

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RIVER YEALM HARBOUR AUTHORITY  
HELD IN THE HARBOUR OFFICE AT 18.00 ON 16<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025**

**Members and Officers in attendance:**

Dominic Crawley - Chairman  
Nicky Tewson  
John Stansell - zoom  
Martyn Oates  
Tom Edie

Ian Kennedy  
Mark Steggles  
John Endicott  
Kevin Thomas

Jez Spring - Harbour Master

Debbie Rhead- Office Manager

**Apologies for Absence**

Peter Hinchliffe and Stephen Maltby sent their apologies.

*Prior to the start of formal agenda business, the Authority was joined by Sara Hills, Lucy Hulatt, Annie Brady and Catherine Woods who are members of the local group seeking to achieve Bathing Water Status on a designated area within the River Yealm. The group explained the main purposes for wanting to achieve this status and the progress that they have made. The group have received significant local support from a range of stakeholders, following their consultations, swim count and poster/email and broader communications efforts. Their application to DEFRA will be submitted by the end of October 2025.*

**Declarations of Interest**

None.

**78/25 MINUTES**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 were presented to the meeting. The minutes were then proposed by Martyn Oates to be a true record of what was discussed, seconded by Ian Kennedy and agreed by all other members present who had attended the July 2025 meeting.

**79/25 MATTERS ARISING**

None.

**80/25 CORRESPONDENCE**

A request was received for the Committee to reconsider its previous decision regarding the fore and aft mooring of a vessel on two outhauls. The Committee members were unanimous in their decision that this arrangement will not be permitted, as had been previously communicated.

The applicant, who wishes to join the mooring waiting list was encouraged to complete the Residency Questionnaire to accompany the Application Form to ensure the process is followed correctly. If the application is successful, the applicant will be added to the waitlist for allocation of a suitable mooring.

**81/25 FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **Income and Expenses for July and August**

In July and August we sent out invoices to the value of just over £48,500 net of VAT. Expenses totalled just over £21,000 and our overheads amounted to £5,700.

### **Comparison P & L YTD 2024 -v- 2025**

At the end of August our income was up by just over £12,000 on this time last year. Direct Expenses were up by £2,700. Overheads were down by £2,500 on the previous year, despite the rent increase.

### **Balance Sheet**

Current assets show debtors totalling just over £1,300.

### **Cashflow**

The opening balance for July was £322,896 with a closing balance of £332,045 at the end of August.

The Committee was informed that, effective 1st October, new bank charges will be introduced by Santander. After reviewing and comparing these charges with those of other banks, the Committee agreed to remain with Santander and absorb the associated costs.

It was also noted that a transition from Sage Accounting to Xero will take place in November. This change will involve some additional cost, as there will be a period of parallel running between the two systems. This overlap is necessary to ensure data is completely and safely transferred and organised in Xero ahead of the January invoicing cycle and the financial year-end audit process, in coordination with the accountants.

## **82/25 HARBOUR MASTER'S REPORT**

**Incidents:** Four incidents were formally recorded since the last Authority meeting, and included 2 collisions, one visiting yachtsman falling into the water and one abusive fisherman at the Yealm Steps pontoon.

**Visitor Numbers and KPC Licences:** Visitor numbers to date are 4,213. KPC Seasonal Licences – 724 and KPC Day tickets – 156. The August Bank Holiday was extremely busy but the poor weather since then has meant that overall visitor numbers are approximately 350 lower than this time last year.

**Infrastructure:** The 2 access ladders on each of the Visitor Pontoons have now been replaced with new ladders. Several large wooden pilings have been replaced at Bridgend and Popes Quay. The Cinder Path suffered a further significant landslip at the end of August and has been closed by Devon County Council as it is unsafe to use.

**Bridgend Lift-In and Lift -Out:** – This will take place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2025 and will be carried out by South-West Crane Hire with boat owners being invoiced by the Harbour Office.

**Regatta - Swimming at Pope's Quay:** N.B. This agenda item was considered out of agenda order at the start of the meeting to facilitate Tom Edie participating in the deliberations, before he needed to leave the meeting at 6.35pm. Several concerns have been raised both with the Harbour Master, and with certain members of the Authority regarding the increased risk to swimmers at Pope's Quay during the Regatta Heats, Finals, and Mini Regatta, when there is a high volume of boat traffic, including vessels under power.

