

Bridport (West Bay) Harbour Consultative Group (BHCG)
Meeting 28 April 2025 Haddon House Hotel 18:00

Present

Adrian Best	(AB)	Maritime policing team, marine tactical advisor
Cllr Jonathan Bourbon	(JB)	Town Council
Emma Bourne	(EB)	Non-boating water activities rep (HCG Chair)
David Boyland	(DB)	Non-Commercial Moorings Sub
Gavin Brooking	(GB)	Non-commercial moorings rep
Ed Carter	(EC)	Harbours Manager/ Weymouth Harbour Master
Roger Guppy	(RG)	West bay Sea Angling Club Rep
Jane Hallett	(JH)	Non-Boating Water Activities Sub
Sam Hanbury	(SH)	Harbour Traders
Ben Harvey	(BH)	Assistant Harbour Master
Cllr Rob Hughes	(RH)	Harbour Advisory Chair
James Radcliffe	(JR)	Harbour Master
Andrew Taylor	(AT)	Community Forum Rep (Ward rep)

1. Welcome & introductions		Action
EB - Welcomed everyone and round the room introductions were given.		
2. Apologies		
Jason Mathews – Gig club sub Debbs Urch – Gig club rep Simon Miles – Commercial passenger carrying vessels rep Becky McGowan - Harbour admin		
3. Minutes of the previous meeting		
No comments.		
4. Actions from previous meeting		
Action	Date of completion	
Terms of Reference update	Complete 28/4/2025	
4. Election of a Vice Chair		
No applications received for the Vice Chair post.		
AT - Puts himself forward for the role of vice chair.		
EM - Took the vote by a show of hands. A unanimous vote sees AT as the new HCG Vice Chair.		
5. Harbours Advisory Committee Chairs updates		Action
Two more members have been voted in to the Harbours Committee, Mark Roberts and Lee Hardy. Both have good understanding and knowledge between them. LH has good ports legal background.		EC – Seek advice from DC Data Protection Officer. Feedback requests prior to meetings
One long term mooring holder mentioned he hasn't had any contact from the HCG group and more communication is needed.		
Users should receive two letters minimum a year regarding the HCG meetings, this is done in pre and post season letters.		
EB – Suggested an option for users to opt in, for their information to be shared with representatives and substitutes for contact.		
JR – This has been investigated, however, due to GDPR it can't be done.		
EC - Will seek further advice to see if there are options to free up this information.		
DB – Suggested sending a feedback letter prior to meetings.		
EC – Agreed, this can be set up across all three Harbours.		
6. Marine Police update & Harbour Watch		
Crime in this area is generally very low.		
We had one incident at Lyme Regis by an organised crime group. A van was stopped carrying a stolen selva outboard which was to be used for migrant crossings. No stops were made at Bridport or Lyme Regis		

