

Minutes of the fifty eighth meeting of the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG) held on Tuesday 25th March 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), Alan Doe (AD - RNLI), Thomas White (TW - DHM, BHA).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jim Robinson (JR - local boatyards), Jack Miskin (JM - BHA). No representative from BHYC or St Helens Parish Council.

2. Bembridge Angling Club representative

Dave Geddes, who has represented BAC since September 2022, has stepped down from both BHAG and the Safer Harbour Partnership due to personal commitments. Since taking over from Alan Deeming, Dave has been a valued member of both groups and his time, input and support has been greatly appreciated. Many thanks Dave. A replacement representative from BAC has not yet been confirmed.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2025 and Matters Arising

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

4. Harbour Report by Jack Miskin presented by Thomas White

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 PMSC external audit is due to take place on Friday 28th of March 2025.

2. Channel Navigation and Safety

2.1 Alterations to buoys have taken place in the harbour approach channel as per LNTM number 5 and its update. TW presented a google map showing the new buoy positions - 8A (where 10 was previously) paired with 11 (slightly staggered) with a long transit between. This does create a choke point between the 2 beaches, but there is still about 26m of width. There have been a number of groundings on that side and it is hoped that the new position of 10 will help to alleviate this.

Number 10 is settling down at low tides - on a big spring the block may be visible. The position can be adjusted if necessary. Agreed that an image would be useful - LNTM 2/2025 which concerns navigation is due to be updated and will include. **Action: TW**

3. Incidents

3.1 On 2nd March 2025 a member of the public fell off the South Quay wall (Bembridge Marina) - whilst there was no significant injury, hazard signage is to be installed.

4. Rallies and Visitors

4.1 The first rallies are due on 12th of April, with 3 rallies of around 30 boats, followed by a 25-boat rally on Easter weekend. The Rally Organiser letter includes the RNLI Water Safety Team Lifejacket Checks offer.

5. Improvement and Maintenance

5.1 Maintenance work has been carried out on the mid-harbour pontoon ahead of the season starting, including new GRP decking which is gradually replacing existing decking as and when needed.

5.2 New for the 2025 season, the introduction of tender mooring on the Duver pontoon at the cost of £100 from 1st April – 30th September. This is primarily aimed at mid-harbour mooring holders, but will also be available generally (monthly and daily).

5.3 The mid-harbour buoys are in the process of being put out and should all be in place by the weekend. MS noted that the Illusion Nationals are over the weekend (29th/30th).

6. Staffing

6.1 Seasonal recruitment has gone well, with 2 new staff for the berthing team and 3 returning, 1 new staff member for Berthing Office admin/Galley Locker, and 1 Facilities/Office cleaner.

Staff Induction training is due to take place 7th and 8th of March.

End of HM report

5. Harbour Offices

We are continuing to settle into the new office/facilities building and are looking forward to the summer staff team starting and customers making use of the new facilities. The Duver Café (this year with a replacement cabin) are working towards opening, along with Steve's Bar. The toilets in the "old" facilities building will remain open for the use of their customers.

6. Dredging

Bembridge Marina: Van Oord have tendered an unexpectedly high price, making it unviable (noted that other harbours have come to the same conclusion). MT is in discussion with an alternative group who will be providing a quote, but dredging will not now happen until next Spring.

Entrance Channel: John Smith has been making in-road further out towards buoy numbers 6 and 7 and has invested in additional plant, including a new long reach digger.

7. Safer Harbour Partnership

Good progress has now been made and the 2 draft Risk Assessments (Entrance Channel and Inner Harbour) are nearly at the point of being finalised, with a draft Harbour Safe Passage diagram also ready to be updated and finalised. A further SHP meeting will be scheduled: **Action: FT**

8. Members' Reports

Brading Haven Yacht Club (RL) - no representative present. MT update from previous minutes, work on the trees at the rear of BHYC carpark is due to take place (*post meeting note: work began on 31.3.25*)

Bembridge Sailing Club (LB) - There has been delayed completion of the new-build, which should be operational within the next week. Easter weekend will see keelboats, dinghies, BODs and Illusions all out racing. Racing marks are all being deployed over the next few weeks. MT suggested the Illusion racing programme might be slightly shortened to finish before harbour buoys are re-laid.

MS reported that MOCRA isn't racing with the Royal Victoria YC this year so will not be coming into Bembridge. The East Wight Combined Clubs (EWCC) schedule etc can now be found at: www.ewcc.online

Bembridge Angling Club - as reported, Dave Geddes is no longer BAC representative. BAC has not yet confirmed whether anyone is available to take his place on BHAG.

Bembridge RNLI (AD) - there have been 13 calls outs in 2025 to date (6 LB / 7 ILB), 11 of which were coastal / inshore, 2 offshore including one medivac from a cargo ship at anchor. 6 involved mental illness/suicide. Nodes Point continues to see issues with people getting into difficulty in the mud.

