

## **EXETER HARBOUR BOARD**

Date: Thursday 11 December 2025

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Rennes Room, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter

Members are invited to attend the above meeting.

If you have an enquiry regarding any items on this agenda, please contact Josie McDonald, Democratic Services Officer on 01392 265354.

*Membership -*

Williams, R (Chair), Cookson, Read, Rolstone, Snow and Sheridan

### **Agenda**

#### **1 Apologies**

To receive apologies for absence.

#### **2 Minutes**

To approve the minutes of the Exeter Harbour Board meeting held on 29 September 2025.

#### **3 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests that relate to business on the agenda and which have not already been included in the register of interests, before any discussion takes place on the item. Unless the interest is sensitive, you must also disclose the nature of the interest. In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, you must then leave the room and must not participate in any further discussion of the item. Councillors requiring clarification should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer prior to the day of the meeting.

#### **4 Local Government (Access to Information Act 1985) - Exclusion of Press and Public**

It is considered that the Board would be unlikely to exclude the press and public during consideration of the items on this agenda, but if it should wish do so, then the following resolution should be passed:

**RECOMMENDED** that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the particular item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs(s) of Part 1, of Schedule 12A of the Act”.

**5 Public Questions**

A period of up to 15 minutes is available to deal with questions relating to the business of the Harbour Board from the public.

Details of questions should be notified to Democratic Services via [democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@exeter.gov.uk) by 10.00am at least three working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting any questions must be submitted by 10.00am on Monday 8 December 2025.

**6 Chair's Announcements**

(Verbal Report)

To receive announcements from the Chair of the Exeter Harbour Board.

**7 Harbour Revision Order**

(Verbal Report)

To receive an update on the Harbour Revision Order (HRO).

**8 Port Marine Safety Code Management Objectives**

(Pages 5 - 8)

To receive an update on the Port Marine Safety Code Management Objectives.

**9 Harbour Master's Report**

(Pages 9 - 14)

To receive a quarterly report from the Harbour Master

**10 Exeter Port Users Group Update**

(Verbal Report)

To receive a verbal update from the Secretary of the Exeter Port Users Group (EPUG).

**11 Trews Weir Update Presentation**

(Verbal Report)

To receive a presentation to update Members of the Exeter Harbour Board on the progress at Trews Weir.

**12 Statutory Harbour Authority Statement of Accounts**

(Pages 15 - 16)

For information only.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next scheduled meeting of the Exeter Harbour Board will be held on **Thursday 5 March 2026** at 5.30 pm in the Civic Centre.

**Individual reports on this agenda can be produced in large print on request to Democratic Services (Committees) on 01392 265107.**

This page is intentionally left blank

## Management Objectives

Management Objectives for the Marine Safety Plan have split its into two sets, the first addresses ‘Standing Objectives’ the second set addresses ‘Period Objectives’. This plan is owned by Exeter City Council on behalf of the Duty Holder and aims to address high level targets which will benefit all port and harbour locations and fulfils the requirement of the PMSC for the Duty Holder to maintain a Marine Safety Plan.

### Standing Objectives

	Number	Provision	Objective	Target	Evidence
	1	Duty Holder	Duty Holders to have received training on their role and responsibility under the Code in the last three years.	To appoint ECC Executive Committee as DH	Action complete. ECC Executive are now appointed as Duty Holder, most members have received training, new member will receive training in December 2025
	2	Designated Person	To have undertaken an operational tour of Exeter waterways in the last three years.	DP selected and appointed in March 2025	Mr James Hannon from ABPmer visited in late March, met the Duty Holders and Harbour Board members on the 29 <sup>th</sup> of September to brief on the changes to the Port Marine Safety Code and the Guide to Good Practice.
	3	Legislation	Report by the Designated Person to the Duty Holder at least once per year.	Not yet, but will be an annual review	DP will visit in January to start the audit in line with the PMSC compliance exercise.
	4	Duties and Powers	MAIB Reportable Incidents: make all reports to the MAIB within 24 hrs, with investigation followed up.	24 hrs initial report, investigation at incident close	Maritime activity report
			Incidents recorded and investigated (if necessary) within the agreed timeframe.	Initial action 7 days, investigation closed in 30 days	Maritime activity report
	5	Risk Assessment	All Marine Risk Assessments to be in date.	100% complete	Strata Service Solutions Ltd have agreed to support MARNIS and we are waiting for a procurement lead to deliver the project.

