

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RIVER YEALM HARBOUR AUTHORITY  
HELD IN THE HARBOUR OFFICE AT 16.00 ON 9<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2025**

**Members and Officers in attendance:**

Dominic Crawley - Chairman  
Nicky Tewson  
John Stansell – by zoom  
Kevin Thomas  
Martyn Oates

Ian Kennedy  
Mark Steggles  
John Endicott  
Peter Hinchliffe

Jez Spring - Harbour Master

Debbie Rhead- Office Manager

**Apologies for Absence**

Tom Edie and Stephen Maltby were unable to attend the meeting.

This meeting was convened as an additional session of the Harbour Authority specifically to discuss the increasing congestion issues that have progressively worsened over time. No formal agenda was issued for this meeting; however, notes outlining the meeting objectives were circulated to the Authority in advance.

**117/25 DINGHY CONGESTION**

The Chairman invited committee members to share their views and concerns so that all matters could be fully considered, discussed and addressed. It was emphasised that all perspectives should be taken into account to ensure a fair and balanced outcome.

**Yealm Steps Pontoon**

It was agreed that stricter enforcement of the existing Rules and Regulations is required, regardless of the meeting's final outcome. The relevant regulations are as follows:

- Maximum length: 11 ft 2 in
- Maximum beam: 4 ft 10 in (excluding fendering)
- Any unclaimed or un-bailed dinghies will be removed by the Harbour Master and his team

In addition, the existing Rules and Regulations will be revised to prescribe that metal dinghies may not be permitted to moor on the Yealm Steps pontoons and that mooring painters should be of a minimum 3 metre length.

Furthermore, compliance with the RYHA residency criteria for the riparian parishes will be required, with an exception for residents of the Old Coastguards properties.

Following further discussion, four options were proposed for reducing congestion on the pontoon:

1. Introduce a cap on the number of licences issued (suggested limit: 140).
2. Introduce a charge for all pontoon users (suggested fee: £100).
3. Implement both measures listed above.

4. Inform all stakeholders of the current situation and enforce all existing Rules and Regulations, including the residency requirement. Stakeholders would be advised that these measures are expected to help alleviate congestion, but if conditions do not improve during the 2026 season, charges and licence limits may be introduced. Suggestions of dinghy sharing where possible would also be requested.

A vote was taken, and Option 4 was unanimously approved, allowing stakeholders adequate time to adjust, (such as by switching to smaller vessels) and providing clear advance notice that future restrictions and charges may be imposed if necessary. Additional matters concerning Yealm Steps Pontoon were discussed, including whether inflatable dinghies should be allocated a designated area and whether a designated visitor area should be established. It was agreed that these are operational decisions that may be made by the HM during the season as appropriate. To avoid damage to the pontoons and other vessels, any aluminium dinghies will need to use either PM7 or PM8 at a cost of £45 per year. The HM will also encourage the occupants of Old Coastguards to leave their vessels at their properties when they are not resident, to reduce dinghy numbers on the pontoon. He will provide lifts if necessary to facilitate this, but will also, as is the case with all river users, promote the use of the Electric Ferry where possible.

#### **The Brook, Popes Quay and Bridgend Quay**

It was agreed that during the 2026 season, there will be a focused effort to monitor these areas for unlicensed, oversized or nuisance vessels. Any such vessels will be removed by the Harbour Master and his team to ensure only compliant craft remain. Concerns were raised about overcrowded launching sites becoming unusable at times. It was agreed that new chains and stern buoys will be installed to encourage tidier vessel storage. The Harbour Master and Authority members will also explore the feasibility of installing a groyne system at the slipways to keep launching access clear. Additional kayak racks were again discussed, and potential suitable locations will be reviewed.

#### **118/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Harbour Authority will be on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 6pm at The Harbour Office.

Minutes approved at a meeting of the Harbour Authority held on [20th January 2026]



Chair