<p>EB – Encouraged everyone to report anything suspicious and requested information to be sent out to the wider user group.</p>	
7. Harbour Masters update	Action
<p>Jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timber piles have been replaced. - Chain moorings in west side of inner basin have been removed, fixed and replaced. - Vessel to remove the chains was initially delayed due to weather. Staff worked extremely hard to complete this work and to get them back in the water before the season started. - Pontoons are now back in after a slight delay due to the weather. The temperature must be right to paint the pontoons. <p>Dredging</p> <p>Before we can gain permission to trial Water Injection Dredging (WID), we need a habitat assessment, which has been completed, and we are currently awaiting the report.</p> <p>Water injection is almost half the cost of cutter suction which can save us £60/80,000 per year. It is hoped this will happen in May. We are liaising with Natural England (NE) and the MMO prior to any works taking place.</p> <p>RG - Silt on inner harbour, especially Jolly Dodger mooring. Depth issues are causing the vessel to stay on the pontoons and is being charged. When were we looking roughly to dredge?</p> <p>JR - The Inner harbour has not met the level of silting where dredging is required, and we can't take it down any lower as it has the potential to undermine harbour walls. Ideally looking at next winter for the east side, but this depends on the progress of works on Harbour Wall B. If we need to move boats from the west side to the east side this may delay this.</p> <p>West Bay is a drying harbour it always has been and always will be.</p> <p>EB – Said that communication could be improved, with earlier updates issued to mooring holders.</p> <p>JR – A letter was sent out in March with information on what we were hoping to achieve with dredging. Further information will be sent out after our discussions with NE.</p> <p>EC – While a marine licence is not required for WID, we are following all avenues of best practice before we can go ahead, liaising with MMO & NE.</p> <p>DB – Mentioned he had to wait outside for hour and half yesterday due to low tide.</p> <p>EC - A meeting is scheduled with FCERM on Wednesday to discuss progress.</p> <p>JR – Will consider requirement for Notice to Mariners.</p> <p>GB – Asked why we are so late for this?</p> <p>EC - Due to weather, surveys have been delayed by a month and half, and we are working as fast as we can to get this done.</p> <p>JR – The companies we are in discussion with to complete the WID are local so if this is agreed it won't take long to be put in place.</p> <p>EB – Suggested more communication around this.</p> <p>The Harbour Revision Order (HRO) is still in the queue for progression. Funding has been released by government to provide additional legal help to the MMO to help speed these up.</p> <p>EC – We have received no objections in 2 years; there has been around 200 comments received by the MMO. Bridport and Lyme are still a priority case and is hoped to be signed off this year.</p> <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff have recently attended a First Aid Course. - Attended training on Customer Care and Council Behaviours. - Health and Safety, Marine Investigation course, and Patrol and Enforcement seminar attended by senior port staff. 	

<p>JR reported Harbour Statistics.</p> <p>EB – Would like to see more info regarding income and maybe comparison of numbers, rather than just cost. For example, is an increase in income due to increased use, rather than just increased charges.</p> <p>JR gave update on Walls A & B, with the proviso that the given dates were only guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • w/c 27th May looking to alter scaffolding ready for works. • w/c 2nd June spray concrete on face of wall • w/c 9th June scaffolding back again • w/c 16th June geo baring will take place, drilling down and filling voids. • w/c 14th July scaffolding back to how it is now <p>During October, the building of a coffer dam will commence. Some mooring holders may have to move in September to allow space for this to happen.</p> <p>EB – There seems that a lot of work is being held up by licencing, can we be thinking further ahead in future?</p> <p>JR – The marine licence process is very slow, engineers are aware of this and have been applying month in advance.</p> <p>EC – This has been informally discussed with the head of the British Ports Association, harbours do need to see improvement in this process.</p> <p>EB - Can the HCG write to the MP regarding this?</p> <p>EC – Agreed and will work with EB to write letter, to include Lyme Regis and Weymouth also, however we should consider writing to the BPA/UKHMA instead as they are best placed to lobby government on behalf of harbours.</p>	<p>EC – EB - Letter from Consultative Groups to MP regarding delays around marine licencing.</p>
<p>8. User Representatives reports</p>	
<p>Gig Club</p> <p>Regatta date Sat 5th July with the reserve date as the following day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We would like to thank the Harbour Team for agreeing to help lay out and retrieving the racecourse and for agreeing to open the West Cliff promenade for the storage on the day of gig trailers. - We are having a post regatta party in the evening in The Salt House to which you and the Harbour Team are cordially invited. - We have been a bit disappointed in the past months in sometimes not being able to change crews on the inner pontoon as both sides had been taken up by boats which had been moored there for days and sometimes weeks. <p>Non-commercial Mooring Holders</p> <p>GB – Asked if the tender racks had been widened?</p> <p>JR - Yes, they have been moved and bolted back down.</p> <p>GB – Have the tender outhauls been sorted</p> <p>BH - The tender outhaul ropes have been fixed and only the amount needed have been put back in. Users will be contacted re new spaces.</p> <p>DB – Asked what the mooring occupancy is?</p> <p>JR - It has gone up and more people have been applying, and we are slowing filling moorings.</p> <p>SH – Suggested supporting the Band Stand will improve the area.</p> <p>AT – Asked if commercial fishing is improving or declining?</p> <p>JR - It is changing, we hold more of a senior fishing fleet however there is new youth coming in.</p> <p>EC – The fishing industry in the UK is experiencing a continued slow decline. With costs increasing and pressure from increased fishing regulations and shortages of labour.</p> <p>JR – The main drop is in tripping vessels, 10-12 years ago we used to have around 12 vessels operating, now we only have 2. Nothing material has changed in the way the harbour is managed to have caused this decline, and we would welcome the application of new operators.</p>	

