

## **Minutes of the fifty ninth meeting of the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG) held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 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), Laurence Blackburn (BSC), John Keyworth (JK - RNLI), Jim Robinson (JR - local boatyards), Nigel Van Nuffelen (NVN - BHYC), Jack Miskin (JM - BHA).

### **1. Apologies**

Murray Clark and Charles Hewitt have both stepped down from St Helens Parish Council. A new representative to BHAG has yet to be nominated.

### **2. Minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and Matters Arising**

An abandoned van in the car park full of rubbish reported at the last meeting was removed soon afterwards by Island Roads. The shed next to the War Memorial has now been disposed of.

LNTM 2 (navigation) has been updated and now includes an image (ref HM report 2.1).

There are no other matters arising that are not included in Agenda items or covered under AOB.

### **3. Harbour Report by Jack Miskin**

#### **1. Safety & PMSC Compliance**

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

1.2 The annual PMSC External Audit took place on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025, where BHA have got a full certificate of compliance with no non-conformities.

#### **2. Channel Navigation and Safety**

2.1 The introduction of an additional channel marker between Attrill's point and Bembridge Point has reduced the number of groundings in this area to zero so far, 1 grounding to date being reported which was well outside this area (see below).

#### **3. Incidents**

3.1 On 4<sup>th</sup> May, a yacht left the harbour 4 hours after tide and ran aground, the skipper had been advised by harbour staff that there was insufficient water.

3.2 To date in 2025, there have been significantly less incidents compared with the same time 2024.

#### **4. Rallies and Visitors**

4.1 The harbour is now entering the peak season with most weekends hosting several rallies as well as individual bookings.

#### **5. Improvement and Maintenance**

5.1 Maintenance is ongoing and is being completed as highlighted in the weekly and monthly checks.

#### **6. Staffing**

6.1 Seasonal recruitment has been good with 4 new members of seasonal staff, along with 3 returning from previous years, to assist the permanent team. Induction training took place in April and we now have a full team.

**End of HM report**

#### 4. Dredging

Since the last meeting, Van Oord have come back with a more competitive quote for dredging and there is also another company who are a potential. As stated previously, any dredging will now happen next Spring.

#### 5. Safer Harbour Partnership

The 2 Risk Assessments (Entrance Channel and Inner Harbour) have now been adopted by both clubs and a Harbour Safe Passage diagram updated and in use. A further SHP meeting will be scheduled as soon as practical: **Action: FT**

#### 6. Harbour events

The **Bembridge Gig Fest** had just been held (14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> June) with coastal rowing boats and crews from Langstone, Eastney, Newhaven and Portsmouth joining 2 Cornish Pilot Gigs from Yarmouth Gig Rowing Club and 2 from Brading Haven Gig Rowers (Bembridge). The event involved 70 rowers, and 10 Marshals from YGRC, with the new Harbour boat acting as committee vessel for Saturday's races and BHYC once again kindly providing on-the-water safety support on both days, which was very much appreciated. A stiff breeze created challenging rowing conditions, and there were some very close finishes. Live music and a BBQ featured on the Saturday evening. Some great images were captured by: [www.facebook.co/twilightwightphotography](http://www.facebook.co/twilightwightphotography)

**Rock the Boat** is on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June, and BHAG members and their partners would be very welcome as guests of the harbour (please let FT know for numbers).

**Bembridge Harbour Family Fun Weekend** is from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> July with BHYC hosting the Great Bembridge Paper Boat Race, BSC assisting with the Beach Activities, the 2 Commodores judging the Best Decorated Boat, and volunteers needed (please!) to help with Sunday's Crabbing Competition. The Bembridge Village Regatta (part of EWCC series) is on Saturday and will be included in the FFW Event Programme. RNLI Coastal Safety Team are attending and the RNLI Lifeboat will be present, operations allowing, likewise the Hampshire Marine Police Support Unit.

#### 7. Members' Reports

**Brading Haven Yacht Club (NVN)** - numbers of people sailing are currently down considerably, along with support boat volunteers (who need RYA PB2 or RNLI equivalent). It was suggested that some of the new, young RNLI crew members may be interested in helping. There are still boats in the Boat Park, but maintenance and spare parts are getting more and more expensive.

BHYC's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is on 21<sup>st</sup> June, the celebration of which will be incorporated into their Regatta Week at the end of August.

