

Minutes

**Whitby Harbour Users Group
29 May 2025
Whitby Yacht Club Meeting Room**

Present:

Alan Paige (AP) – Under 10m Fishermen
Bob Bennett (BB) – Whitby Cruising Association
Chris Bourne (CB) – North Yorkshire Council
Callum McKeon (CMcK) – North Yorkshire Council
John Anderson (JA) – Whitby Yacht Club
Adrian Fusco (AF) – Chair and Whitby Yacht Club
Cllr. Mark Crane (MC) – North Yorkshire Council
Gary Pearson (GP) – North Yorkshire Council
James Cole (JC) – Whitby Commerical Fishermen's Association
Cllr. Sandra Turner (ST) – Rowing Clubs
Sam Whitfield (SW) - North Yorkshire Council
Kirsty Patullo KP (via Ms Teams) – note taker

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions & Apologies:</p> <p>AF opened the meeting, and introductions were done to welcome new members.</p> <p>Apologies: Paul Hobson, David Wall, David Moore and Linda Wilde.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of last meeting:</p> <p>The notes of the last meeting were reviewed.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>The Terms of Reference review is still ongoing as confirmed by GP.</p> <p>GP provided an update on the windows/roof skylight. SW has organised for a deep clean of this and in the process of purchasing new flags. Scaffolders have been organised to carried out works on 30 May 2025.</p> <p>Issues of price increase and ice/freezer storage were raised during the last meeting, and this remains to still be an issue. Colleagues noted that this is currently held by one person which is impacting on other harbour users easily accessing this. There was some suggestion of potential access to any available grants or funding, as there is no current support in</p>	

	<p>place. The current freezer was noted to be in state of disrepair with overflowing ice and water, thus making the surrounding area a potential hazard.</p> <p>Pigeon issues were also discussed as matters arising. However, preventative measures are being put in place including netting to prevent them accessing the building.</p> <p>Parking on Church Street was also highlighted. Colleagues have engaged with Highways Team regarding implementing signage and altering road markings to make it clear where loading bay is situated. Members noted that this unfortunately is unlikely to be made enforceable for public who may chose still try and park in the vicinity.</p> <p>Minutes from 20 February 2025 were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting discussed.</p> <p>Action. GP to review the points raised regarding the freezer storage for ice and the current state of appliance in use.</p>	GP
3.	<p>Whitby Harbour Court Judgement</p> <p>CB provided members with an update on where the court judgement has now reached. CB noted that previously the objector had an anonymity agreement in place with the Court, but this has now been publicised and now available within the public domain. Ms S Boyce's case has been comprehensively won on all the points raised. As a result of this judgement, North Yorkshire Council (NYC) will now have to create what will be called a new Harbour Account. Harbour accounts are not something new, however. The accounting practices historically were aligned to local authority practices. This new account will be ring-fenced to only apply to Whitby Harbour. This change will also have changes to harbour land in line with the Judge's findings. Any income which is derived from this land will go into the harbour account but equally and expenditure out will also come out of the account. CB advised members that a presentation is being taken to Elected Members on 05 June 2025.</p> <p>CB wished to make it clear to members that there is absolutely no change in operation or services to harbour users because of the Court Judgement.</p> <p>ST expressed some anxiety around what happens when there is something unplanned and drastic requiring work to be carried out. Is it the intention of NYC to subsidise this until there is enough money in the ring-fenced account? NYC colleagues noted that previously, Whitby Harbour did not have a separate account, with its revenue going directly into the general coffers. However, the general coffers have historically funded the harbour with significantly more than the revenue it has generated. Moving forward, the council has a legal duty to ensure that funds received from the harbour are appropriately managed within its own account.</p> <p>It was emphasised that overall expenditure on the harbour will continue to exceed revenue, and funding will not be restricted to the income received.</p>	

	<p>The court case also confirmed that ring-fenced monies will be required to be backdated, and ST asked if a buffer of money will be put into the new Harbour account. CB advised that Finance have been working on this. The court judgement advises that the back-dated time period goes back to when Ms Boyce first logged her objection. CB felt that despite the outcome of court judgement it has provided an opportunity to challenge some of the practices previously in place. He also reiterated that any monies into the harbour account that were unspent would be carried over into the next financial year. This is being highlighted to note that internally (NYC) there will be some changes with budgets and project alignments to support the new account. Harbour land ownership will still sit within the Local Authority. This was raised today, to dispel rumours that appear to be circulating that ownership has changed. This is not the case.</p> <p>Members agreed that 'we' could be better with our communication out with this forum. Suggestions were made on perhaps drafting a Communications Plan and a quarterly update which could be disseminated to key partners. It was also noted that the minutes of this forum could be circulated by attendees to their groups for awareness. Members asked to consider what this could look like and provide feedback to CB and GP on recommendations.</p> <p><u>Action</u> Members asked to consider how to better our communication strategy with this forum to ensure Harbour representatives are highlighted with current state of play. Feedback to be provided back to CB and GP.</p>	
4.	<p>Extra Bridges: At the last meeting there was mention of implementing an additional cost for extra bridges. A formal decision has been made by the Council and the proposal is in place. CB advised that subsequently we have received a letter from the Yacht Club challenging this decision. A meeting has been offered to discuss these concerns further. GP is considering extra bridges on a case-by-case basis to ensure if they are navigationally safe or not. -The meeting arrangements will be confirmed in due course.</p> <p>It is not the Council's intentions to disrupt activities and racing, but safety is a concern.</p> <p>Dredging was raised as an ongoing issue and can have potential impact on these extra bridges. Members seeking update on current position. It was highlighted that NYC colleagues are still working on application for the dredging licence.</p> <p>Application was submitted but there has been a request from CEFAS for further samples to be taken due to levels of contamination found in the first set of samples received. CB advised that an exclusion zone has been proposed around the sample site and there will no dredging in that area.</p> <p>The latest request is for the use of different excavating equipment to be used which is more difficult due to the dredger being owned. NYC is working on this as a priority and noted that despite it being disappointing that the licence has not yet been granted, the local authority do respond to</p>	