<p>Community Forum The community forum met this week; they have been disbanded. AT is happy to continue representing residents as he is continuing to engage with West Bay Ward meetings.</p> <p>Non-Boating Water Activities Some of the swimmers have made a water action group. Testing the water has started today. Testing is at the end of the harbour entrance on the east side by the rocks on east beach. We will try and gain blue flag status. 17th May – A paddle out protest will be held on East beach.</p> <p>Commercial Passenger Carrying Vessels EB – Updated the group with SM report. Questions asked were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why were the 2025 dredging licences not in place sooner, this task happens annually and is not an unknown? • Are licences for 2026 in place yet? • When will they be in place? • When will West Bay Harbour be dredged this year? • Will the Inner Harbour be dredged (desperately needed)? • What measures are in place to ensure that West Bay harbour will be prepared and ready in time to Open for the 2026 season? <p>Most questions have already been discussed and answered in previous agenda items.</p> <p>JR – Work will not begin on 2026 plans until 2025 work is complete. West Bay harbour has never failed to be open on time for the start of the season, sometimes items like pontoons can experience delays, primarily due to bad weather. JR would like it recorded that the harbour staff work incredibly hard and diligently to complete all tasks in a timely manner, and due recognition should be given to their continued hard work and dedication to the harbour. Members agreed with and supported this statement.</p> <p>EB - Asked, can the vessel working on chains be on contract? JR - No, this will cost too much, and it doesn't work for smaller harbours.</p>	
<p>9. Representatives and Substitutes - Attendance</p>	<p>Action</p>
<p>Vacant position Harbour Traders Representative. JH – Suggested speaking with the owner of the sauna to see if he is interested.</p> <p>EC - The Terms of Reference states, 3.9 Where an organisation sends a representative to fewer than 50% of meetings in any year, the Consultation Group is entitled to review that organisation's membership of the Group and may ask the organisation for an explanation before taking further action. EB - How do we get members back in if members have been reviewed? EC - This is for the committee to discuss and see what they want to do. It would be best to contact these members to see if they plan to come back. EB - Will contact Commercial Fishermen's rep to see what their plan is with regards to coming to meetings.</p>	<p>EB - Contact Fishermen's Rep</p>
<p>10. Format of future agenda and minutes</p>	<p>Action</p>
<p>EB - Would like to propose the first agenda item be actions arising, to add and remove actions when set and complete.</p> <p>JR - We do keep a separate list of all actions for harbour use; we can incorporate this into the agenda and minutes.</p>	<p>Create high-level action tracker as requested and add to next Agenda.</p>
<p>11. Terms of Reference amendments</p>	