The NNPC has supported the idea of prohibiting swimming from Pope's Quay during various Regatta events to reduce the risk of accidents.

With serious concerns having been raised, it was agreed a constructive programme of communication, risk assessments and risk mitigation strategies need to be followed through. It was agreed that a follow-up meeting should be arranged involving the Harbour Master, representatives from the Regatta Committee and the Parish Council. The chairman requested that the findings and follow-up actions from this requested meeting should be tabled at a meeting of the Authority before the end of March.,

### **83/25 TEAM APPRAISAL**

These are all underway for the year and will be completed before the next meeting where the budget will be agreed.

### **84/25 UPDATE FROM BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE**

Having circulated the relevant papers ahead of the meeting, the chairman, outlined the budget process and draft recommendations to the Committee. He summarised the work done by the sub-committee, including the provisional likely financial outcome for 2025 and the anticipated running costs and provision accruals for 2026. These inputs then generate draft proposals on probable price levels for the services provided to stakeholders in 2026. He requested that all Committee Members review the documents and provide any feedback, such as thoughts, ideas, or concerns before the end of September. This will allow sufficient time to consider any necessary adjustments before the next meeting, where it is expected the budget can be approved formally.

### **85/25 UPDATE ON PLANNED AKZO NOBEL REMEDIATION PROGRAMME**

The Harbour Master informed the Committee that the latest draft of MMO Licence for the proposed remediation work has now been received. The remediation will be overseen/coordinated by Geosyntec, as technical project managers for Akzo Nobel. The remediation contract will be carried out by Teignmouth Marine Services (TMS), the remediation programme contractors. The Harbour Master outlined the proposed plans to Committee Members, raising several concerns and identifying areas where further clarification is still required. He advised that while the proposed start date for excavation is currently set for 27th November, preparatory activities, including sampling, clearing, and site setup, will begin in advance of that date. The chairman explained that the MMO licence is a licence to conduct the remediation works, subject to extensive conditions. Akzo Nobel also requires a licence to access the site physically and this access licence will be provided by the Crown Estate, as freehold

owners of the river fundus. To ensure the Authority's position as lessee of the fundus and operators of the harbour is safeguarded, and to ensure the risks and potential liabilities arising from the works are carried by Akzo Nobel and its appointed representatives, the chairman was authorised to engage with a firm of solicitors with proven experience in the area of marine remediation

#### **86/25 CONGESTION AT YEALM STEPS AND THE BROOK**

Dinghy and kayak congestion at the various launching sites around the harbour, in particular the Yealm Steps and the Brook, is now of serious concern. With pressure on these areas expected to only get more severe with the Collaton Housing Development and other growing demands, the Chairman asked all Committee Members to consider possible options to mitigate and manage what is a difficult and inevitably an emotive issue for all the authority's stakeholders. Members are requested to email their suggestions to either the Chairman and Ian Kennedy within the next two weeks. These ideas will then be reviewed and collated, with the aim of identifying and implementing practical measures to help alleviate the problem.

#### **87/25 PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON**

Wembury – Nothing to report.

Newton and Noss – Mark Steggles noted that the Noss Voss has been identified as requiring maintenance in due course. He will keep the Authority updated on any developments regarding this matter.

Brixton – Nothing to report.

Yealmpton – Nothing to report.

#### **88/25 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

The Chairman acknowledged the significant amount of work Ian Kennedy has undertaken in developing the new Book of Reference, which is still in progress. He asked Ian to clarify what the final outcome will be once the work is complete. Ian explained that the result will be a single consolidated document, replacing the current collection of separate policies. It will include a clear set of rules for Harbour Users, while the Book of Reference itself will serve as an important reference document for the Authority, as members and parish council representatives change over time.

#### **89/25 MOORING APPLICATIONS AND PROPOSED MOORING ALLOCATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP REQUESTS**

In July & August there were five new applicants requesting to join the mooring waiting list.

2 mooring was allocated. – 1 x C Moorings.  
There were NO Partnership requests.

**90/25 AOB**

As previously discussed, and agreed by the authority The Chairman has requested that each Parish Council represented on the authority conduct its own representative re-appointment process before the end of March 2026.

Debbie Rhead confirmed that the donation to the River Yealm Regatta for the fireworks of £65 had been sent.

A thank you from The Authority to Shorestore for their years of service will be drafted and sent.

**91/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Harbour Authority will be on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2025 at 6pm at The Harbour Office.

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**Chairman**