflects the harbour's role as a busy public space, with a number of incidents linked to public behaviour, seasonal activity, and general waterfront use.

At the time of writing this report, the Harbour team have recorded 56 incidents since the last meeting:



Within each category, incidents have comprised of:

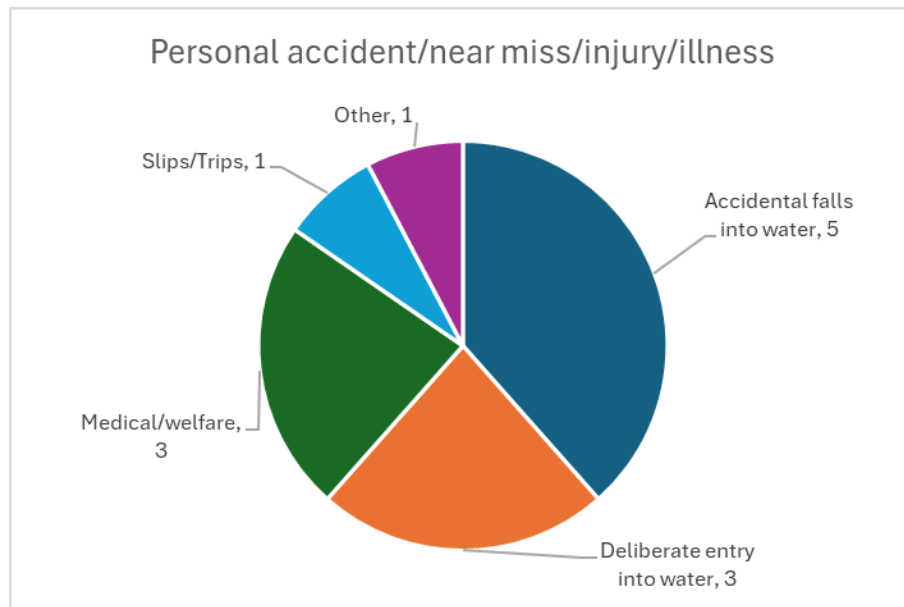
Crime/Theft/Antisocial Behaviour:

- Instances of pier jumping, including groups of youths repeatedly entering the water from the Pleasure Pier and Town Bridge.
- Reports of people entering restricted commercial areas, including intoxicated individuals and unauthorised access to fenced zones.

- Vandalism incidents, including damage to harbour signage, fencing, and radar/aerial equipment on vessels.

Personal Accident/Near-miss/Injury:

- A number of incidents involved members of the public entering the harbour, either accidentally through slips and falls from quaysides and pontoons, or deliberately through jumping and swimming. Harbour staff responded promptly, providing assistance and first aid where required.
- Medical and welfare incidents accounted for a proportion of reports, including collapsed or vulnerable individuals, in some cases linked to suspected intoxication, with police or ambulance services attending as necessary.
- Incidents were typically low severity and behaviour-related, with Harbour staff providing first response, and coordinating with emergency services where appropriate.
- Overall, analysis indicates that most incidents are behaviour-related rather than infrastructure-driven, with no significant injuries recorded.



Potential Risk:

- Reports of people swimming across the harbour entrance, posing a significant navigational and safety risk.
- Unmarked fishing gear and floating debris reported in the harbour and bay.
- A mechanical issue with Town Bridge barriers and control systems, resulting in a delayed lift.

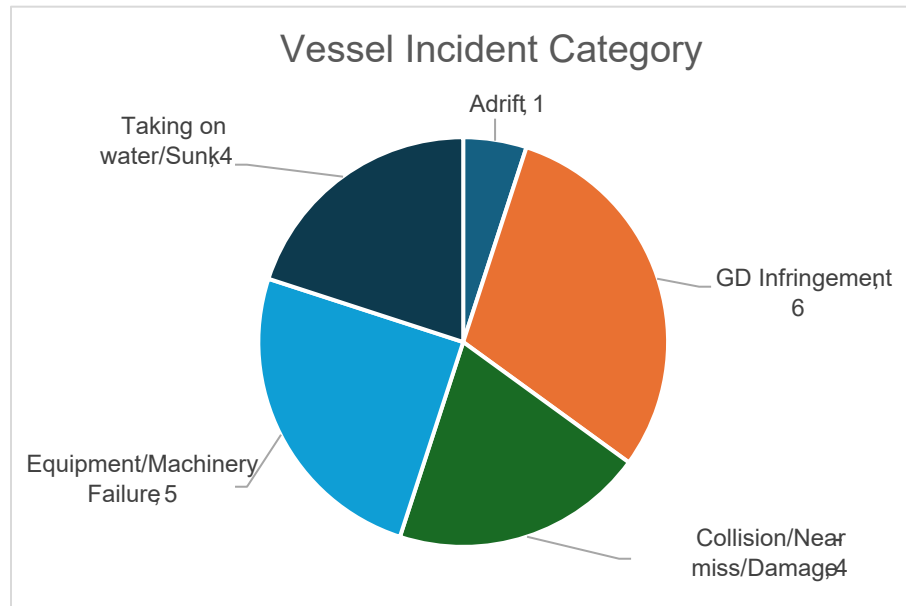
Pollution Incidents:

