

Meeting: Harbour Committee

Date: 21st September 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

- 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

- 2.1 As required by the Port Marine 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

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

4. Appendices

- 4.1 None.

5. Background Documents

- 5.1 None.

Supporting Information

The reporting period has covered one of the Harbour Authority's busiest operational periods of the year. Favourable weather resulted in significant levels of recreational and commercial activity across Tor Bay, while the Harbour Authority continued to manage marine safety, maintain harbour infrastructure, support partner organisations and progress a number of strategic projects. Despite

current staffing pressures, services have continued to be maintained across all three harbours, supported where possible by seasonal staff.

6. Safety.

- 6.1 All safety inspections and general safety precautions have continued to be undertaken in accordance with Harbour Authority policy. The summer period has been particularly busy across all three harbours, with favourable weather conditions resulting in high levels of recreational boating, water-based activity and visitor numbers throughout Tor Bay.
- 6.2 A total of 17 accidents and incidents were recorded within the Harbour Authority's MARNIS marine safety management system during the reporting period from 16 June 2026. The Harbour Authority continues to record, review and investigate incidents as appropriate, with lessons identified and actions taken where required.
- 6.3 During the reporting period there were two serious water-related incidents involving the recovery of persons from the water. These incidents demonstrate the importance of continued cooperation between the Harbour Authority, emergency services, commercial vessel operators and other organisations operating within Tor Bay.
- 6.4 Patrol vessel OSCAR IV assisted Devon and Cornwall Police with the recovery of two stolen personal watercraft. This provided further demonstration of the wider role undertaken by Harbour Authority vessels and staff in supporting partner agencies operating within Tor Bay.
- 6.5 The Harbour Authority has continued to support other Council services where operational assistance can be provided. This has included working with SWISCo to assist with the removal of litter left at Hope's Nose.
- 6.6 Meetings have been held with the RNLI Water Safety Team during the reporting period, further strengthening the working relationship between the two organisations and providing opportunities to coordinate water safety messaging and initiatives across the Bay.
- 6.7 Meetings have also been held in Brixham with representatives from Border Force and the Home Office during the reporting period. These meetings have further strengthened working relationships between the organisations, improving communication, information sharing and operational coordination within Brixham Harbour.

7. Regulatory

- 7.1 The Harbour Authority continues to operate in accordance with the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code and continues to review its operational procedures, risk controls and marine safety management arrangements.
- 7.2 The introduction of an out-of-hours labour charge during 2026 has enabled the Harbour Authority to recover the costs associated with staff attendance outside normal working hours. This is ensuring that the cost of providing additional operational services is

recovered from those requiring the service rather than being absorbed by the Harbour Authority.

- 7.3 Harbour Management attended the British Ports Association Summer Meeting, the Cruise Britain Summer Meeting, the South West Region Harbour Masters Association meeting and the Port Welfare Committee during the reporting period. Attendance at these regional and national forums provides an opportunity to share operational experience, understand emerging industry issues and maintain relationships with other ports and maritime organisations.
- 7.4 Tor Bay Harbour Authority will host the South West Port Welfare Committee in Torquay during October 2026. This will be the first occasion on which the Harbour Authority has hosted the Committee and provides an opportunity to showcase Tor Bay's harbour facilities and further strengthen regional relationships.
- 7.5 Members of the Harbour Management Team also visited Newlyn Harbour and Falmouth Harbour during the reporting period. The visits provided an opportunity to learn from the management and operation of other harbours and to identify practices and initiatives which may have relevance to Tor Bay.

8. Engagement and Consultation

- 8.1 Harbour Liaison Forums have been held during September for all three harbours. These forums remain an important mechanism for engaging directly with harbour users, tenants, commercial operators and other stakeholders and provide an opportunity for operational matters and future plans to be discussed.
- 8.2 The Harbour Authority's offshore winds sea safety campaign was delivered throughout the summer period. More than 10,000 safety leaflets were distributed to approximately 120 businesses across Tor Bay, helping to provide visitors and water users with safety information before entering the water.
- 8.3 Planning has commenced for the Bay of Lights programme and the 2027 Airshow. Harbour Authority officers are working alongside Council colleagues and partner organisations and are attending monthly programme board meetings to ensure marine operations, navigational safety and waterside requirements are considered throughout the planning process.
- 8.4 The Harbour Authority continues to work closely with the Council's regeneration partner, which is undertaking an operational asset and maintenance review across Torquay, Paignton and Brixham Harbours. Harbour officers are supporting the review by providing operational knowledge and information regarding the use, condition and maintenance requirements of harbour infrastructure.
- 8.5 The Oxen Cove development planning application has now been submitted. Consultation has been met with minimal concerns from local residents, with the principal issues relating to potential noise and odour impacts. Stakeholders have been reassured that external

operational activities will be restricted to between 0700 and 1900 hours, with operations outside of these hours being undertaken within the building.

