

**Minutes of the fifty seventh meeting of the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG) held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 0930 at the Bembridge Harbour (new) Office**

**In attendance:** Malcolm Thorpe (MT - BHA - Chairman), Fiona Thorpe (FT - BHA), Jack Miskin (JM - BHA), Mike Samuelson (MS -BHUG), Martin Groom (MG - BPC), Robin Lobb (BHYC), Laurence Blackburn (BSC), Charles Hewitt (CH - St Helens PC). Alan Doe (AD - RNLI), Jim Robinson (JR - local boatyards), Nigel Van Nuffelen (NVN - BHYC).

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Dave Geddes (DG - BAC).

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 and Matters Arising**

No matters arising that are not included in Agenda items or covered in AOB.

**3. Harbour Report presented by Jack Miskin, Harbour Master**

**1. Safety & PMSC Compliance**

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

1.2 A PMSC external audit date has been set for the end of March.

**2. Channel Navigation and Safety**

2.1 We are in the process of installing a new port hand channel marker opposite Number 11. The new marker will be Number 10, with the current Number 10 becoming 8A.

**3. Incidents**

3.1 On Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> January a houseboat pontoon was reported as having broken free. It was recovered by harbour staff on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January - no damage was done.

**4. Rallies and Visitors**

4.1 So far this year we have 48 rallies booked in.

**5. Improvement and Maintenance**

5.1 Maintenance tasks are being completed in line with the Internal Audit findings in priority order.

5.2 Our reviewed and upgraded BHA Oil Spill Contingency Plan was approved and certified as Category 3(d) by the MCA on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**6. Staffing**

6.1 Over the next month or so we will be advertising for seasonal staff.

**End of HM report**

**4. Marina of the Year - British Yachting Awards**

We were delighted when the Harbour was nominated for this national award by the yachting press, together with marinas in Conwy, Northney, Falmouth, Largs and Shepards in Cowes - strong competition from many who are part of large marina groups. We are very proud of our Harbour team who worked really hard to encourage votes from harbour users and visitors, and the local clubs, businesses and community who were all hugely supportive - this combined effort resulted in the Harbour winning the Marina of the Year 2024 award! Great community involvement and our enormous thanks to everyone concerned.

## 5. Harbour Offices

We have now relocated into the new office/facilities building. This building was designed in 2013 and would be different if we were designing it now, but it is modern, efficient and a huge improvement for the staff, effective harbour management, and the facilities available to customers.

As reported at the previous meeting, WightFibre confirmed that they are unable to use the existing BT ducting from the road (in answer to a query - high tech cabling originally put into Hoverworks, now BBS, has been investigated previously and we are told is not suitable to use). CH recommended "Starlink" as an alternative provider offering a fixed monthly price, which uses a network of satellites. *(post-meeting note: BHA internet fibre connection is hardwired into the new offices)*

The Duver Café and Steve's Bar are due to reopen at Easter.

The first floor of the old offices has been rented out on an annual basis and the ground floor will be used by the harbour for storage at the current time.

## 6. Dredging

MT has a meeting shortly with VanOord regarding dredging at Bembridge Marina and potentially along the Duver. The timing is looking like May - dredging cannot take place before 1<sup>st</sup> April. Easter weekend - Friday 18<sup>th</sup> to Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April, and the Bank Holiday weekend from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May need to be taken into consideration.

The potential effectiveness of the dredging will be part of the discussion with VanOord.

Communication from the EA regarding the operation of the sluice gates remains minimal, but they did recently notify BHA of the gates opening during a period of heavy rain. MS stated that the Island River Partnership would continue to press for a long-term review of the sluice gates, whilst recognising that the avoidance of flooding is the priority of the EA.

BSC has confirmed that they will not be doing any dredging this year - LB reported that they will be monitoring depths etc in the BODA pool. BHYC are also not planning to do any dredging.

**Channel dredging:** JMC Ag are acquiring a long reach digger which will be utilised in dredging the western side of the Entrance Channel, which is in need of attention.