**Bembridge Sailing Club (LB)** - The Club is gearing up for summer. Keelboat racing has not been well supported up to now, but 8 boats attended Cowes Classics Week. Cadet Weeks begin on 21<sup>st</sup> July for 3 weeks in a row. The Scow Parade Round St Helens Fort is on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> August at 18:30. MS mentioned that the Swallow Nationals are on 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> July, with 13-14 boats involved. There will a Sail Past on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August (from 15:30) in celebration of BSC's Dinghy Club Centenary. The traditional BSC Regatta will take place over the 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> August, with the J70 Regatta taking place on 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> August.

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

**Bembridge RNLI (JK)** - mechanical issues (winch gearbox) are ongoing. Equipment and personnel are due on 1<sup>st</sup> July and preparation work on the winch on 22<sup>nd</sup>, with completion hoped for by the end of July and a return to normal service. The estimated cost is in the region of £150,000. 11 other Tamar lifeboats need similar works. Currently this is adding 20 minutes to the launch time.

There have been 41 shouts to date (a number not reached in 2024 until July). There had been less mud rescues. On 26.5.25 there was a Garmin SOS distress alert from 6nm SE St Catherines. Lights were reported from Ventnor. A large RIB had been swept onto the beach - the local Coastguard looked after its occupants and notified local police.

An Open Day is planned for 10<sup>th</sup> August. A new fundraising chairman will be being sought in 2026.

**Bembridge Harbour Users Group, BHUG (MS Caretaker Chair)** - MS raised water quality under AOB at the meeting on 25.3.25. A correction to the minutes is noted: the Clean Water Sport Alliance is not a World Sailing initiative. See also AOB below.

LB had, by chance, come across a gentleman from the EA on the Club pontoons, who informed him that he collects water samples every other month or so. He also collects from Fisherman's and Baywatch. LB will send through an email with EA information. **Action: LB**

**Bembridge Parish Council (MG)** - no elections had been necessary and all councillors were re-elected, with 2 positions remaining available. MG was elected as the new Chairman - congratulations Martin! Bembridge village is entered into the South East in Bloom competition. Support has come from Warners who have kindly donated many flowers.

Sea buckthorn: the footpath has been cleared and cutback – more action will be needed in the autumn.

**St Helens Parish Council** - Murray Clark had notified FT that he has left the Parish Council, and it is understood that Charles Hewitt has also stood down. A number of replacement candidates have been interviewed, but no-one appointed in sufficient time for this BHAG meeting. FT is in communication with the PC Clerk.

**Local Boatyards (JR)** - Bembridge Marine are currently one staff member down. 5 RIBs have been sold in the last 3-months and they have 2 stock boats which they'd like to sell. Squibbs now have a Reno boat lift and JR is working with them when motorboat repairs are needed.

#### **Items from the previous minutes:**

**New harbour workboat:** MT confirmed that the first refurbishment of the workboat, which has been renamed "Bulldog" has been completed.

**Harbour Farm project:** a nature walk is being planned in conjunction with the RSPB, with the creation of viewing points.

## **8. Any other business**

**Report into man-overboard:** MS reported that no additional recommendations have been made by the RYA, following publication of the Accident Investigation Report into a man-overboard incident off Cowes in 2022, involving a Sonar class keelboat, where there had been loss of life.

**Taittinger Feeder Race:** MT, with the Royal Solent Yacht Club, had proposed and promoted a feeder race from Bembridge to Yarmouth ahead of this year's Taittinger Regatta (4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> July). There was insufficient take-up this year, but it may be looked at again in 2026.

**Water quality:** MS highlighted Southern Water's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), which is *"a strategic document that sets out how the company will manage water resources to meet current and future demand. The plan is updated every five years and includes forecasts of water needs, proposed solutions, and strategies to ensure a resilient water supply for customers in the South East of England."* Following consultation and review during 2024, a Statement of Response was published in May 2025. Ref: [www.southernwater.co.uk/about-us/our-plans/water-resources-management-plan/](http://www.southernwater.co.uk/about-us/our-plans/water-resources-management-plan/)

**Entrance Channel safety:** JR reported congestion at times, with boats in the vicinity of the Over Tyne buoy while waiting to transit the Channel. Swimmers are also in the water off St Helens Beach, plus windsurfers are also in the area. MT reported that a foiling boat had been seen in the Channel, travelling at speed, which he understands comes out from BHYC. NVN had been unaware (video footage was available on the BHYC Facebook page, which was viewed following the meeting).

**Sea Angling Classic:** MS mentioned this event for info - Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> June from Port Solent Marina with Selsey Bill being the main fishing area. Timing is 07:30-16:00 - VHF channel 72 being used. 32 boats entered.

## 9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at 09:30** at Bembridge Harbour Office.