EXETER HARBOUR BOARD

Thursday 11 June 2026

Present

Councillor Williams, R (Chair)
Councillors Cookson, Payne, Reed and Smith

External Members

Prescott, Rhodes, Berkley and Temple

Apologies

The Right Worshipful The Lord Mayor Councillor Rolstone and Lt Col David Marino

Also Present

Head of Service Operations, Harbour Master Exeter Port Authority, Waterways Team Manager, Democratic Services Officer and Harbour Patroller and Democratic Services Officer (JM)

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the meetng of the Exeter Harbour Board held on 18 March 2026 were taken as read, approved, and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no questions from members of the public had been received.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed the new members of the Harbour Board, both Councillors and external and gave thanks to the Councillors and external board members that had served on the Exeter Harbour Board the previous year.

The Chair provided an update on the A379 bridge replacement and advised that she had written to Devon County Council following the previous meeting of the Exeter Harbour Board in March, and that this letter would be appended to the minutes.

5 **HARBOUR REVISION ORDER UPDATE**

The Chair read a statement that had been provided by Ashfords LLP:
"Each individual or organisation that submitted a response to the formal consultation will receive a response letter from Ashfords LLP on behalf of the Council. There are c.500 letters which will need to be sent, and the majority are expected to be send by the end of the next week. The letters will be clear that is a response is not received within 6 weeks, all correspondence will be passed on to the Marine Management Organisation for consideration."

6 **EXETER PORT ADVISORY GROUP UPDATE**

The Chair advised that the Chair of the Exeter Port Advisory Group was not present, but his update was included in the agenda pack.

7 **SOUTH WEST WATER PRESENTATION**

The Head of Local Government Affairs, South West Water (SWW), gave a presentation on water quality, resilience, storm overflow, and pollution, net zero, and environmental net gains.

He outlines South West Water's statutory planning requirements, including the water resources management plan and the waste water management plan, both of which considered climate change, population change, local development plans, demand, supply, and the capacity of existing assets.

Members heard that the majority of Exeter's water supply came from Wimbleball, with some water also taken from the Otter Valley. South West water was also planning additional reservoir capacity at Cheddar, which would support water supplies across a wider area. It was noted that significant additional water resources would be required by 2040.

Members were advised that the Environment Agency data described the state of the environment and informed required improvements. The current status for the relevant catchment was described as moderate, with the aim of moving water bodies towards good status. South West Water's investment programme included approximately £140 million in the Exeter area, with legally binding schemes to address issues including storm overflows, shellfish waters and bathing water protection.

The Head of Local Government Affairs (SWW) answered questions from Members in the following terms:

- water quality requirements were legally binding and signed off by the Environment Agency;
- only four schemes had not been delivered in the previous year;
- projects were set jointly with the Environment Agency and were based on discharge, quality, volume and the condition of the water environment;
- information on work carried out was publicly available through the Devon East Management Catchment;
- odour issues at Countess Wear were affected by the site location and weather conditions;
- discussions had taken place with Environmental Heal on odour issues; and
- published data was independent Environment Agency data and was

collected by automatic water quality monitors that took readings every 15 minutes.

Members were advised that there was a dedicated email address that could be used by elected Members to contact South West Water.

The Chair thanked the Head of Local Government Affairs (SWW) and confirmed that the slides would be appended to the minutes.

8 EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION

The Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP) delivered a presentation to the Board to update on the work that was being carried out. It was highlighted that the estuary was culturally and socially important and attracted significant interest. This updated approach was intended to simplify previous arrangements and to provide greater flexibility.

The EEMP supported the work of other organisations and promoted collaborative, evidence-based decision making. It was described as a strategic and coordinated framework for cooperation between statutory bodies and partner organisations. The objectives included improving collaboration, reducing adverse impacts and supporting activity that was economically viable and social beneficial.

It was noted that EEMP did not override or replace legal duties, but helped organisations meet legislative requirements. The governance framework explained roles, responsibilities and decision-making principles, and provided a process for organisations to work together and manage potential conflicts.

The Process Triangle identified procedure, substance, and relationships as key elements in addressing environmental issues. The governance structure was not expected to change significantly, with the Partnership Committee, Forum, and Facilitation Group continuing to support the overall partnership arrangements.

The Forum provided opportunities to celebrate and promote the estuary, and support local priorities. A celebration event was being considered for November and education sessions were being offered in schools.

Work on estuary access and safety included a water users' survey, signage audit and biosecurity plan. Coastal coordination work was being led through the Coastal Partnerships Network, including case studies and monitoring evaluation.

In response to questions from Members, the Marine, Estuaries and Coastal Officer, and the Marine, Estuaries and Coastal Support Officer provided the following answers:

- they were open to any form of collaboration with Councillors;
- school sessions were delivered to primary schools for students in years three and four;
- they were currently trialling activities for Natural England; and
- the next Forum meeting was scheduled for mid to late November.

The Chair thanked the Marine, Estuaries and Coastal Officer, and the Marine, Estuaries and Coastal Support Officer for their presentation.

9 **PORT MARINE AND FACILITIES SAFETY CODE MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

The Harbour Master advised Members that:

- the Designated Person's report was almost complete and would be discussed with Duty Holders and the members of the Harbour Board;
- agreement had been reached that the MARNIS system would be used for risk assessments;
- work was ongoing to determine which assessments would remain shoreside and which would move to MARNIS;
- a presentation had been received from ABPmer; and
- stakeholder involvement was continuing.

10 **HARBOUR MASTER'S REPORT**

The Harbour Master updated Members on operational matters, including proposed work at Topsham in response to a build-up of silt. It was noted that heavy rainfall had contributed to the build-up and that movement of the silt was being considered.

Members were advised that two abandoned boats had already been dealt with this year, and that if successful the Harbour Revision Order would assist in preventing future abandonment.

A temporary licence had been granted for a pontoon at Topsham Quay. This would be used for passengers travelling to the Turf Locks pub and by Stuart Line Cruises. The pontoon was also able to be used by members of the public.

In response to a question on the pontoon the Harbour Master advised Members that as the pontoon would not be fixed to the Quay, planning permission was not required.

The Waterways Team Manager explained to Members that the Canal and Topsham Quay had two different systems for delivering electric, and that the technology was outdated and being retrofit.

The Chair expressed thanks to the Waterways staff for their contribution to the report, which provided a clear overview of activity across the area of responsibility.

11 **STATUTORY HARBOUR AUTHORITY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Board received the statement of accounts for information. It was noted that the information had been extracted from a report to Council.

In response to a question from Councillor J Reed, regarding transport costs and the reported overspend, the Harbour Master advised that this included vehicle costs and that a more in-depth response would be provided outside of the meeting.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.00 pm)

Chair