

Minutes of the fifty sixth meeting of the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG) held on Tuesday 22nd October 2024 at 0930 at the Bembridge Harbour Office (rescheduled from 15th October)

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 (St Helens PC).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jim Robinson (local boatyards), Murray Clark (St Helens PC), Alan Doe (RNLI), John Keyworth (JK - RNLI), Dave Geddes (DG - BAC).

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 13th August 2024 and Matters Arising

No matters arising that are not included in Agenda items.

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 The internal PMSC audit has been completed and staff are now working through the findings in priority order.

2. Channel Navigation and Safety

2.1 During the week commencing 16.9.24 harbour staff took advantage of the big spring tides to inspect all Channel markers and undertake maintenance where required.

2.2 The annual Trinity House inspection was completed on the 23.9.24 with no faults recorded.

3. Incidents

3.1 On 7.9.24 a vessel sank on the fisherman's pontoon following heavy rainfall. The owner had been notified by BHA of the boat sitting low in the water and the owner had attended the vessel. The self-draining deck bung was removed, but in error was then left out so that once the tide turned, the excess water under the deck meant the self-draining bung was below the waterline causing the vessel to sink. BHA worked with Bembridge Marine Ltd to refloat and pump the vessel (at BBS) which was then lifted by BMS for repair. Many thanks to BMS for their assistance.

4. Rallies and Visitors

4.1 Rally bookings are being taken for the 2025 season. *RL reported that BHYC had hosted rally members from Emsworth the previous week and who had already booked for next year. MT noted that rally boat numbers are increasing with rallies of 15/20 boats now going up to 30.*

4.3 The winter mooring offer, maintained at 2023/24 pricing, is proving to be popular. Some space for the 2025 season is currently available.

5. Improvement and Maintenance

5.1 Winter maintenance, in line with the Internal Audit, is ongoing and includes the GRP decking on the Bembridge Marina North Quay linkspan, as well as general maintenance.

5.2 Trinity House has given permission for the proposed new Channel marker (to be installed opposite buoy no 11) to go ahead. Its number and exact location to be confirmed - MT/JM will liaise with BHYC (Graham Sunderland) in this regard as the Club's current Protocol is for boats to cross the Channel at buoy 10 across to 9, and for fleets transiting the Channel a patrol vessel is stationed there. **Action: MT/JM (FT will cc GS)**

6. **Staffing**

6.1 Thomas White, BHA Deputy HM, completed a 3-day Harbour Master Course in October, run by IDG Maritime Ltd

End of HM report.

4. **Harbour Office update**

We had hoped to be operating from the new office/facilities building by now but should be very soon – final paperwork is being completed on fire regulations provision. WightFibre have just notified the Harbour of issues preventing them from providing service to the Duver due to existing BT infrastructure and ducting from Duver Road being very sub-standard. The Duver Café and Steve's Bar are now closed for the winter - reopening in the Spring.

MT confirmed there is no timeline on the demolition of the existing building.

5. **Safer Harbour Partnership**

FT will send out date options for a SHP meeting in the second half of November. Discussions continue with BHYC in regard to information being included as part of Sailing Instructions.

The 2 draft Risk Assessments circulated to all 3 clubs are still under consideration and it is hoped can be progressed at the next meeting. **Action: FT**

6. **Dredging**

Dredging at Bembridge Marina has been rescheduled for April 2025 (original date of September / October put back because of the intended move to the new building). MT is discussing possible dates with Van Oord (keeping clear of Easter and the May Bank Holiday)

Channel dredging by JMC Ag is continuing according to plan, with good progress on the eastern side of the Channel. The west side is more difficult due to access issues in accordance with the Dredging Protocol.

7. **Harbour Events 2025**

Dates for Harbour events next year:

Bembridge Gig Fest - Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th June

Rock the Boat - Saturday 28th June

Bembridge Harbour Family Fun Weekend - PROVISIONAL TBC - Friday 25th to Sunday 27th July.

LB (BSC) noted for a Village Regatta.

8. **Bembridge Village Green**

There are now 4 campervan associated vehicles remaining: an ex-coach which is going to the mainland sometime in the next 7 days, a transit van which will be removed at the same time, and

an Audi car and small transit with one owner being moved by BHA. Several campervans which had relocated to nearby the Harbour View have now gone. *Post meeting note: as of Thursday 24/10/2024, all campervans and vehicles have now departed from the site and all concrete boulders back in place.*

It was reported that some campervans have now moved onto IoW Council land near Bullys Hill in Brading.

No decision has been made on how to prevent future reoccurrence. MG (Bemb PC) expressed thanks to MT for the time and effort taken to deal with this whole issue (which FT observed has been excessive and lengthy). For info MG described height restriction measures at Steyne Road Car Park. MS also expressed his thanks.

