

Meeting: Harbour Committee

Date: 15th June 2026

Wards affected: All wards

Report Title: Harbour Masters Safety and Management Report

When does the decision need to be implemented?

Director Contact Details: Matt Reeks, Interim Director of Tor Bay Harbour Authority
matt.reeks@swisco.co.uk

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

6. Safety.

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

- 6.2 One reported incident occurred on Torquay harbour estate. A member of public was leaning over a barrier whilst walking along and hit his head on a sign set behind the railings. We are contesting any liability but as a safety measure the sign has been removed. A small yacht left Torquay and was seen to be in difficulties off Paignton Harbour. Patrol boat Oscar 4 attended and towed the vessel to safety. No safety equipment on board resulted in a formal warning being issued to the master of the vessel. We will continue to record all incidents.
- 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 at Brixham and Paignton following a trial in Torquay which proved very positive. All repairs are communicated to the Harbour Master and will be allocated to the maintenance team where appropriate. Larger repairs will be contracted to Swisco where possible or alternatively to the list of approved contractors.
- 6.4 New vehicle barriers and ANPR cameras are now installed at all three harbours. Brixham barrier suffered some minor teething problems but is now working effectively. This will assist in the management of vehicles entering the sites for non-business matters. A continuous problem in all harbours and previously a daily occurrence. The Torquay barrier was hit by a delivery vehicle which departed without reporting the incident. A police report was compiled and the police are taking action to recover the cost of the repairs. A similar incident occurred at Paignton but the driver's details were taken and claims will be made to his insurers.
- 6.5 Contractors are underway with the manufacture of the linkages for the cill gates. Once we have delivery of the items we will instruct divers to install the damaged linkage. We will schedule this to limit any disruptions to harbour users.

7. Regulatory

- 7.1 Nick Burns has continued in the position of Interim Harbour Master to ensure compliance with the Port and Marine Facilities Safety Code. The two new Deputy Harbour Masters Ollie Parker-Ford and George O'Rourke have been instrumental in our PMSC compliance document being signed off and our vision for the future of the harbour authority. All have been working closely with our Designated Person James Hannon.
- 7.2 George O'Rourke has been in communications with the Department for Transport (DfT) to re-establish the customs clearance for Brixham Harbour. This will offer clearance for the movement of ships stores through the port to offshore vessels. We will hopefully generate more requests for transfers of stores in the future generating an additional income stream.
- 7.3 PMFSC training and audit was completed, and all certificates have been issued.
- 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 George and Ollie attended a 5-day Spill Operations Commander Course in Bristol; this is the most comprehensive pollution qualification and allows to act incident managers in any pollution event.
- 7.6 The Torbay Harbour Statuary Oil Pollution Contingency Plan has completed the approval process and has been validated by the counter pollution and salvage Officer for the MCA for a further 5 years
- 7.5 No statutory Harbour approvals or requests have been requested.

8. Engagement and Consultation

- 8.1 The quarterly Brixham and Torquay/Paignton liaison forums were held in May. Additional effort has been made to encourage attendance again and any future key outcomes will be shared with the Committee. Questions were raised regarding the coloured lights at Paignton North Quay FTS will be requested to carry out improvement works once the barrier works have been completed.
- 8.2 The Harbour team, working in conjunction with the Councils Regeneration partner have continued meetings with the Brixham tenants and operators over recent months to share with them development plans in Oxen Cove. The team are now working with the architects and project team to establish the best possible fit with these requirements. In the meantime a traffic management plan has been implemented to reduce the risk whilst vehicles and plant are manoeuvring around the harbour estate. The plan will reduce or stop any lorries reversing out of the yard onto the highway minimising the risk to vehicles and pedestrians.
- 8.3 Brixham Harbour hosted the 2026 pirate festival and the event saw thousands of participants in costume across the harbour. Our maritime events schedule has increased year on year and 2026 has now reached 70 events scheduled throughout the year. The prime event being the Torbay Air Show. Concerns were raised with this event due to the impact on the seafront by the flood defence scheme. Tabletop exercise concentrated on the movement of people in the event of any incident during the displays. Mitigations were implemented during the exercise to minimise the risk to public. Clear walkways were constructed between the site area to allow public to move from the promenade into the green area in time for the event. Friday evening air displays went without incident but the fireworks display was halted as the fallout was in the proximity of spectators. With good weather the event saw a high attendance ashore and an estimated 400 vessels at anchor watching the displays on the Saturday. There were a few vessels entering the restricted area but the safety teams reacted promptly
- 8.4 The Harbour Master and deputies have attended Water safety forums and Port Welfare Committee meetings throughout the year and will continue support these organisations.

9. Asset and Plant

- 9.1 The new patrol boat, Papa 4 is working well and has been on the water at weekends patrolling the bay. Oscar 4 has also been involved in recovering broken down vessels and both vessels continue to be strong assets to the authority.
- 9.2 The Torquay patrol boat, Oscar 4 is due for annual inspection mid-June. Owner / operator inspections have shown no issues and the inspections are expected to be passed without any works required.
- 9.3 The Brixham workboat, Signal II has been lifted out of the water for some repairs to the decking and hatches. Works will commence in the next week to replace decking boards which have become softened due to wear and tear.
- 9.4 The Torquay workboat, Fortune, is coded under the SCV code and was inspected in October passing with no issues.

10. Forthcoming Actions

- 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 are in constant use moving high volume on a weekly basis.
- 10.2 The clearing of abandoned vessels in the Harbours continues with the removal of the MFV Accumulate. Gilpin's Demolition carried out the works and the vessel was dismantled and removed within three weeks. Two additional yachts were also removed from the harbour estate at the same time. Abandoned vessels are continuing to be an issue around the coast of the United Kingdom in most ports. We currently have two more vessels under arrest for non payment of dues. We will process them accordingly.
- 10.3 The Brixham outer harbour moorings maintenance contract has been underway and all the outer moorings have now been serviced by Millenium Marine Contractors. They are currently ahead of schedule and the remaining dive time will be used to assess the sacrificial anodes on the trawler basin sheet piling. Brixham inner harbour mooring chains replacement has been completed by Brixham Sea Farms and we are working to fill the vacant facilities. Both are local companies.
- 10.4 The "Versa Dock" pontoon for the Brixham breakwater continues to be used regularly following it's installation. Responses in the Liaison Forums were very positive for this facility.

- 10.5 One harbour assistant has resigned from the team and recruitment is underway for his replacement Adrian was with us for 8 years and we hope to recruit a replacement in the near future
- 10.6 The security contract moved across to SWISCo in July 2025, the team are working well and regular patrols and dock mastering has commenced. Landing notices are now issued to all vessels landing at Brixham. The team has three new members and are well into their training for the role
- 10.7 Work to complete the installation of the Festoon lighting was abandoned during the summer holidays due to operational reasons. We anticipate the replacement of the Paignton North Quay lighting soon.
- 10.8 The “Northern Arm” proposal remains live and further meetings on this subject are being held.

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	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	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.			
Additional considerations				
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

12.1. None.

13. Cumulative Community Impacts

13.1. None.