- A report of what appeared to be sewage issuing from a storm drain between Westwey and North Quay marinas. When staff investigated nothing was in evidence, the report was passed to the Environment Agency.
- 2 instances of light oil/fuel sheens detected within the inner and outer harbour. Both slicks were very small and dissipated quickly.

- 2 instances of ‘splash spills’ during fuelling. Both spills were easily cleared with sorbent material.
- 2 instances of waste engine oil being deposited into a waste bin. Both incidents are being investigated further, with CCTV being examined.

Vessel Related:

- Engine failures, loss of steerage, and electrical or mechanical breakdowns, often requiring Harbour assistance or tows.
- Minor collisions and near-misses during berthing, unberthing, and manoeuvring in confined areas. There were no reported injuries and no incidents involving significant damage to vessels or infrastructure.
- Vessels taking on water at berth due to equipment failure, weather, or poor maintenance, with Harbour staff assisting where necessary.
- General Direction infringements including speeding, excessive wash, unsafe navigation, and misuse of harbour facilities, with investigations ongoing in some cases.

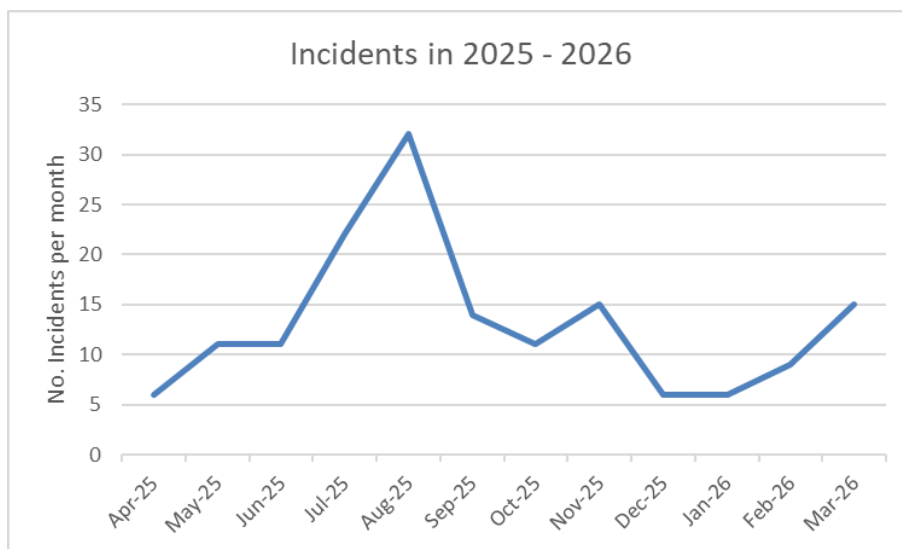


3.0 Incident Analysis 2025 – 2026

3.1 This section reviews all incidents recorded within Weymouth Harbour during the 2025–2026 reporting period. A total of 158 incidents were logged and grouped into categories based on current harbour practices and General Directions. This represents the first full year of usable data following changes to the way incidents are recorded and has already provided a much clearer basis for analysis. While the approach will continue to be refined over time, it is already allowing for a better understanding of the causes and types of incidents occurring within the harbour. As this dataset develops in future years, it will also support more meaningful comparisons and trend analysis, helping to identify patterns and inform longer-term decision making.

3.2 Seasonal Trend

When incidents are broken down by month, a clear seasonal pattern emerges, which is in line with expectations. Numbers begin to rise through the spring before reaching a peak during the summer months, with August recording the highest number of incidents. Levels remain relatively high through July and September, reflecting increased use of the harbour during the main tourism and boating season. Incident numbers then fall through the autumn and remain lower over the winter, when overall harbour activity is reduced.