9. Members' Reports

Brading Haven Yacht Club (RL) - The Club has recently held its AGM. Training is taking place over ½ term and the Youth Championships are from 2nd November. The Frostbite series is every other weekend and the Icebreaker series, involving other local clubs, runs from 5th January through to March also every other weekend.

All Club racing marks have been lifted (likewise BSC) and concrete weights "stored" on Silver Sands beach. The Trinity House inspection of buoys from both clubs was all ok. Some BHYC mooring buoy chains need maintenance as the marks having been out for 3 years.

Bembridge Sailing Club (LB) - The Club's Committee Weekend has just been held. It has been a good summer and efforts to better manage the house have worked (and benefitted from the timing of keelboat racing). On the water training and cadet activities has been very good and Illusions are now back on the water.

LB is in touch with Van Oord and has shared BODA pool data with them with a view to potentially dredging when VO are in the Harbour in the Spring. MT noted that this would involve inclusion in an MMO licence as the EA would like to see a protocol introduced for dredging the Inner Harbour.

Bembridge Angling Club (DG) - DG apologies sent. Update BAC 60th AGM on 22.10.24! There's been improved turnout for competitions but they have been adversely affected by strong winds. A new mooring holder recently lost an auxiliary outboard from the back of his boat, which was seemingly recovered from the mud by a visitor who then took it away with them. It was subsequently returned and was the subject of an insurance claim. As a result of this the mooring holder has left the harbour.

Bembridge RNLI (JK/AD) - apologies sent - no report.

Bembridge Harbour Users Group, BHUG (MS Caretaker Chair) - MS described BHUG's purpose as being to "pass on useful information and keep people aware of what's going on - acting as a mail box."

BHUG was set up in 2006 as a sub-committee of the Bembridge and St Helens Harbour Association (BASHHA) to deal with the Harbour Dues public enquiry. BASHHA has not met since before Covid and is not active, but has funds believed by MS to be around £6,000 that under the BASHHA Constitution can only be passed on to a charity. MS stated that no decision has been made on a beneficiary. MT considers that such funds should be allocated to BHUG.

FT asked if MS might circulate BHUG minutes as he has kindly done previously. The BHUG AGM was held on 30th August. **Action: MS**

Bembridge Parish Council (MG) - the footpath behind Embankment Road has now been cleared of brambles, led by Andrew Holman. MT noted how helpful the IoW Council's Rights of Way lead, Darren Clarke, had been throughout the process and both Darren Clarke and **MT** are hopeful of extending the footpath into Bembridge.

St Helens Parish Council (CH) - CH was not present at the last SHPC meeting so unable to report on it. Regarding flare disposal, he'd received a negative response from the IoW Council in relation to incineration at their plant. Research has established that a burn box can be used for a maximum explosive mass of 5kg, which equates to 50 paraflume flares (note: hand-held flares are smoke only and are not explosive).

Ocean Safety in Southampton accepts out of date flares for a small charge, but transport is an issue. Cowes Harbour Commission has held Time Expired Pyrotechnic Disposal Events, the last one being July 2024 at Shepards Marina, limited to Island residents, with a charge of £6 per unit.

Local Boatyards - JR had given his apologies.

10. Any other business

The British Yachting Awards: details had been emailed to all members and customers. Bembridge Harbour has been shortlisted in the Best Marina Category of these national awards, as has Shepards in Cowes. There has been a fantastic response from the clubs, local businesses and Harbour customers and the nomination is great for the Harbour and the local community. BHAG members are asked to help encourage more votes by spreading the word far and wide (and voting themselves!) - every vote counts!

South Marine Plan Implementation Training: an introduction to marine planning being run by the MMO on 12th November in Portsmouth, noted by MS. *Post meeting note: BHA's Deputy HM is attending.*

Houseboat update: one is in the process of being demolished and rebuilt. 2 were supplied and fitted with sewerage facilities by BHA free of charge some time ago. All new and incoming HB are compliant. Approx 4 remaining old HB are without treatment facilities. No new HBs are currently due.

For information from MS: the RYA is now requiring new ROs to complete an online safeguarding course, with responsibility being taken by a declared Lead Club Welfare Officer for the day. Also mentioned, additional insurance needed where clubs are loaning boats at sailing events.

MOCRA 2025 event: LB confirmed 13th/14th September under consideration.

Sea Buckthorn: (*post meeting note*) no further news from Mark Larter at Natural England. In the meantime the area is being cleared as necessary, as has been done previously.

Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 11:00. Dates in December and January were considered and it was agreed the next meeting will be on **Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 09:30** at the Harbour Office.