

**Meeting:** Harbour Committee

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**Wards affected:** All wards

**Report Title:** Harbour Masters Safety and Management Report

**When does the decision need to be implemented?**

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. To provide Members of the Harbour Committee with an update on the current safety and management considerations of the Harbour

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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- 2.1 As required by the Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code, Members of the Harbour Committee as duty holders are required to be aware of safety and management issues.

## 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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- 3.1 That Members of the Harbour committee note the contents of the Harbour Masters report.

## 4. Appendices

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- 4.1 None.

## 5. Background Documents

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- 5.1 None.

## Supporting Information

## 6. Safety.

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- 6.1 All safety inspections and general safety precautions have been conducted as per policy.

- 6.2 Two members of public recently reported falling on Haldon Pier. An ASSURE safety report was completed for each incident and investigations have taken place. Although the pier surface is uneven in a lot of areas the maintenance team are continuously making patch repairs to the surface. Signage is placed in prominent places warning of trip hazards.
- 6.3 The Harbour Master has met with the Lead Highway Inspector and it has been agreed that the SWISCo Highways Inspection Team will now be responsible for safety inspections on the public realm areas of the Harbour Estate to ensure a consistent approach. Harbours team will continue to inspect the maritime element of the ports and will make the required repairs within the harbour team or use external contractors for larger works.
- 6.3 A fisherman was injured in Brixham when a trawl door fell from the quayside and struck him knocking him over. He was later found to have non-life changing injuries. The HSE and Police attended the harbour to investigate. MAIB have requested footage from the corporate CCTV team for their investigation which was provided.
- 6.4 New vehicle barriers and ANPR cameras are being installed at all harbours. Torquay is completing the first installation with Brixham following closely behind. This will assist in the management of vehicles entering the sites for non-business matters. A continuous problem in all three harbours on a daily occurrence.
- 6.5 Whilst contracted divers were working on the bridge and cills. The inner cill gate automatically raised whilst the diver was working on the outer gate. A SHE and MarNis report was completed and the incident was forwarded to the HSE dive inspectorate by the Torbay Health and Safety manager prompting an investigation. Prior to an inspection the SOP was reviewed and amended to include a lock out procedure. The RA was also reviewed and amended. The recommendations put forward by the HSE were in place prior to the issue of their notice. The incident was then closed off.
- 6.6 In November a visiting yacht caught on fire and sunk while berthed at the Town pontoon in Brixham Harbour, the owner of the vessel sustained minor burns and was transferred to Derriford Hospital. The owner has subsequently been discharged from hospital. The vessel was swiftly recovered by a third-party contractor, and the incident is now being investigated by Fire Investigations UK.
- 6.7 In November a HGV driver sustained a head injury after falling from height, while unloading his trailer in Brixham Harbour. This incident was reported by a Harbour User. A SHE Assure incident has been raised.
- 6.8 Members of Harbour management undertook a 2 week NEBOSH health and safety course held at SWISCo to further enhance Health and Safety practices within the harbour.
- 6.9 Work is underway in enhancing and developing a new Health and Safety Marine Management System, incorporating the latest edition of the Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code.

## 7. Regulatory

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- 7.1 Following another round of recruitment and interviews no suitable replacement Harbour Master has been found. Nick Burns has stepped into the position of Interim Harbour Master to ensure compliance with the Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code. Two new Deputy Harbour Masters have been recruited. Ollie Parker-Ford joined the team in August. He has a wealth of experience being the Royal Marines landing craft training Officer. George O'Rourke joined us in the beginning of October. His previous role was First officer on passenger vessels with Carnival corporation. We welcome them both to the team. Andy Wakeham has retired as Harbour Foreman after 38 years working in Torquay. The recruitment for his replacement concluded with Grant Costin being appointed into the position of Torquay Harbour Foreman (Team Leader).
- 7.2 The Department for Transport (DfT) re-visited Torquay harbour during the cruise ship Spirit of Discovery's visit. They inspected the temporary restricted area and paperwork associated to the visit. The Port Security Plan has been amended to include Ollie and George as future Port Facility Security Officers and has been sent to DfT. Drills and exercises have been carried out in compliance with regulations.
- 7.3 The designated person for Tor Bay Harbour, James Hannon undertook a gap analysis of the Harbour Authority under the Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December, this was followed by designated person training for Harbour committee members that was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> December in Brixham Harbour. A report on the gap analysis undertaken is expected to be published in the new year.
- 7.4 A review of all leases and licenses relating to the Brixham Harbour Estate is being undertaken by the Councils development partner. This will establish a clarity around the current situation and also allow a strategy to be developed for future income and rent monitoring.
- 7.5 No statutory Harbour approvals or requests have been requested.

## 8. Engagement and Consultation

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- 8.1 The quarterly Brixham and Torquay/Paignton liaison forums were held in September. Additional effort has been made to encourage attendance, and any future key outcomes will be shared with the Committee.
- 8.2 The Harbour team, working in conjunction with the Councils Regeneration partner have met with all the Brixham tenants and operators over recent months to share with them outline proposals for the new development in Oxen Cove. The engagement was based on identifying the operators' key requirements in terms of additional space or facilities to ensure that the final designs for the new premises in Oxen Cove delivers the best possible outcome. The team are now working with the architects and project team to establish the best possible fit with these requirements.

- 8.3 Brixham Harbour hosted the Sardine Festival in August, despite the arrangements being somewhat last minute the team worked hard to accommodate the festival completely within the Harbour site. The festival was considered a great success and the organisers have expressed a desire to hold it on site again next year.
- 8.4 The Harbour Master has attended Water safety forums and Port Welfare Committee meetings. Ollie Parker Ford attended the SWRPA meeting in the HM's absence.

