

Minutes of the Harbour Committee

21 September 2026

-: Present :-

Councillor Strang (Chair)

Councillors Bye, Carter (Vice-Chair), Fellows, Fox and Penny

47. Apologies

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group Leader, the membership of the Committee had been amended for this meeting by including Councillor Bye instead of Councillor Twelves.

48. Minutes

Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2026. It was noted that Councillor Carter had been omitted from the attendance list. Subject to this amendment, the Minutes were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair

The Minutes of the meeting of the Harbour Committee held on 20 March 2026 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to Councillor Carters inclusion on the attendance list.

49. Tor Bay Harbour Masters Safety and Management Report

The Deputy Harbour Masters presented the report as published.

Members received an update on operational matters across the Harbour Authority area and discussed ongoing safety and asset management issues.

Particular discussion took place regarding the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FAS) funding programme, which was providing Government funding support for eligible harbour infrastructure projects. Members were advised that funding could contribute up to 75% of project costs, subject to application and approval. The Committee noted that funding had already been secured for a walk-on pontoon and trauma kits, and that officers were actively progressing a number of further applications. Members heard that there was no limit on the number of applications that could be submitted, and that larger-scale projects, including works at the Northern Arm and Oxen Cove were being explored for partial funding through the scheme.

The Committee discussed the importance of maintaining harbour assets and noted the intention to move towards a more proactive approach to asset management

through ongoing condition assessment and forward planning of maintenance requirements.

Members were advised that where funding opportunities required urgent responses between scheduled meetings, any significant proposals would either be reported to a future meeting of the Committee or circulated by the Chair for Member comment as appropriate.

Resolved (unanimously);

that Members of the Harbour committee note the contents of the Harbour Masters report.

50. Tor Bay Harbour Budget Monitoring Report

The Divisional Director of Finance presented the report as published.

Members noted the current financial position and the forecast year-end overspend of approximately £14,000. It was explained that increased expenditure on repairs and maintenance was the principal reason for the forecast variance, although this had been partially offset by underspends in other budget areas, including staffing.

The Committee heard that fish toll income was currently forecast to exceed budget by approximately £100,000. Members discussed the factors affecting fishing income, including recent pressures on fish and shellfish stocks and the impact of the octopus bloom being experienced in local waters.

Members noted that additional use of reserves had been approved since the budget was originally set and that this was now reflected within the monitoring figures. Whilst the reserve balance was expected to reduce to below £1 million, officers advised that it would remain above the level considered appropriate to manage operational risks.

The Committee discussed opportunities to maximise income from slipway operations and considered the competitive position of Brixham Fish Market compared with other regional ports. Members noted the ongoing commercial strengths of Brixham as a fishing port whilst recognising the competitive pressures posed by neighbouring facilities.

The Chair requested that a detailed breakdown of recharged services income be distributed to assist Members understanding. Discussion also took place regarding the Harbour Authority's contribution to the Council's General Fund and the importance of ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of harbour operations.

Resolved (unanimously):

that the Harbour Committee note the projected revenue outturn position and estimated adjustments to the reserve for Tor Bay Harbour Authority for 2026/2027 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

51. Harbour Master Recruitment update

The Chair provided a verbal update on the recruitment of a Harbour Master following the imminent departure of the current Harbour Master.

Members expressed their appreciation to Mr Burns for his service and contribution to the Harbour Authority.

The Committee discussed the current arrangements within the Harbour Management Team and noted the positive work being undertaken by the Deputy Harbour Masters. Questions were raised regarding future management arrangements, and the possibility of continuing the current arrangements, with the two Deputies assuming the role in a dual capacity; however, Members were advised that the Port Marine Safety Code required the Harbour Authority to appoint a single designated Harbour Master.

The Committee recorded its thanks to the Deputy Harbour Masters and wider harbour staff for their continued professionalism and commitment during the transition period.

Chair