<p>EC - Some amendments have been made to the Terms of Reference. It has been seen and approved by DC Legal and Democratic Services. The group was emailed a draft copy of the updated Terms of Reference. Further to being circulated around all Consultative Groups, the updated ToR, with any comments from Consultative members, will be presented to the Harbours Advisory Committee for formal adoption.</p> <p>The updates to the ToR concern a method to allow meetings to take place for a limited time in the case of a chairman not being elected, and a section concerning the introduction of a general Code of Conduct for committee members.</p> <p>A Residents' representative will continue to sit on the WBHCG; AT will keep this role and feed between the Ward meetings and HCG so we can work together and share information.</p> <p>No comments received regarding any the amendments; all members agreed to adopt these changes.</p>	
12. Car parking	Action
<p>EB circulated some transaction data for West Bay car parks for the last 3 years. An attempt to gather weather data to add was made, JR thought car parks were adding this data to their reports. EB – to investigate this.</p> <p>Last year's report shows decreased usage. This may be due to weather, it was noted it had affected all 3 harbours.</p> <p>BH – Added, local private weather stations do record daily weather conditions, and this data may be available upon request.</p> <p>SH- Stated that applying for trader staff parking permits is long winded, as a letter is required for each individual application. It would be easier if there was a difference process.</p>	EB – Investigate weather data
13. Black hut	
<p>Some plans have been put together; however, this is at pre application stage, it is with planners currently waiting advice, a response may be received around June time. We will then go into full application.</p> <p>EB – It's a bit of a push to have a max of 2 people in the end. Could this be too small?</p> <p>JH – Asked who will manage it?</p> <p>JR – The harbour will manage the new commercial hut to help fund Harbour maintenance.</p> <p>AT – Added, this will be good to help serve the RNLI.</p> <p>EB – Asked if it will be open during the winter?</p> <p>JR – This will depend on the weather.</p>	
14. Signage	Action
<p>JR is trying to work with the Town Council. Signage is currently being sought for around the river. The harbour is always updating signage where necessary.</p> <p>EB - Dog signs are out of date and not clear. There are many people with their dogs going onto the beach when they are not meant to.</p> <p>EB and JR to meet and go through what is needed.</p> <p>AT – Advised to look at how much signage is not needed and clear these and to be mindful of cost.</p>	EB – JR – Meet to discuss signage
15. Dogs on the beach	
EB to meet with JR to discuss signs, as above.	
16. Bins	
<p>JR - We have removed more than 50 small bins, 14 new houses with more to be removed shortly.</p> <p>Our own hand made bin housings are due to be placed at The Mound car park, Fisherman's Green and the play park.</p> <p>Making them ourselves has saved the council a lot of money compared to buying them.</p>	

<p>The bin by East Beach has been fixed.</p> <p>Waste service now empties the bins daily.</p> <p>SH - Shame harbour traders can't use better packaging from the kiosk, no reason to use plastic etc for packaging.</p> <p>EC - Water quality testing should not just look at water pollution from a bacterial perspective but should include plastics and packages going into the sea, as well as other pollutants such as Endocrine disruptors and agricultural run-off.</p> <p>JR - We will be looking at sponsorship for the bin stores. We will make a sponsorship package available in future.</p> <p>GB - Suggested being careful with advertising, perhaps one style everyone can follow easily would be good.</p> <p>EB – Suggested branding to promote West Bay.</p> <p>GB - Make sure the signs won't get tatty.</p>	
17. Tourism material	
<p>EB - Only info from TIC was made by West Dorset District Council. Needs updating.</p> <p>EC - Dorset Coast Forum would be good to contact to help</p> <p>JR - "Visit Dorset" may be able to help with this.</p> <p>SH - Does this come under harbour or town council?</p> <p>EB - Comes under us all and work together to improve this.</p> <p>To be discussed further in future.</p>	
18. Crabbing	
<p>EB - Crab catching gear renting, should be encouraging traders to sell something that's biodegradable. Should there be a Crabbing Code? Could have signage with a QR code for further information?</p> <p>RG – Will talk to Tom in the Angling Centre</p> <p>EC - Spoke to Litter Free Dorset about some Crab Line recycling bins for West Bay.</p> <p>EB - Litter Free Dorset are in touch with me.</p> <p>EB to speak to Dorset Wildlife Trust</p>	<p>RG – Talk to Tom in the Angling Centre</p> <p>EB – Speak with Wildlife Trust</p>
19. Q&A's	
N/A	
20. AOB	
<p>RG – Kayak store of the west side of the harbour?</p> <p>JR - Currently located on east side, there is no space to locate them on the west side.</p> <p>BH - Due to weather and the open location the west side would also not be suitable for storage, also very little to no demand for this.</p> <p>JR - The harbour is now taking is out of date flares. Also the beach wheelchair store is nearly finished. It is located on the edge of the slipway area, using stone donated by the harbour.</p>	
21. Dates of future meetings	
<p>EB – Suggested booking all meeting dates for the following year at the end of each year.</p> <p>EC – We generally do not finalise the Harbours Advisory Committee dates until early in the year. We will present 'best guess' dates in the November meeting and look to fix the 2026 WBHCG dates at the first meeting in 2026.</p> <p>Next meeting date Monday 3rd November 1800 held at Haddon House</p>	