A small amount of dredging was done at Attrill's Point in 2023 by VanOord when creating a channel for outgoing sediment.

Bembridge PC has supported the planning application for the continuation of the use of the aggregate yard off Embankment Road sought by JMC Ag.

## 7. Harbour Events 2025

FT confirmed the dates of the Bembridge Harbour Family Fun Weekend as Friday 25<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July. BHYC and BSC have both confirmed their full support for the relevant FFW events, which is hugely appreciated. FT will get in touch with JK re the RNLI Lifeboat attending on the Saturday. AD confirmed he will be happy to run a Lifejacket Clinic (see also members' reports). **Action: FT**

**Bembridge Gig Fest** (run by BHA in conjunction with Yarmouth Gig Rowing Club) is on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June. BHYC have confirmed their on-the-water support for the event.

Huge congratulations to Brading Haven Gig Rowers, who were successful in a recent bid for a wooden gig being offered up by the Trustees of Swanage Sea Rowing Club, to a gig club in development who would benefit from it. BHYC now owns 2 traditional wooden coastal gigs.

## 8. Embankment Road footpath

The footpath as intended, going eastwards to Selwyn yard, is now completed and signed off by all relevant parties other than the RSPB. Bembridge PC are providing and will be managing dog poo bins, instruction on the locations of which is awaited from the County Council. These need to be in place before the footpath can be opened.

MT confirmed that the position of the Harbour from the outset has been in total support of a further footpath extension, in line with Bembridge PC.

MT reported that work has been carried out on the ex-silt lagoon off Embankment Road, to create a landing strip for Brent Geese. Tree work has been undertaken by Natural England. The area will be managed going forward by BHIC.

## 9. Members' Reports

**Brading Haven Yacht Club (RL)** - RL intends to stand down as Commodore and Nigel Van Nuffelen, currently Vice is due to become Commodore. An area at the rear of the BHYC car park is currently cordoned off due to trees representing a potential safety hazard as a result of recent high winds. MT is seeking advice from a tree surgeon. **Action: MT**

MT repeated his offer to give a talk to BHYC dinghy sailors and/or the Sailing Committee as he has done previously.

NVN confirmed that he will be standing in for RL's remaining tenure (September 2025) at which point he could be further elected as Commodore for the following 2 years. Nigel is looking forward to being on the advisory group.

**Bembridge Sailing Club (LB)** - The Club are in the process of rebuilding a shed for use as a base for the boatmen and for storage. This rebuild has been facilitated by members' donations as part of the Club's "futures fund".

The Illusion class is in full swing, with team racing over 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> February. August is looking extra busy this year as a result of the dates of Cowes Week moving from its regular slot. Cadet bookings for summer courses are already coming in.

**Bembridge Angling Club (DG)** – DG sent apologies, with an update: *I can advise that in between the strong winds, some members have been able to get out and some bass, whiting and some small cod have been caught, but mainly we are plagued by small conger eels. Also, the first of our annual boat lifts for maintenance took place last Saturday with the weather being on our side for a change.*

**Bembridge RNLI (AD)** - call outs: an extremely busy year, with a record total number of call outs for Bembridge in 2024 numbering 92 (53 ALB and 39 ILB).

AD is part of the data analysis department in Poole, who report the greatest number of call outs nationwide being as a result of suicide/self-harm risk. On the Island, Culver has the highest risk.

The Water Safety Team, led by AD, ran 16 lifejacket clinics during July and August 2024. Out of 340 jackets checked, 260 (87%) would work, with just under half having no faults at all (out of date firing caps can mean the jacket may not inflate instantaneously, but can still work). During the Clinics

there were 800 water safety conversations, and £700 in donations was raised for the RNLI. AD expressed his thanks to the Harbour Berthing Team for enabling the Duver Clinics.

A new RNLI information pack will be ready for distribution shortly. Appended to these Minutes: information/advice on Sailing Concussions published by the RYA, and information/advice on Hypothermia published by Cowes Harbour Commissioners, kindly provided by AD.

