

Minutes of the fifty forth meeting of the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group (BHAG) held on Wednesday 5th June 2024 at 0930 at the Bembridge Harbour Office

In attendance: Malcolm Thorpe (MT - BHA - Chairman), Fiona Thorpe (FT - BHA), Thomas White (TW - BHA), Mike Samuelson (MS -BHUG), Laurence Blackburn (LB - BSC), Martin Groom (MG - BPC), Robin Lobb (RL - BHYC), Dave Geddes (DG -BAC)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Jim Robinson (local boatyards), Murray Clark (St Helens PC), Charles Hewitt (St Helens PC), Alan Doe (RNLI), John Keyworth (RNLI).

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2024 and Matters Arising

All matters arising are the subject of Agenda items.

3. Harbour Master and Deputy Harbour Master appointments

BHAG members were notified on 11.5.24 of the appointments of Jack Miskin and Thomas White as Harbour Master and Deputy Harbour Master respectively, forming a young team who already have detailed knowledge and experience of the Harbour on which to build going forwards.

4. Harbour Report presented by Thomas White, Deputy 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 Harbour and BBS teams are continuing with maintenance in priority order.

2. Channel Navigation and Safety

2.1 All channel markers have been cleaned serviced and are back on station.

2.2 Two blue cans have been placed out in areas that need attention by the dredger (LNtM 8/24)

3. Incidents

3.1 We have recently experienced a couple of issues/incidents with sailing dinghies having allisions with boats, and one where a dinghy capsized in the channel in front of a commercial fishing boat which had to take evasive action.

3.2 Sailing dinghies and dayboats are reminded not to sail in the main channel and fairway and keep south of the red navigation buoys; the Harbour is now frequented by much larger motorboats and yachts than before, who have right of way due to restricted draft. Visibility can be limited where boats are rafted.

3.3 An undesirable recently arrived in the harbour despite refusal from the management. BHA involved the local police community officer who was very helpful in assisting BHA and staff and the individual departed.

4. Rallies and Visitors

4.1 Rally bookings are still being received for this season and now extending into the 2025 season. May was exceptionally busy and there are a number of rallies due during June.

4.2 Existing rallies have been contacted on behalf of Bembridge RNLI to inform them of private lifejacket clinics which have been gratefully received, and will be included in information sent to future bookings (*AOB from previous meeting*). AD reported a number of checks completed with quite a few issues highlighted.

- 4.3 We have several upcoming dates that are now fully booked, with an increased number of users we all need to stay vigilant.
- 4.5 FT read an email from the Royal Lymington YC following their recent rally, as an example of the thanks regularly received and the level of service provided by the Harbour staff team (*appended to these minutes*). RL reported that BHYC had hosted a RLYC rally dinner for 67 which was a great success and much enjoyed.

5. Improvement and Maintenance

- 5.1 Bravo pontoon at Bembridge Marina has now been re-decked, replacing the wooden decking with GRP. Alpha pontoon is next to be done.

6. Staffing

- 6.1 We now have the returning seasonals joining us for the summer.
- 6.2 The majority of the harbour staff have completed fire extinguisher training with Wight Fire on 14th May which also included a Fire Drill.
- 6.3 During the month of June we are looking to complete a training exercise that will see the mobilisation of tier 2 oil spill response equipment.

Harbour Master report ends

5. Dinghies sailing in the Fairway / Safer Harbour Partnership

As detailed in the HM report, there have been a number of instances of dinghies sailing in the fairway, resulting in several incidents and safety concerns. It is vital that dinghies stay to the south of the red navigation buoys. There were several incidents last year, including a dinghy tacking inside a Duver Marina berthing space, and the necessity for a rescue by Harbour staff of a boat sailing for pleasure, where there was potential for serious injury.