9. Asset and Plant

- 9.1 The Torquay workboat, Fortune II, sustained bow damage whilst assisting a visiting passenger vessel during a docking operation in Torquay. Repairs were subsequently undertaken, including modification to the Bow of the vessel making it more suitable for the type of work it undertakes. The occurrence was recorded within the Harbour Authority's marine safety management system and further work will be undertaken to better understand and document the operational limits of plant equipment. Further training, a review of risk assessments and standing operational procedures covering the operation will also be conducted.
- 9.2 The Harbour Authority's contractor for the Torquay Bridge and Cill structure has commenced the replacement of hydraulic hoses as part of the scheduled maintenance programme. These works form part of routine planned maintenance. Further works have been identified by the contractor, and a work plan is currently being formulated.
- 9.3 The Bridge and Cill experienced a period of downtime of approximately 22 hours during August due to a faulty electrical relay switch. The issue was resolved swiftly by the Harbour Authority's electrical contractor.
- 9.4 Internet connectivity issues affecting the recently installed Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system have now been resolved. The Harbour Authority is working with the installers and expects the system to be fully commissioned shortly. Once operational, the system will assist with the effective management of vehicle access across the harbour estates.
- 9.5 The operational asset and maintenance review being undertaken with the Council's regeneration partner will also assist the Harbour Authority in developing a clearer understanding of future maintenance requirements, priorities and investment needs across all three harbour estates.
- 9.6 All outer harbour moorings at Brixham have been surveyed by MMC and certified for a further operational year. Surveys have also been completed on the anodes within the inner basin. The results identified that a number of anodes are now in poor condition and have subsequently been referred to the Council's Engineering Team for consideration within future maintenance programmes.
- 9.7 New access ladders and fendering have been installed at a number of locations within Brixham Harbour, replacing assets that had deteriorated and presented potential hazards to vessels, harbour users and the commercial fishing fleet.
- 9.8 Installation of a new Walcon tender pontoon is scheduled for mid-October following the successful award of Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) funding. The project is

expected to take approximately ten days to complete on site. The pontoon layout has been designed to provide a balanced allocation of space for both commercial and recreational harbour users within the inner harbour.

10. Forthcoming Actions

- 10.1 All three harbours have experienced a busy summer period, with favourable weather creating particularly high levels of water-based activity. Harbour staff and patrol vessels have maintained a visible operational presence throughout the period, responding to incidents, supporting harbour users and undertaking routine harbour management duties.
- 10.2 Funding through the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) has been approved for the provision of publicly accessible trauma kits across all three harbours. This investment will improve access to emergency first aid equipment for harbour users, commercial operators and members of the public.
- 10.3 A number of additional FaSS funding applications have been submitted by the Harbour Authority and are currently awaiting decisions. Members will be updated on the outcome of these applications when further information is received.
- 10.4 The Harbour Authority currently has three vacant posts, comprising two vacancies at Torquay Harbour and one at Brixham Harbour, all arising from resignations. Recruitment is underway for all three positions and there has been strong interest in the available posts.
- 10.5 The vacancies are creating short-term workforce and operational pressures, particularly during a period of continued high activity. Seasonal staff are being utilised wherever possible to provide additional resilience and support the permanent workforce while recruitment is completed. Operational requirements and staffing levels continue to be monitored closely by Harbour Management.
- 10.6 The recruitment of voluntary external advisors to assist the committee is progressing. This post will be advertised, and candidates shortlisted following the recruitment and appointment of current vacancies.
- 10.7 Planning will continue during the autumn and winter period for forthcoming events and operational requirements, alongside the ongoing programme of maintenance and asset review across all three harbours.