	Number	Provision	Objective	Target	Evidence
	6	Marine Safety Management System	All Policies reviewed on a three-yearly basis.	To have plan produced and available to all stakeholders within 6 months.	Not yet completed. See below.
			The Marine Safety Management System will be reviewed annually (or following any significant incident, industry or legislative changes).	To distribute widely, to keep numbered and dated reviews. To liaise with other stakeholders on the waterways about their own responsibility to the PMSC	To keep as an agenda item at the Port User group meetings. A Haz ID workshop will be held with the DP as lead in early spring of 2026
	7	Review & Audit	Internal Audit	Staff reviews annually. Document checks annually	Audit complete, matters raised have been addressed
	8	Competence	Ensure staff with marine safety responsibilities are trained to undertake their duties.	100% of Essential & 80% of Desirable completed	Maritime activity report
	9	Plan	Publish a three yearly Marine Safety Plan	Plan prepared, enclosed	Internal Audit
	10	Conservancy Duty	Aids to Navigation: Three-year performance meets or exceed IALA performance threshold	To carry out annual liaison and inspection with Trinity House	Constant monitoring of navigation channels. Survey information shared with Port User Group and Topsham River Commissioners
			Hydrographic surveys in date	Survey of the approaches completed March 2025, next survey of the approaches to be completed in April 2026	

## Gap Analysis update

	Number	Provision	Objective	Target	Evidence
	13	PMSC	Liaise with marinas, facilities and boatyards within port limits confirming work towards compliance	March 2026	Done, emails sent by HM to boatyards signposting towards PMSC training and compliance with the code
	15	Harbour assets confirmed with MCA	Assets declared on the list held by the MCA in case of Civil Contingencies Act 1984	2025	Done, list of assets compiled and sent by HM to the MCA
	6	Update Admiralty chart no2290	Port limits to be shown on Admiralty chart no2290	2025	Done, liaised with UKHO, now illustrated on the current chart no 2290 Task complete

## Period Objectives

	Number	Provision	Objective	Target	Responsible Officer
	1	Duties and Powers	General Directions	Introduce General Directions and repeal current Bye-Laws – With lawyers Ashford's currently.	Harbour Master This work is still on-going, awaiting HRO
	2	Duty Holder	Marine Facilities	Identify Marine Facilities within the port area and seek compliance with the PMSC	Harbour Master liaising with providers of Marine Facilities within the port to deliver awareness training on the PMSC
	3	Competence	Training	Issue Training Matrix and ensure all staff have appropriate training as required to undertake their duties	Funding for training courses identified
	4	Marine Safety Management System	Management of Navigation	Carry out a formal Risk Assessment of navigable waters	Harbour Master Ongoing work, awaiting HAZID workshop to complete
	5	Conservancy Duty	Aids to Navigation	Review of all AtoN's in the port	Graham Manchester  This is ongoing work, annual servicing of all Aids to Navigation has just started now that the moorings season has ended, hoping to have 60% of all nav aids serviced by spring of 2026
	6	Marine Safety Management System	Liaison and consultation with stakeholder	Improve lines of communication in place with Port User Groups. Regular meetings with the Commodores from sailing clubs around the river to ensure collaborative approach to managing the different racing areas	Harbour Master  Done, regular meetings in place and open lines of communication with all user groups and clubs maintained



## Maritime activity report

This quarter of the season up to December has been relatively quiet in terms of the weather; we have had some strong winds and rough water in the river at times but thankfully not nearly as bad as this time last year. Even so, there have still been some instances of note, at the beginning of the month we were notified of a yacht that was drifting up the river in a still wind. Thankfully we were able to get to it in time before it beached on the shore or mudflats. We towed the boat back down to the Bight and put it on an EPA visitor mooring but after enquiries were made with the mooring associations it appears that the yacht is not registered with any of the associations and despite our best efforts, the owner cannot be identified. This means we have another potentially abandoned yacht that we will have to ultimately dispose of. This is just one of 14 abandoned vessels that we must deal with in river and canal this year.

At the last meeting I told you that we had recruited Lee Price as a new Harbour Patroller after the retirement of Alan Harwood. Unfortunately for us Lee has had a significant change in his personal circumstances which means he has to leave in December. This is a blow because he fitted into the organisation very well and is a strong member of the team. We will not be able to recruit a replacement however, it has been decided that a review of the Operations department will take place first.

The formal consultation is now closed, and the responses are currently being processed by the Marine Management Organisation. We are not in a position to discuss the consultation not its outcome until this process is complete.

When the MMO have sifted through the public responses, Ashfords will contact us to see where we can move forwards.