RL recalls similar issues 8 years ago when he was previously BHYC Commodore. MT reported that 5 years ago BHYC had agreed to include within Sailing Instructions the need to keep outside the red buoys – this does not currently feature in the SIs. Noted that although the mid-Harbour pontoons have narrowed the gap, visiting boats have a smaller window to transit the fairway than small sailing boats so are usually not moving when there's more limited water outside the red buoys.

Discussion was held on whether an additional navigation buoy would be useful between 10A and 12 which is quite a sharp corner.

FT has written to the Commodores of BSC and BHYC and both have confirmed support for the SHP. Two joint Risk Assessments created by the SHP have now been formally endorsed by BSC. Feedback from BHYC and BAC is awaited. The aim is for all 3 clubs, and the Harbour, to adopt the RAs (reviewed annually). The next SHP meeting will be scheduled once progress on this has been made.

LB/MS noted that BSC has produced guidelines for recovering a man overboard from a keelboat. The Club has also introduced a form for completion by Race Officers in stipulated weather conditions/water temperatures, with a coloured flag system indicating the suitability of conditions for sailing for various groups.

6. MOCRA

LB will be producing in the next week a list of fleet members requiring berthing including name /beam/LOA. MS reported 9 entries.

7. Expired Flare disposal

Charles Hewitt update by email: "I am waiting on the IOWC to return my calls re flare disposal and use of their incineration plant - I will let you know as soon as there is an update on that."

8. Harbour Office update

Carpets are being laid in a week's time, internals are continuing and anticipated date for occupation is now looking like the end of the month or soon after. The new events area is proving very popular and a marquee is going up ahead of the Bembridge Gig Fest on 8th/9th June.

As requested, BHAG members were notified when the Duver Café and Steve's Bar opened on 1st May.

Phase 2 of the development queried - no timescale as yet.

9. Bembridge Village Green

BHA and Bembridge Parish Council are agreed that the caravans should be moved off. One of the concrete blocks (weighing 2 tons) has been moved and a number of the caravans are back. MT and the PC are meeting on 6th June to consider the way forward.

10. Members' Reports

Brading Haven Yacht Club (RL) - rally catering is very successful. The Princess Royal has recently visited the Clubhouse to meet members of the National Coastguard Institution (NCI).

There are not as many people sailing as in the past, but boats are starting to launch for the season and moorings are being taken up. RL will confirm numbers (for Harbour Dues) when known. On 6th June, BHYC is hosting a Commemorative Ceremony to mark the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings. The lifeboat will be in attendance and the Ceremony will be followed by a wreath laying off the Fort.

Bembridge Sailing Club (LB) - a busy few months with the Illusions finishing a great season in April. Keelboats were busy over the Bank Holidays and 12 children participated in a prep-school event over ½ term. The Old Fort team are now providing catering for the summer which is boosting house and bar figures.

LB noted that the BODAs are going aground at low springs and if the Harbour is dredging in the Autumn they would like to also get some done - little and often seems to be the way forward.

LB reported a recent incident: a girl he was taking through her PB2 got a fishing line round her neck - it was low tide and they were travelling at 6 knots in the mid-channel near buoy 11. The girl wasn't hurt, but it could have been very nasty if they had been going at higher speed.

Bembridge Village Regatta plans: MS reported that he has made contact with Sarah Noyes who manages the VR fund which he thinks has about £600 in and could be used to purchase prizes.

Bembridge Angling Club (DG) - a quiet time of year, but all boats have been lifted out for maintenance. 2 competitions have been held, with numbers of plaice very low, and lots of bass around. Alan Deeming is now producing a newsletter.

Bembridge RNLI (MS) - there have been 13 big boat and 13 small boat call outs, including a person overboard at St Catherine's Point who managed to call the emergency services from their mobile phone whilst in the water. They were recovered after 2 ½ hours in the water and taken to hospital.

Recruitment is going well with 2 ladies currently in training for the lifeboat crew. Dawn Hodge is already a helmsperson for the inshore boat.

First known as the “Institute for Preservation of Life from Shipwreck” the 200 year celebrations of the RNLI have now largely happened, with good publicity nationally.