**Bembridge Harbour Users Group, BHUG (MS Caretaker Chair)** - MS reported that BHUG has 65 paid up members and he continues to keep them informed. John Smith's recent application for dredging was supported.

As requested at the previous meeting MS had circulated the BHUG minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 and will send through minutes from the AGM held on 30<sup>th</sup> August. FT queried item 6 of the 22<sup>nd</sup> October meeting - MS confirmed that it was an "Afternote" from J Gully, who was not present at the meeting and clarified that the item was not discussed at the meeting.

**Bembridge Parish Council (MG)** - Embankment Road footpath as discussed in para 8. Beach Cleans during 2024 collected approx 450 kilos of rubbish. The first clean this year is on Saturday (18.1.25) - all are welcome. MG will check the Bembridge Point path on Saturday and cut back if necessary.

**St Helens Parish Council (CH)** - the PC is in the process of pre-setting a budget and is looking at having a village consultation - ideas welcome.

The significant number of mud rescues recently from Nodes Point was discussed, and the need for signage. Ownership of the land includes the National Trust, Priory Bay and one other. Bembridge PC has installed signage between White Cliff Bay and the Crab and Lobster and would be happy to assist. MS will circulate a map of the footpath.

**Local Boatyards (JR)** - Bembridge Marine was busy up to November then quieter during Nov/Dec. They now have a new canteen and have opened up additional workshop space for fitting tubes. A new build boat has been ordered by a Seagrove Bay customer and another by Seaview YC. BML is attending a Boat Show in Basingstoke in April, taking 2 boats with the aim to grow the customer base.

Currently BML boats are coded to SASHMA and licenced by the IoW Council. If MCA coding becomes a requirement, it will have a knock-on effect on both design and cost, requiring for example jockey seats, tube inflation drop off checks etc.

The BML shed will need to be upgraded within the next 5 years - MT advised allowing plenty of time to obtain planning permission.

## 10. Any other business

**Rowing specific waist lifejackets:** AD reported that Spinlock in Cowes have developed a jacket/PFD designed for rowing (and similar), currently being trialled. *Post meeting note: A video of testing carried out in September 2024 with Brixham Gig Rowing Club, Torbay RNLI and Spinlock can be seen at: [www.spinlock.co.uk/en-GB/uk/articles/cornish-gig-rowing](http://www.spinlock.co.uk/en-GB/uk/articles/cornish-gig-rowing) FT*

**AIS/PLB** (Automatic Identification System / Personal Locator Beacon): AD reported that there is now a combined unit which can be fitted into lifejackets (AIS being suited to the Solent and PLB further afield).

**BBS planning application:** the application has been temporarily withdrawn at the request of the IoW planning dept, as they have now requested a Bat Survey which cannot take place until May.

**Expired Flare disposal:** it was reported that a disposal facility is due to open in Cowes. *Post the meeting, CHC confirmed that the options are currently being explored and the aim is to have an operation up and running in a few months time. When the details are finalised CHC will notify BHA and we will circulate the information to BHAG members. FT*

Ocean Safety in Southampton charges about £1.50 per flare but there is the issue of transport. Requirements for carrying flares is stipulated by the MCA. It was noted that the design of LED flares is improving.

**Bembridge Point car park:** there are no plans currently to reopen the car park. It was concluded that the installation of “no overnight parking” or similar signage is unlikely to be effective and the area would need to be managed/policed if reopened. Secondly, although campervans have used the area over a number of years with little problem until the past year, part of it is designated as a Village Green, upon which parking is not permitted. MG reported that Bembridge PC support no change.

A query was raised about the purpose of a “grid/dolly” situated near the Mill House. **Action: BHA**

**Harbour Sale:** MT requested that MS refrains from repeating his request for an update on this at every meeting - as and when there is anything to report on, it will be.

