

# Minutes of the sixty first meeting of the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG) held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at 0930 at the Bembridge Harbour Office

**In attendance:** Malcolm Thorpe (MT - BHA - Chairman), Fiona Thorpe (FT - BHA), Mike Samuelson (MS - BHUG), Martin Groom (MG - BPC), Charlie Daish (BSC), Jim Robinson (JR - local boatyards), Nigel Van Nuffelen (NVN - BHYC), Andrew Phillips (St Helens PC - BH), Jack Miskin (JM - BHA)

## 1. Apologies and welcome

Apologies from Alan Doe, John Keyworth and Laurence Blackburn.

A new representative from St Helens Parish Council, Andrew Phillips was welcomed to the meeting (co-representative with Bella Hewitt).

## 2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and Matters Arising

The dates for the Bembridge Gig Fest are confirmed as 30<sup>th</sup> -31<sup>st</sup> May 2026

*Note: action point from the last meeting not reported on at this meeting:* MT had extended an invitation to John Smith (JMC Ag) to join BHAG, which he declined.

## 3. Harbour Report by Jack Miskin

### 1. Safety & PMSC Compliance

1.1 During the period from the last meeting to date, it can be reported that BHA continues to demonstrate compliance with the PMSC and its associated guidance.

### 2. Channel Navigation and Safety

2.1 The annual Trinity House inspection took place on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, all local aids to navigation were "found to be in good and efficient order".

### 3. Incidents

3.1 On 3<sup>rd</sup> of October an ex-trawler ran aground on St-Helen's Fort rocks. The RNLI launched and stood by. There was no involvement by BHA.

3.2 On 22<sup>nd</sup> of November the vessel Saso ran aground near 9A when attempting to enter the Harbour 4hrs after High Water. The RNLI launched to assist and the boat anchored. The crew were taken off by the RNLI and returned the following day to recover the boat, which is now at the Duver Marina (ref BHA Local Notice to Mariners 7/2025).

### 4. Rallies and Visitors

4.2 2026 online booking (April onwards) is now open, with bookings coming in.

4.3 Annual licence invitations have been issued with an early bird discount (payment before 31<sup>st</sup> January).

### 5. Improvement and Maintenance

5.1 The harbour and BBS teams are continuing to work through the winter maintenance schedule, in priority order, as identified from the internal audit conducted on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August.

### 6. Staffing

6.1 BHA and BBS staff took part in 1<sup>st</sup> aid refresher training on 19<sup>th</sup> of November.

6.2 Thomas (DHM) and Henry (SrBM) are completing oil spill training at Yarmouth Harbour on the day of the meeting,

**End of HM report**

### 3. Dredging

Discussions are continuing with three companies, one being Van Oord, who although being the preference are still significantly more expensive. All three employ water injection. Dredging is programmed at Bembridge Marina in April/May 2026.

### 4. Safer Harbour Partnership

A meeting of the SHP which took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> October was very positive and productive. A SHP logo should be finalised soon - the current version was shown at the meeting. The next step will be to write to local businesses operating within the Harbour (eg Tackt-Isle, Bembridge Powerboats) outlining the purpose of the Partnership and inviting them to join. **Action: FT**

### 5. Time Expired Pyrotechnics

Safe disposal of TEPs has been an issue for some time, as discussed by this group. In October, Cowes Harbour Commission launched a new TEP reception facility, with drop-offs at Shepards Marina (09:00 to 17:00 daily) and Kingston Boatyard (09:00-15:00 Monday to Friday). There is a charge of £6 per TEP.

### 6. Members' Reports

**Brading Haven Yacht Club (NVN)** - NVN has been re-elected at the Club's AGM recently and there were a few changes to the management committee. The Club's Boatman, Duncan Bates, has now retired, but is remaining as Chief Instructor for the time being. The position of Bosun will shortly be advertised in-house, and the role may include directing volunteers undertaking some tasks. Gig rowing is going very well, with an event planned for September 2026.

A fresh water pipe, upgraded by BHA has been installed and will be reviewed on site by JM and NVN early in the new year to ensure there is no risk of damage to boats (eg Scows) coming out on the western slipway. **Action: JM, NVN**

**Bembridge Sailing Club (CD)** - new Flag Officers are in place following the Club's AGM. Things have gone well this season in terms of getting people on the water, especially youngsters, with communication being a key safety feature. There's no plan to dredge the BODA pool, which is gradually filling in, as can be seen on low water Spring tides.

The Illusions have, as a result of an issue during racing on 12<sup>th</sup> October, introduced a new Sailing Instruction (to the Illusion Class SIs) which enables the Race Officer to include a boundary using the red buoys, marked by flags, effectively creating an obstruction to prevent boats going across the channel.