The RYA/MCA/RNLI have recently produced Water Safety Tier 2 resources, which AD will be able to share in due course. They take the form of Checklists which are pertinent to any water-based activities.

Bembridge Harbour Users Group, BHUG (MS Caretaker Chair) - MS reported that he continues to keep members aware, circulating Local Notices to Mariners and "picking up titbits here and there".

Bembridge Parish Council (MG) - at a Beach Clean the week before the meeting (Harbour View to the Lifeboat Station) approx 40kg of plastic etc had been collected. The next Clean, on 3rd April, is being sponsored by Classic Cottages.

Bembridge Village is entered in the SE Village in Boom competition, being judged during June/July.

There is an abandoned van in the car park full of rubbish (*since the meeting, notification has been received from Island Roads that they are due to remove the vehicle*). The shed next to the War Memorial could be disposed of. **Action: MT**

Noted that the Harbour View Café had had a bore hole dug in some concrete to check the ground conditions ahead of a potential future planning application.

Nothing further has been heard from Mark Larter regarding support via the National Trust for on-going clearance of Sea Buckthorn at Bembridge Point. Another clearance session is needed - a weekend is preferable for MG.

MG reported that he is standing for re-election in Council elections taking place in May, the outcome of which will determine whether or not he continues to be the BHAG representative.

St Helens Parish Council (CH) - no representative present.

Local Boatyards (JR) - JR sent apologies following the meeting. He sent the following comments for inclusion in the minutes:

Please note that we have decided to close the RIB hire part of our business.

Following the tragic accident a couple of seasons ago involving Sea Dogz in Southampton, the regulations are being reviewed. I recently attended a couple of Professional Charter Association meetings to discuss the new 265-page draft.

Although we are local authority licensed rather than MCA coded, this clearly provides guidance for all commercial operators. In the event of an incident, the MAIB would investigate, and the local authority would likely take guidance from their findings.

The new regulations are planned to be introduced mid-season, and the paperwork alone would take months to complete. While we could hire a company to handle this, Sea Dogz was prosecuted for using a generic risk assessment so probably not wise. Complying with the safety assessments would be more feasible if we employed RIB drivers. However, our boats are used by the public, with only a twenty-minute handover and tuition. Many users are novices and disregard warnings about alcohol consumption and other safety measures.

Therefore, like many other operators, Tom and I have decided that the risk to the company and staff is too significant to continue this service.

It's unfortunate, especially for our young staff members and the area, as this service generated income and tax.

9. Any other business

New workboat: MT confirmed that the Harbour now owns a 30' motorboat "Newark" which will be used for laying buoys, towing etc and will be available for crewed charter. It will be having some work done before it goes into service.

Items from the previous minutes

6. Embankment Road footpath: the footpath is open and the required bin has been installed.

Query re a "grid/dolly" situated near the Mill House - the dolly is for BAC boats to sit on at low water for maintenance and is on land belonging to a private individual.

Harbour Farm off Embankment Road: Andrew Holman has set up a Harbour Farm Community Group Company and is in communication with the Environment Agency regarding the use of one of the buildings (poss a barn) as a visitor centre / hide.

Water Quality: MS raised the water quality at local beaches as a potential for promotion. The EA publish bathing water information on a weekly basis, including for St Helens and Bembridge beaches and there are a number of action groups such as Swim the Wight, Surfers Against Sewage etc. Mention was made of World Sailing's Clean Water Sport Alliance, which the RYA support - post the meeting MS circulated further information to members - attached to these minutes.



Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 10:40. The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 17th June 2025 at 09:30** at the Harbour Office.

Information circulated by email by MS - 25.3.25

EA monthly samples at BSC:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/sampling-point/SO-Y0004444>

RYA FB - World Sailing Sustainability Session - Join the Clean Water Sport Alliance this week for the upcoming World Sailing Sustainability Session! Hear more about our work in protecting water quality in the UK this World Water Day - <http://rya.org/WzbA50Vj30v>   Wednesday 19 March. 09:00 - 10:00 UTC. To listen to the recording of the excellent presentation by Phil Horton (RYA Sustainability Manager) click on: <https://youtu.be/Wz3BnOjNylU>

EA - Bathing Water Information - to ascertain the EA assessment of your local 'Bathing Water' beach (i.e for East Wight - Seagrove, Ryde, St Helens, Bembridge, Whitecliff Bay, East Cowes) click on: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/> and type in the name of the beach

For example, for St Helens beach click on:

[https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/profile.html?search=Seaview%20\(Isle%20of%20Wight\)&site=ukj3400-18100](https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/profile.html?search=Seaview%20(Isle%20of%20Wight)&site=ukj3400-18100)

SPS - Yaverland Water Testing - <https://swimthewight.org.uk/>