**Sea Buckthorn:** nothing heard from Mark Larter at Natural England. FT will send a further follow up. **Action: FT**

### **Next Meeting**

The meeting closed at 10:50. The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 09:30** at the Harbour Office.

## COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION Jan 2025

### Stay Safe This Winter: What is Hypothermia?

Despite the obvious charms of Cowes Harbour, the waters and weather conditions can be unpredictable, especially during the colder months. One of the most serious risks faced by individuals near or on the water in these conditions is hypothermia. By dressing appropriately, staying dry, and keeping an eye on the weather, you can reduce your risk. Always stay vigilant for symptoms and know how to respond should hypothermia occur.

### What is Hypothermia?

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it, causing the core body temperature to drop below the normal level of 35°C. The condition can develop quickly in cold, wet, or windy environments, putting anyone involved in outdoor activities - such as boating, swimming, or even walking along the coast - at risk.

### Risk Factors in Cowes Harbour

Cowes Harbour can be exposed to a variety of weather conditions, especially during autumn and winter. Cold temperatures, windy weather, and sea spray or rain can cause body heat to be lost rapidly. The harbour's location and tidal nature can also mean that sailors and others are often exposed to water temperatures lower than expected, even during relatively mild air temperatures. Other risk factors include:

**Water exposure:** Falling into cold water is one of the most dangerous causes of hypothermia.

**Wind chill:** Wind can accelerate heat loss from the body.

**Wet clothing:** Wet clothes, whether from rain or sea spray, draw heat away from the body.

**Fatigue and alcohol consumption:** Both can impair judgment and reduce the body's ability to regulate temperature.

### Symptoms of Hypothermia

**Shivering:** The body's natural response to try to generate heat.

**Confusion or disorientation:** As the brain starts to lose heat, thinking and decision-making become impaired.

**Slurred speech:** A sign of deteriorating motor function and coordination.

**Numbness or tingling:** Usually in the extremities, such as fingers, toes, or lips.

**Fatigue:** Feeling unusually tired or weak, which could lead to difficulty moving.

**Loss of coordination:** Difficulty in performing basic movements, such as holding onto a boat or paddling.

If hypothermia is suspected, immediate action should be taken, as the condition can quickly become life-threatening.

### Prevention Tips for Hypothermia if you're heading out on or near the water:

**Dress Appropriately:** Wear layered clothing, including waterproof, windproof, and insulating materials. Choose clothing that retains heat even when wet, such as wool or synthetic fibres. Avoid cotton, which loses insulating properties when damp.

**Wear a Life Jacket:** A life jacket can significantly reduce the risk of drowning if you fall into the water. Ensure it is well-fitted and designed for cold water conditions.

**Stay Dry:** Wet clothing can rapidly accelerate heat loss. Use waterproof clothing and equipment whenever possible, especially if you expect to be in or near the water.

**Check the Weather Forecast:** Before heading out on the water, check the weather and tide conditions. Wind and rain can drastically lower the air temperature, increasing the risk of hypothermia.

**Avoid Alcohol:** While alcohol may make you feel warm initially, it actually lowers the body's core temperature and impairs your judgment and reaction time, making it more difficult to take the necessary actions if something goes wrong.

**Have an Emergency Plan:** Always inform someone of your planned route and expected return time. Carry a mobile phone or VHF radio in a waterproof case, and make sure you know how to contact the Coastguard in case of an emergency.

### **What to Do if Hypothermia is Suspected**

**Get Out of the Cold:** The first step is to move the person to a warmer, dry area. If in the water, get them to a boat, land, or shelter immediately.

**Remove Wet Clothing:** Wet clothing should be removed as quickly as possible to stop further heat loss. Replace it with dry, warm clothing or blankets.

**Warm the Body Gradually:** Use warm (not hot) blankets or heating pads to warm the body, focusing on the torso, neck, and head. Avoid using direct heat such as hot water or heating pads on the skin, as it can cause damage to the tissues.