The season of goodwill is fast approaching, we will have staff afloat on Christmas Day to cover the charity swim from Exmouth beach at 10.00hrs, we will also have staff on the water on Boxing Day to cover the organised powerboat racing as well as on New Years Day.

The Topsham Ferryman will also be operating in the week between Christmas and New Year.

At the last visioning day that the Harbour Board had at the start of the year, ideas were discussed about creating extra income. We tasked Graham Manchester with doing a small advertising campaign to increase the number of customers storing their boats at the Turf or Basin. For a modest outlay of £2k we have increased our income by a further £6k.

### **Colin Acton – Canal Manager**

The only things I can think to mention for December's meeting are:

.

We have completed winter boat cranings onto the quayside.

The Canal team have installed two escape ladders to the pontoons at Regents Wharf and Double Locks. We have contractors planned to carry out works at Turf, the outer walls are due to be pointed.

Ground works for additional pontoon arms on the West side of Turf, this has been done by a contractor and when we have time we will be able to connect further pontoons along that side.

Turf Lock walls – repairs to masonry joints and underwater inspection using divers. Engineering are investigation quotes for bank repairs along the Canal towpath (west) from Salmonpool Bridge to Double Locks.

When time allows the Canal team plan to carry out some tree cutting / maintenance on the top Canal section.

### **From Nick Stone at the Buoy Store – lead officer**

A few words for the report

Through the Autumn we have been making the most of having sufficient staff in the Estuary. We have had the new member of staff with us, as well as the Topsham Ferryman whilst the ferry has not been operating. Having these staff makes a real difference and feels like an adequate number. The new member of staff has expertise in the field of vessel management, so he has been setting up some systems for us to make dealing with the various vessel requirements easier. He has also been making preparation for the transition to the new workboat coding. We are aiming to make the best use of his specialist skills before he departs in December.

We have been able to complete the winterisation of moorings in good time and are now into the navigation mark servicing which will carry on in earnest, weather permitting, through the winter months.

Our risk assessment review has continued with the focus on 'hot works'. Work has also started on the navigational risk assessments so there is a base to work from when the 'HazID' process takes place.

### **From Graham Manchester - lead officer on volunteers and Aids to Navigation**

Volunteers

We have a team of ten volunteers who gave their time assisting staff with weekend patrols on the Estuary and seafront in 2025.

- 2024. Coolest summer in 10 years – We ran 39 patrols. Totalling 118 volunteer hours.
- 2025. Warmest summer on record – We ran 43 patrols. Totalling 197 volunteer hours.

In October we ran a volunteer training evening for our team of volunteers. Eight of our volunteers attended. We also had two of the local neighbourhood police officers attending (who had joined us on four patrols during the summer period) and a wildlife Warden. All are keen to be involved again in 2026

Sharing Resources with East Devon Wildlife Wardens

We have now entered a partnership where the wardens will charter our RIB 'Exe Harbour Launch' for up to 40 days per year. This is a good example of sharing resources and strengthening local partnerships. This partnership will also generate income for replacement of craft in future years.

#### Winter Storage at Turf and the Canal

During the summer we had a push on attracting new customers with yachts/powerboats to the canal for winter storage (five months storage). For this we:

- Carried out a questionnaire of existing customers to gain feedback.
- Produced a promotional leaflet
- Reworded the winter storage offering on the web site
- Put a small number of adverts on Facebook
- Produced banners for the canal and our work boat.

We are pleased to say that we have 12 new customers storing their yachts at the canal and at the quay over this winter period.

#### Aids to Navigation

We continue working through the servicing of aids to navigation and gradual replacement of older buoys. All aids to navigation are in working order as of the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2025. **From Carolyn Nation – lead Officer on moorings servicing work and incident statistics**

12 incidents logged in the last quarter

5 x private mooring failure

4 x grounding

1 x capsize

2 x collisions

75 moorings have been winterised

#### **John Kent - Topsham Ferryman**

During 2025 the ferry wasn't working for two weeks during weekdays during May due to anticipation of low customer numbers, this closure worked well.

The difference in annual number is in line with Easter 2024 being at the end of March and during 2025 on the 20 April.

The Topsham Ferry season for 2025 had a very successful start to the season then evened out during the seasonal peak period, I am pleased to confirm that the numbers of families with young children increased during the season, they have enjoyed our fantastic river estuary and canal side views.

The numbers of public using electrical assisted bicycles has increased considerably this year, these bikes have enabled people who would not be able to use a

conventional bicycle to complete the loops around the estuary and into the city along the fantastic cycle tracks.