## 9. Asset and Plant

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- 9.1 The new patrol boat, Papa 4 is now complete and following its successful coding inspection and is fully complaint with the new Workboat 3 code. The purpose built floating jetty has been installed behind the ferry pontoon in Brixham and Papa 4 will be based there permanently to operate as required for patrolling and operations from Brixham.
- 9.2 The Torquay patrol boat, Oscar 4 has also passed the annual inspection for Workboat 3 code with no deficiencies.
- 9.3 The Brixham workboat, Signal II has had works completed to comply with the inspection and after some minor changes is now back to being coded on Small Commercial Vessel 2 coding.
- 9.4 The Torquay workboat, Fortune, is coded under the SCV code and was inspected in October passing with no issues.
- 9.5 The new Meter Macs System has been installed in Brixham and following a few minor technical issues now appears to be working. Havills and Wemco will be investigating some issues for the water delivery aspect of the equipment and we hope to see improvements in delivery and charging for the future. Despite social media posts to the contrary ALL customers who are subscribers to the Meter Mac system were made aware of the changes well in advance through email, posters and letters and no issues were reported. Some minor problems are still being reported and we are investigating solutions.
- 9.6 A full inspection by property services was undertaken in November of BTA's facilities after directors highlighted rising defects and untimely rectifications. Following a meeting in December, an action plan and costings for works required is being undertaken, with works scheduled to commence in March 2026.

## 10. Forthcoming Actions

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- 10.1 All three harbours are operating satisfactorily. General maintenance is being undertaken and where possible there is a continuous drive for clearing away rubbish especially in

Brixham. New waste facilities are in place there and a new charge will be set for the waste disposal subject to committee approval.

- 10.2 The clearing of abandoned vessels in the Harbours continues with another four arrest notices due to expire and vessels will then be removed from harbours. Two vessels sold by MDL Marina made the news following a breakdown of the towing vessel. Ports along the coast refused entry under the dangerous vessels act HM relied on the act to refuse entry back into Brixham as the vessel was reported to be in danger of sinking.
- 10.3 The Brixham outer harbour moorings maintenance contract has been awarded to Millenium Marine and the Brixham inner harbour mooring chains replacement will be carried out by Brixham Sea Farms. Both Local companies.
- 10.4 The "Versa Dock" pontoon for the Brixham breakwater has been delivered, assembled and towed to Brixham. Spring tidal conditions permitted the sinkers to be dug into the seabed and the pontoon is now fully installed and operational.
- 10.5 One new Harbour Assistant was appointed in June and a Harbour Assistant is currently being onboarded after the promotion of the Harbour Assistant to Foreman in Torquay. An additional Administrative Assistant has also been recruited on a temporary contract.
- 10.6 The security contract moved across to SWISCo in July, the team are bedding in well and regular harbour patrols has commenced. Landing notices are now issued to all vessels landing at Brixham.
- 10.7 SWISCo have begun installing 50 new public benches around the Harbour in Brixham as part of the port improvement works, all commemorative plaques will be replaced, and benches can be collected by sponsors if so required. Work to complete the installation of the Festoon lighting was abandoned during the summer holidays due to the risk and impracticalities of installation during the busy period.
- 10.8 Due to a lack of effective security arrangements over recent years there has been a lack of oversight and subsequent charging in terms of waste disposal on the quayside at Brixham. This has led to a custom and practice of waste of all types being abandoned unsafely on the quayside creating operational difficulties and ultimately being removed free of charge by the Harbour Assistants and as a result costing the Authority significant sums and preventing the team carrying out essential repair and maintenance work.

With the new security arrangements in place over the coming weeks the Harbour Master and Deputies will meet with commercial operators to discuss and advise of future arrangements. It is vital that Brixham Harbour continues to provide the required services for commercial operators such as waste disposal, but this cannot occur at cost to the Authority.

A waste management scheme will be discussed and introduced which gives masters of commercial vessels and owners the responsibility to identify waste generated by their working practices, where applicable under mooring charges it will be disposed of as part of the Mooring Charge, but any waste that falls outside of the Mooring Charge provision, such

as commercial waste including nets and cable will be charged as per the current schedule of charges.

- 10.9 The “Northern Arm” proposal remains live and further meetings on this subject are being held.
- 10.10 A new maintenance and repair contract is now in place for the Millenium Bridge and cill in Torquay Harbour. There are still issues with the hydraulic and electrical systems and the new contractor has been asked to provide a quote for a full refurbishment and replacement programme. Hydraulic failures have occurred recently, but repairs have been prompt from the new company. Following a recent inspection a damaged bush on the cill operation linkage has been identified. We carried out an investigation on 10<sup>th</sup> September spring tides. After the inspection a recommendation was produced to replace the damaged linkage. Estimates have been requested for the works and are in the region of £130,000. Failure to carry out the works could result in a catastrophic failure of the basin cill gate. Both gates are still functioning as normal but there is a higher risk of failure due to this linkage issue.

## 11. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	There is no differential impact.		
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	There is no differential impact.		
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by	There is no differential impact.		

	a physical or mental health condition or illness.			
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	There is no differential impact.		
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	There is no differential impact.		
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	There is no differential impact.		

Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	There is no differential impact.		
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	There is no differential impact.		
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	There is no differential impact.		
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	There is no differential impact.		
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay,	There is no differential impact.		

	5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.			
<b>Additional considerations</b>				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		There is no differential impact.		
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		There is no differential impact.		
Human Rights impacts		There is no differential impact.		
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	There is no differential impact.		

## 12. Cumulative Council Impact

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12.1. None.

## 13. Cumulative Community Impacts

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13.1. None.