**Bembridge Angling Club** - no replacement representative has yet been nominated.

**Bembridge RNLI (JK)** - no representative present. It was however reported by MS that one of three RNLI Inshore Lifeboat Centres (Poole, East Cowes, Wales) which undertake servicing and repairs may close.

**Bembridge Harbour Users Group, BHUG (MS - Chair)** MS continues to disseminate information (such as the recent flood warning issued by the Harbour) to BHUG members. The official BHAG minutes are distributed by email to BHAG members and published at the same time on the Harbour website. MS also appends them to the notes of the appropriate BHUG meeting. BHUG has no current projects.

**Bembridge Parish Council (MG)** - pressure from BPC and others (including St Helens PC as below) had led to Southern Water (SW) postponing a planned closure of Embankment Road during December to the new year.

SW are submitting an application for a marine licence to undertake work on Silver Sands Beach - extending a concrete base by 10m and installing more pipework, with the aim of preventing flooding at Solent Landing. MG reported a sewage tank that is currently blocked, preventing any sewage outfall. SW are submitting a planning application for the installation of a main sewage treatment plant for the Island, based at Alverstone.

Bembridge Fire Station has not been operational as a fire station for the past 5 years. A decision on its future has been deferred to February due to public pressure and negative press around closure. The building is currently used by the BPC Resilience Group and it is hoped that it could be retained and used as a community hub.

**St Helens Parish Council (BH)** - St Helens PC had also put pressure on Southern Water in regard to the planned closure of Embankment Road in December and that any closure should avoid Easter and Bank Holiday weekends.

A Village Consultation, conducted in October 2025, was well supported by residents. Full report on Key Findings on the SHPC website - [St Helens Village Consultation 2025 FINAL.pdf](#)

Andrew Palmer (Duver Enterprises) attended a recent PC meeting and outlined the plan to remove the old railway carriages on St Helens Duver - the IoW Stream Railway, under new management, may take them to restore as much as possible. New, single storey units will replace them and a new sewage treatment plant is planned. Extended licences on beach huts could be available, with priority given to local residents, and some kept for short-term rental. Car parking will be by the caravans.

Ganders Restaurant on Upper St Helens Green is sadly now closed, with Ian and Kim retiring.

The Local Bobby for the area is aware of youngsters, often using e-bikes, congregating possibly for illegitimate reasons and is monitoring accordingly.

**Local Boatyards (JR)** - newer boats has led to less maintenance, but BM is very busy eg a number of tube changes and the installation of fuel tanks in 2 Scorpions RIBs. Some work has been picked up from A P Marine in East Cowes. Squibbs and Attrills have swapped yards.

## 7. Any other business

**Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC)** - as previously reported, the PMSC, first introduced in 2000, has been reviewed and updated, as published in April 2025. Its aim is "to enhance safety for everyone who works in, or uses, ports, harbours, marinas, and other marine facilities." The updated Code is more explicit in its inclusion of non-statutory facilities such as jetties, marinas, boatyards, yacht clubs and water sports centres. BHA will write to the clubs and marine businesses within the harbour, drawing their attention to the requirements of the Code. **Action: BHA**

PMSC: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67fd175bed87b81608546666/port-marine-safety-code.pdf>

**Abandoned boats** - an increasing problem nationally. MS reported that the RYA / The Green Blue have information on the disposal of abandoned "end of life" recreational craft on the RYA website, including details of several scrapping facilities around the country:

<https://www.rya.org.uk/members-legal-advice/buying-owning/end-of-life-boats/>

MS also reported that the RYA/Coastguard Safe Tracks programme for navigational information is closing. The service allowed the boating public to log their boat details, passage plan, next of kin etc

**Water quality:** MS had met 2 ladies from Swim the Wight (<https://swimthewight.org.uk>) who organised open water swimming daily from Yaverland. They test water quality with equipment provided by Southern Water (results typically within 12 hours). Currently based in a shed at Wildheart Animal Sanctuary (previously Sandown Zoo) but shortly moving to a 20' container. STW CIC are developing a proposal to create a new tidal sea pool (the Accessible Sea Pool Campaign). MS has passed their contact details on to FT.

**MOCRA:** the Nationals, run by the Royal Victoria YC and BSC, are planned for the week leading up to the Round the Island Race on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July (Nats 6-8 July or 7-9 July). The RVYC Vice-Commodore is the lead on berthing etc.

**Harbour Farm** - no update

**Houseboats** - no update

## 8. Next Meeting

The next meeting is provisionally scheduled for **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 09:30** at Bembridge Harbour Office. The meeting closed at 11:15.