**Offer Warm, Non-Alcoholic Drinks:** If the person is conscious and alert, provide warm (not hot) drinks, such as tea or soup, to help raise their body temperature.

**Call for Help:** If symptoms of hypothermia are severe, or if the person is unconscious, confused, or unable to warm up, immediately call the Coastguard or emergency services.



**RYA - Sailing concussions Jan 2025**

The RYA recommends a policy of **Recognise and Remove** when dealing with someone who may be concussed



If you suspect that someone might have a concussion, they must be removed from the water and advised to get checked over by a medical professional.

**What is a concussion?**

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump or sudden impact to the head. This impact can cause the brain to move or twist unexpectedly, releasing chemicals that can damage your brain cells and function. Concussions are the most common but least serious type of brain injury, if treated correctly.

**Concussion symptoms**



The symptoms of a concussion can range from mild to severe, and in some cases emergency treatment may be necessary.

World Sailing has produced a [concussion recognition tool](#) to help you identify someone that might be concussed.

The most common symptoms of a concussion to look out for are:

- Confusion and disorientation
- Loss of balance and coordination
- Headache
- Disturbances in vision
- Dizziness and/or nausea
- Lying motionless



- Facial injury or trauma
- Difficulties with memory

### Common concussion misconceptions

#### You must be knocked out to have a concussion.

**FALSE.** The part of the brain responsible for consciousness represents around 10% of the entire brain's function. Therefore, other areas of the brain could be damaged without an individual being made unconscious.

#### Wearing a helmet prevents a concussion.

**FALSE.** The brain is not fixed to the inside of the skull, meaning it can move independently inside the head. Therefore, a helmet will not prevent a concussion. Wearing [sailing helmets](#) has many safety benefits regarding protection of the external parts of the head and should be encouraged in high performance and foiling boats.

#### Concussions cause degenerative brain diseases.

**TRUE & FALSE.** Research suggests that multiple concussions over several years are linked to neurodegeneration. However, most individuals who only experience one or two concussions in their lifetime will likely not experience neurodegeneration.

#### Brain scans detect concussions.

**FALSE.** Aside from the observable symptoms of a concussion, medical practitioners are unable to see any changes in the neural or vascular structure of the brain. A CT or MRI scan is not able to spot a concussion. However, they can be used to find more serious injuries like brain bleeds or excessive swelling.

#### Recognise and remove



It's important to recognise instances where a concussion occurs and to remove the potential risks associated with it.

Sailing related sports concussions may occur through bumps to the head from the boom, in a boat park during rigging, or simply by slipping and falling.

If an individual displays any symptoms of a concussion, your main priority must be bringing them back to shore. This will protect them from further harm, whilst reducing any potential risks to others.

Always try to notify someone else that you are responsible for a potentially concussed individual. For example, the race officer, an instructor or coach, centre manager or the coastguard.

If the individual displays any of the following RED FLAG symptoms, you must seek immediate medical advice:

- Severe Neck Pain/Tenderness
- Repetitive vomiting and/or seizures
- Double vision and/or severe headaches
- Increasingly combative or agitated
- Weakness, tingling or burning in limbs
- Losing consciousness

### Removing further risks



When experiencing a RED FLAG symptoms, always seek a medical assessment by calling 999. This should be conducted within 24 hours of a head injury.

To prevent further harm from a sports concussion, you should follow these principles:

- A potentially concussed individual should not sail ashore unaccompanied. If possible, take control of their boat and return them safely to shore.
- After a head injury, an individual should not operate any motorised vehicle.
- Do not let a potentially concussed person drink alcohol or highly caffeinated drinks.
- Keep the concussed individual warm and dry. They may want to get changed but it's important for them to remain under supervision for at least two hours post injury. After a medical assessment, a concussed individual should return home and rest, following a [pathway to recovery](#) before returning to the water.

Full recovery from a sports concussion and return to usual sailing activities, such as racing should take no less than 21 days.

To discover more about how to [look after yourself](#) on the water, visit the [RYA safety hub](#).