Bembridge Harbour Users Group, BHUG (MS Caretaker Chair) - the group continues to “monitor” and has been trying to support BHA in promoting a review of the operation of the sluice gates, which the EA does not consider to be a high priority.

Bembridge Parish Council (MG) - the PC AGM was held 2 weeks ago, with Liz White remaining as Chair and Council members unchanged. The number of mud rescues was worrying - warning signs to be located near the Crab and Lobster Pub have been ordered. D-Day Commemorations will be taking place.

MS has a copy of a Natural England Report on IoW pathways, including Priory Bay to St Helens Church and reported that NE prefers a coastal route to the current inland one (*report circulated post the meeting*).

St Helens Parish Council (CH) - no representative present. At the previous meeting a query was raised about ownership of land, near Nodes Point, where mud rescues involving the emergency services are increasing. CH had responded as below:

The PC is aware of the foot path around Nodes Point and it has been raised in the past (Mar 22, Jul 22, Sep 23 and Apr 24 was the last time). I believe this is NT land where the landslip took place and the council has a responsibility for the footpath, but Mr Palmer I believe still owns the beach and Priory Bay Hotel much of the woodland, in addition Natural England for the works as the very western end is within the Priory Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Rights of Way contact at IOWC has been informed and caution signs have been posted.

Local Boatyards (JR) - JR had given his apologies so no report.

11. Any other business

Dredging: MT confirmed dredging would continue on the eastern side of the Channel in the area of buoys 9 and 11. No decision has yet been made regarding an Autumn dredge, where the focus would be on Bembridge Marina.

Public footpath along old railway line: MT reported that the IoW Council are due to install some fencing along the footpath.

Illusion racing: MT noted that the Illusion racing season was starting earlier and finishing later (end of April). He has had a discussion with Bruce Huber in relation to the mid-Harbour buoys being brought in and when reinstated.

Bembridge Gig Fest - 8th/9th June: FT confirmed 9 boats from 6 clubs attending. The Programme, and a Course Map will be sent to BSC (MS is RO on Sunday 9th when gigs are doing timed racing round St Helens Fort). BHYC are providing on the water support on both days (2 safety RIBs).

Hovercraft visit: on Sunday 16th June at 18:00 a Hovercraft will be operating in the Entrance Channel and landing on Silver Sand Beach as part of a private event. A Local Notice to Mariners will be issued accordingly (LNtM 12/24 issued 14.6.24 cancelled 17.6.24).

Sea Buckthorn: MG has not yet actioned the Sea Buckthorn clearance but will be doing so. Mark Larter (NE) has been notified by FT. Regarding the scrub and dune habitat at Bembridge Point, ML confirmed on 12.4.24 that he has “started drafting a CES application, aiming to achieve a +/- 20% area reduction on its leading edge.”

Sale of Harbour businesses: MT had no comment.

12. Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 1100. The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 6th August 2024 at 14:00** at the Harbour Office.

Appendix 1 to BHAG Minutes of 5.6.24

Email from Royal Lyngton YC from their Rally Organiser

From:

Sent: Thursday, May 30, 2024 12:04 PM

To: Bembridge Harbour

Subject: R Lym Visit

Dear Jack

I would just like to record my personal thanks for the way your marina handled our time with you over the Bank Holiday Weekend and, indeed, your very helpful approach over the previous 4 months. I was particularly impressed listening to Tom on the radio responding in a most professional manner, to the boats arriving, seemingly at 10 second intervals, on the Friday. Thank you too for setting us up to use your BBQ area on the Saturday. As an aside, Henry endeared himself to me when he offered to carry all the gear I was struggling with going up to the BBQ. Fee and Jackie were a delight too.

Finally, although it will not be me organising it, I would be grateful if you could book the R Lym YC in again for the same weekend next year i.e. Friday 23rd to Monday 26th May 2025. Perhaps someone could confirm this booking.

Best Wishes
redacted