3.3 Incident Type Analysis

Looking at incident types overall, Vessel Related incidents make up the largest share, showing that issues linked directly to vessel operation and condition remain a key area of risk.

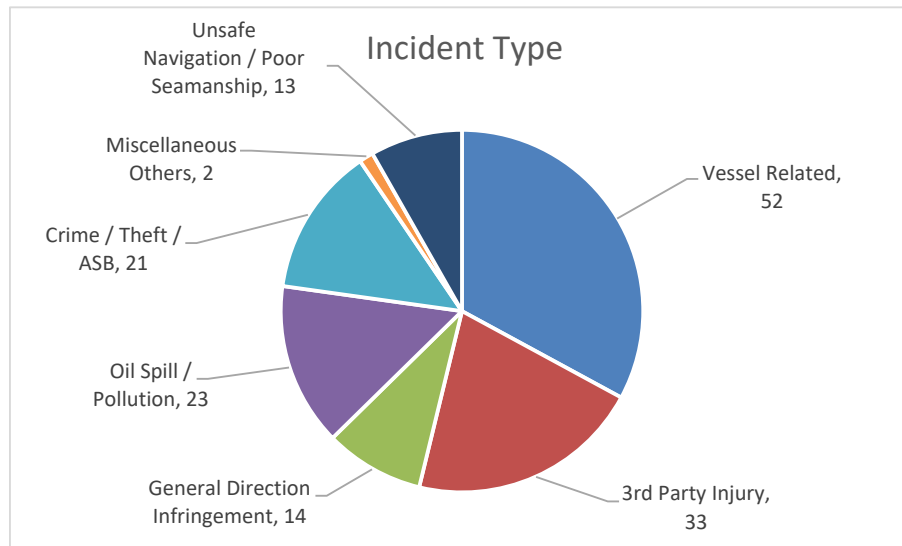
Analysis of Oil Spill and Pollution incidents shows that 23 events were recorded during the reporting period. These are generally small-scale incidents, typically associated with routine harbour activity such as refuelling, vessel maintenance, or minor leaks, rather than large or significant pollution events. While individually low in impact, they represent a recurring issue within a busy operational environment, particularly in areas where vessels are berthed or working.

Overall, the data shows that pollution incidents are largely linked to day-to-day practices rather than deliberate actions. As such, they are well suited to control through continued emphasis on good housekeeping, vessel maintenance, and awareness. Although not a dominant risk area, they remain important due to their visibility and potential environmental impact within a confined harbour setting.

Further review of incidents recorded under the “Crime, Theft and Anti-Social Behaviour” category shows that almost all (20 of the 21 incidents) relate specifically to anti-social behaviour, showing that the issues being experienced are mainly linked to nuisance, trespass, and general behaviour, rather than theft or deliberate damage to property.

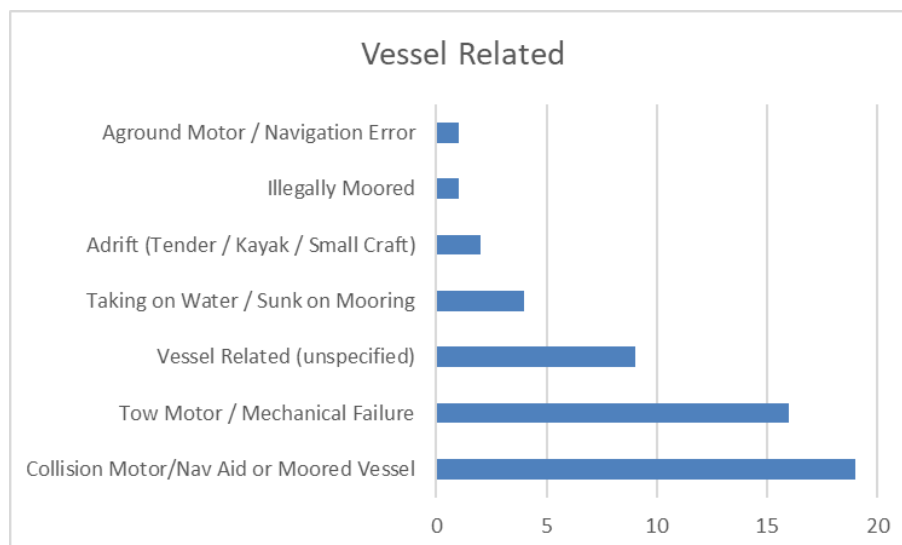
Analysis of 3rd Party Injury incidents shows that the majority relate to slips, trips and falls, particularly on pontoons, quaysides and around vessel access points. A significant number occur during boarding or disembarking, or when moving between vessels, where changing levels and vessel movement increase the risk of loss of balance. Overall, these incidents are generally low in severity but relatively

frequent and are primarily driven by a combination of environmental conditions and user awareness, rather than deliberate actions.