There is currently no specific ferry on the Exe estuary that disabled users and their mobility buggies can safely use to access the canal side from Exmouth or Topsham, The Topsham ferry causeway ramp up to the canal and the ferry itself would need adapting, these adaptations would also greatly help the many families with push chairs who struggle to get up causeway ramp on to the canal bank.

This year has also seen another steady flow of tourists from Europe cycling from Harwich and channel ports down through the south of England to Lands' End then either returning to Europe via Plymouth or other south coast ports, the Topsham ferry appears in their cycle travel guides.

There is continuing clearance of rubbish from the river and canal, litter picking is carried out twice a week around the ferry causeway areas and appx 50 metres in each direction along the paths on both sides of the canal.

It is an absolute privilege to be the Topsham Ferryman and provide a safe, friendly, easy economical route across the river for locals and visitors, many of my customers are repeating trips across the river that they have been carrying out for many years.

Wildlife enthusiasts continue to enjoy using the service, as soon as a wild bird that is not often seen appears on the river or water meadows there is a regular procession of ornithologists on the ferry.

Many customers report they have enjoyed the walk to the Turf Lock inn along the canal and then back to the ferry, Customers sat outside the Passage House Inn at Topsham continue to be a source of customers for the ferry.

Visiting craft users of all types are increasingly happy to chat and take on information regarding water safety on the river and estuary, next year I hope to include tide tables and further water safety notices on the ferry notice board, the numbers of kayaks and paddle board users on the river and canal at Topsham has increased this year, Information for those both new and old to these sports will hopefully lessen the risk of safety incidents.

This year has seen a marked decrease in the numbers of adults and children swimming in the canal by the Topsham swing bridge, hopefully this carries on during next year.

The ferry was open during half term in October this year, unfortunately during the weekdays the number of passengers were low due to poor weather conditions however it was busier at the weekend when tides and weather conditions were good.

It is planned to operate the ferry during the Christmas break starting on Boxing Day for six days and ending on New Years day, an increase in advertising is being carried out to promote this period of ferry operations.

Looking forward to the 2026 ferry season Easter Sunday is on the 5 April, which hopefully will kick start the season with plenty of customers, In addition an advertising schedule targeting specific areas of the UK where it is known that visitors

who have been on the ferry during 2025 come from, a more general advertising schedule is also being planned to attract tourist customers who are staying in Devon on holiday.

### Volunteer Patrols and the Local Neighbourhood Police

We have a team of ten volunteers who give up their time (mainly at weekends in the summer) to allow us to do regular weekend patrols on the estuary and approaches by acting as crew on the patrol boat. We started the season with some 'on the job' volunteer training as well as an RYA Level 2 Powerboat training course for three new volunteers who did not hold the qualification. This included a new volunteer who is a recently retired member of staff from the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office.

Please note, Exeter Port Authority is an RYA Powerboating School, specifically for training volunteers and new staff members.

The volunteers are a great resource, resulting in an increased presence on the water at the busiest times of the year. In total between May and the end of August 2025, 43 patrols took place equating to 197 volunteer hours. We have also developed closer ties with the local neighbourhood police. Police officers have joined us on three patrols and are keen to join us on additional patrols moving forward

### Statistics for 2025

#### Compiled by Carolyn Nation lead officer for stats

2025 – 127 incidents this season, including 1 breakdown, 1 dismasted yacht, 3 antisocial behaviour, 5 collisions, 1 sinking, 1 swimmer stuck on Stuart Line pier, 3 skiing in channel, 3 occasions children jumping into marina entrance, 1 kite surfer caught around a mooring buoy, 79 speeding vessels skippers spoken to about their speed. As ever, this is only a fraction of the true number of incidents that happen afloat, the table below only indicates either what we have seen or what is reported to us.

Incident type	Number
Sinkings	3
Groundings	4
Collisions	7
Speeding vessels	85
Machinery failure	1
Engine breakdown	2
Injury afloat	2
Vessels adrift	2
Swimmers in the main channel	
Navigation errors	3
Capsized vessels	1
Man overboard	

Vessels parted from moorings	5
other	12

Grahame Forshaw

Harbour Master

24<sup>th</sup> November 2025

	2025-26	2025-26	2025-26
	Approved Budget	Actuals at Qrt 2	Outturn Forecast at Qrt 2
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>			
Fees and Charges	( 89)	( 23)	( 92)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>( 89)</b>	<b>( 23)</b>	<b>( 92)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Employees	275	88	162
Premises	53	29	53
Supplies and Services	115	26	75
Transport	22	16	22
Support Services	3	-	3
Capital Charges	29	-	29
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>Net cost of Harbour Activities as included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>252</b>

This page is intentionally left blank