3.3 Vessel Related Incidents

Breaking down Vessel Related incidents further, collisions and mechanical failures account for most cases. Collisions (all minor) involving other vessels, moorings or harbour infrastructure form the largest group, highlighting the challenges of manoeuvring in busy or confined areas. Mechanical failures are also a significant factor, underlining the importance of vessel upkeep and reliability. Other types of incidents, such as vessels taking on water, drifting, or the occasional grounding or illegal mooring, occur less often but still present operational risks. Overall, these incidents tend to arise either from interaction between vessels and structures, or from loss of propulsion or control, reinforcing the importance of safe manoeuvring and well-maintained vessels.

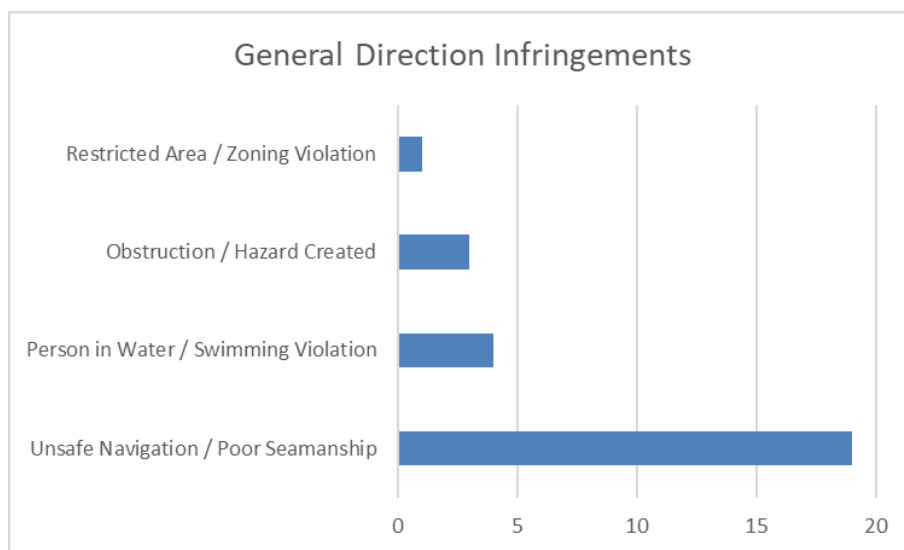


3.4 General Direction Infringements

First analysis of General Direction Infringement incidents showed that many were initially recorded under broad terms such as "Unsafe Navigation / Poor Seamanship". On review, it became clear that

most of these did not represent clear breaches of the General Directions but were more general issues of judgement or awareness. These have therefore been removed from the GDI category, giving a more accurate reflection of actual non-compliance. What remains is a relatively small number of clearly defined infringements.

Of these, the largest group relates to speeding and excess wash, followed by people in the water, and a small number of obstruction and zoning issues. Overall, this demonstrates that while breaches of the General Directions do occur, they are relatively limited when set against the level of activity within the harbour. The main challenge continues to be managing how a wide range of users share the space safely, rather than dealing with widespread or deliberate non-compliance.



4.0 Operations

4.1 Oil Spills & Emergency Response

During the reporting period, the Harbour team dealt with several minor oil and fuel pollution incidents, as detailed in Section 2.0. These incidents were generally low-volume and short-lived, most commonly arising from refuelling activities or incorrect disposal of waste oil. All were managed promptly through monitoring, or appropriate containment and disposal measures. No spill reached the threshold required for an activation of the Oil Spill Management Plan.

We are currently liaising with Dorset Fire and Rescue service to plan a larger multi-agency emergency exercise later this year. 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.

4.2 Harbour Maintenance

Refurbishment of the Westwey gatehouse has been completed, the structure has been repainted and a new roof fitted. Water supplies have been added to the Trinity Road pontoon, and old pilings have been removed from the Custom House Quay area. Quotes are being obtained for the replacement of these pilings, and we hope to complete this work later in the season.

An upgraded camera has been fitted to assist in monitoring the slipway, and new CCTV cameras have been fitted on the gatehouses at the North Quay and Westway marinas. These new cameras, which combine a fixed view of the gatehouse gangways and a PTZ camera into a single unit, provide us with coverage of the whole marina basin.

Annual vessel maintenance has been completed, with cleaning, anti-foul painting, and engine servicing all being conducted 'in house'.

4.3 Stone Pier Café area subsidence

In April, some minor subsidence was noticed immediately behind the harbour wall adjacent to the Stone Pier Café. The area was cordoned off, and engineers from the FCERM team visited the site to inspect the area from land and from the water. It was determined that the subsidence was caused by heavy rain flushing material from behind the wall, and that the wall itself is unaffected. Subsequently, the sunken area has been filled with Bentonite, a clay material that is used for its swelling, sealing, and stability properties, which help control water movement and prevent further ground loss. After further monitoring to assess the area as stable, the barriers have now been removed.



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 Cargo Stage

Works to resurface the Cargo Stage, the raised platform and quay wall that runs west to east from the old Fish Landing Quay to the Ferry Steps, are moving forward. Investigation works took place during April to better understand the overall condition of the area, and to ascertain if any voids were present in the structure, prior to heavy re-surfacing equipment being used.

The geotechnical survey confirmed that the Cargo Stage ground conditions are generally sound and capable of supporting resurfacing plant and equipment. No significant weaknesses or voids were identified, and the works can proceed with standard precautions, including localised repairs if any isolated soft spots are encountered.

We are working with the Highways team to arrange for the re-surfacing works to take place, and it is hoped that this will be completed, with new railings put in place along the roadside platform edge, ahead of the Artisan Market and Seafood Festival events later in the summer.

5.3 Stone Pier Railings

Inspections have identified sections of the Stone Pier railings requiring replacement and refurbishment due to corrosion from prolonged coastal exposure. The railings provide a critical safety barrier, with the risk of serious injury increased by exposed rocks at low tide; temporary fencing has been installed where deterioration presents an immediate hazard.

Work commenced on the 6th of May, with completion planned ahead of the peak summer season, however with changing weather conditions in this exposed part of the harbour it is difficult to fix an exact completion date. Work will take place on 50m sections at a time, and public access to the Stone Pier is not being restricted.

5.4 Sand Jetty

The architecture and engineering consultants Ramboll have been commissioned to assess the structure and condition of the Sand Jetty. Procurement has been completed, and it is planned for the survey work to take place around mid-June, dependent on tides and diver availability.

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.

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.

5.5 Weymouth Quay Fuel Pontoon

I am very happy to report that the fuel pontoon finally opened for service at the end of April. All Weymouth berth holders have been notified directly, and further communications through social media and the Dorset Council communications team are being progressed.

Further to a spill of fuel during commissioning of the fuel pontoon, as reported to this committee in December 2025, works 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 has been completed. Protocols, procedures, and risk assessments are in place, and staff training has been undertaken.



Statistics surrounding fuel sales will be provided at future meetings as meaningful data becomes available.

5.6 Waste Pump-out Facility

Work to install a waste pump-out facility is scheduled to commence shortly. The unit will be located on the fuel pontoon, enabling vessels to conveniently access both refuelling and waste disposal services within a single visit, improving overall harbour efficiency and user experience.

Due to current regulatory requirements, the system cannot be directly connected to the main sewer network. Instead, waste will be collected within a dedicated shoreside holding tank and subsequently removed for appropriate pre-treatment before entering the wider wastewater treatment process, ensuring full compliance with environmental legislation while maintaining high operational standards.

The delivery of this project has required extended consultation with regulators, along with additional design work to ensure the system is fully compliant, not only in terms of waste handling, but also with the specific requirements relating to electrical installations in proximity to fuel infrastructure. As a result, the facility will unfortunately not be operational in time for the summer season. However, this work has been essential to ensure a safe, compliant, and robust installation, and we are progressing the scheme as quickly as practicable.

The total cost of the installation is estimated at approximately £40,000 (£20,000 for pump systems, £11,000 for the shore-side tank, and £10,000 for fittings and installation). While this is higher than initially anticipated, the scheme represents a long-term investment in essential harbour infrastructure, and funding is already identified within the Asset Management plan. In addition, there will be an ongoing

operational cost associated with waste collection; however, this will be better quantified once usage patterns are established.

The provision of this facility delivers a number of important benefits. It will significantly support improved water quality within the harbour by enabling the safe and responsible disposal of vessel waste, reducing the risk of overboard discharge. It also enhances the range and quality of services available to both resident and visiting vessels, strengthening Weymouth Harbour's offer and overall value for money.

In doing so, the project directly supports the objectives of the Dorset Council Harbours Strategy, particularly in relation to environmental sustainability, maintaining and improving harbour infrastructure, and ensuring harbours remain attractive, well-managed, and fit for purpose for current and future users.

6.0 Commercial Port Berths & Notable Traffic

6.1 There has been no notable commercial vessel traffic, outside of usual operations, 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

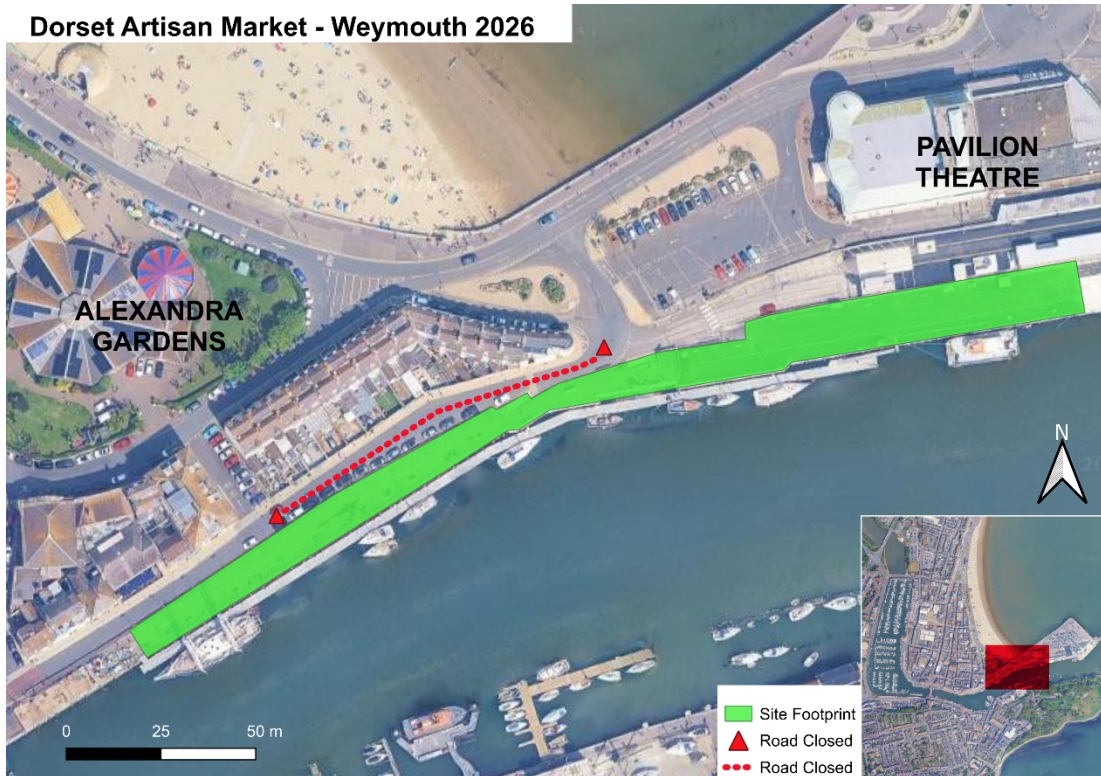
Alongside the usual annual harbour events, some further large events are also planned. Attracting events to the harbourside directly supports Dorset Council's Harbours Strategy, which identifies the development of leisure and tourism activity as essential to making Weymouth a "premium destination" and 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



Seafood Festival

The Dorset Seafood Festival returns to its harbourside home in Weymouth on the 4th – 5th of July. 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.

Seafood Festival - Weymouth 2026



iQFoil Championships – Portland & Weymouth

The 2026 iQFoil World Championships will be hosted by the Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy from the 4th – 12th of September, attracting around 250 of the world's top Olympic-class windsurfers to the area. The majority of racing during the week 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 the 12th of 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. Members of the public will be able to try out sailing, and watch displays of e-Foils and Pump Foils being demonstrated by experts. 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.

Event Calendar:

Month	Event	Date(s)
June	National Mixed Gig Championships Offshore RC Model Racing Lifeboat Week Dorset Artisan Market	6 th – 7 th 13 th – 14 th 6 th – 12 th 19 th
July	Seafood Festival 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