AII/CB/GP

	<p>any issues as a priority due to its urgency. There are 8 stages of the application, and we are currently at 5. CB and CMcK are in talks with our scientist to see if they are close to finding a resolution. They advised that a meeting with CEFAS and MMO is being requested.</p> <p>Members made reference of the revisit of the Endeavour Vessel in Whitby in 2028 and asked what the position on a deep-water berth for a vessel such as the Endeavour. It is hoped that the licence that is being applied for would allow us to dredge out a sufficient size of channel and create the right berth. CB emphasised that the Council recognises how important this is for Whitby therefore any potential hazards that would prevent this would be mitigated.</p> <p>Disposal of dredging materials was raised, and it was noted that the best and most sensible outcome is for disposal at sea. Any other methods i.e. landfill, would be unaffordable.</p>	
5.	<p>Fishing Industry Update</p> <p>An update on the national picture was provided to members. It was noted that the total quantity of landings for March 2025 showed a decline of 12% compared to March 2024. In the same time period, the value of landings also shows a decline by 14%.</p> <p>There is no white fish landing and predominantly shellfish. Lobsters are looking healthy now and into the future. However, concerns were made about how unknown the fishing industry will be in the future. The cost of licencing maybe having an impact on users and noted to be very costly.</p> <p>Trout fishing has provided a nil return. Members referred to the quality of water within Whitby and whether this is having an impact.</p> <p>There are currently projects ongoing in Renewables which includes the Dogger Bank Wind Farm and the Sofia Offshore Wind Farm. These are in their final stages of being signed off. These are significantly impacting on the fishing industry in Whitby. These companies are providing some subsidies, therefore whilst the fishing sales are down as a result, the users are keeping viable. The works are set to be in place for at least the next two years, possibly three. With the impact of Covid, a proper fishing year has not been seen since 2019, and it is the hope that it can go back to these levels. This is happening at a national level but is very much felt locally.</p> <p>Crew retention was also highlighted and the aim to recruit and train the younger generation with the whole package and get investment and enthusiasm back in the fishing industry. There are some challenges with accommodation options that can be offered as part of a package.</p> <p>The fishing school is looking and options to try and set up a Hostel type accommodation and they have been engaging with Economic Development Officers in NYC to try and offer a joint approach for a more sustainable fishing port and recruitment programme.</p> <p>Fight4Whitby have written what is known as a pre-action protocol letter with objections to the construction of Whitby Town Hub. A response has</p>	

	<p>been provided which sets out the rationale as to why construction will not be stopped. Principally, this letter was received 5 weeks post construction work starting and is out of time. -The next step in this process is to wait for them to consider the response and whether they wish to apply for a judicial review.</p> <p>Fuel issues in Scarborough were mentioned and that currently there is no fuel tank there now. A new supplier has been procured for Scarborough and incidentally on the back of this incident, provisions are being arranged where if Whitby was to incur the same issues, then this new supplier will be able to provide for Whitby. However, with climate change being high on the agenda, the Government is pushing for electrification of harbour fleets. It was respectfully suggested that putting in petrol supply facilities will be unlikely because of this, the focus will be on sourcing marine gas oil.</p>	
6.	<p>Port Marine Safety Code</p> <p>GP recently attended the British Ports Association Primary Safety Call Compliance meeting. The focus was on entering a full review of compliance, what the requirements are and what needs to be done by January 2026.</p> <p>Regarding incidents which have occurred since the last User Group meeting, there has been</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal injury claims where someone slipped on ice • Propulsion of vessel • Serious incident in Scarborough where a driver drove their car off the harbour. Investigation is ongoing in connection with this incident and commentary cannot be made. Highlighted for members awareness only. <p>GP advised that all relevant staff have been trained to Level 1 OPRC training. Therefore, if there was ever a similar event occur then staff can respond accordingly. This continues to be pushed to ensure resilience across the team(s).</p>	
7.	<p>Harbour Maintenance & Infrastructure Projects</p> <p>Winter period planning was referenced in assisting the Yacht Club with winter mooring. Winter period runs from 1 November to 31 March. It was noted that the Harbour could support the Yacht Club members by asking them to use available space at the Marina due to the less space available on the boarding pontoon. A decision was made to make this available all year, rather than seasonally. However, this is being met with fishermen taking advantage of this and using more, without permission. Unauthorised use of the pontoons may have an impact with preventing yachts which have been out of the water for Winter going back to their berths.</p> <p>Therefore, a decision was taken to charge these offenders, and they were billed accordingly for their actions.</p> <p>Alpha vessel maintenance requires some further work, and GP is liaising with contractors to return and get this actioned at the earliest opportunity.</p>	

	<p>Parkol is the next project which continues to progress but is being met with some quite significant civil engineering issues, but CB advised members that the Project Team are very close to finalising an agreed price with the Contractor. They are undertaking a cost audit. A report will then be taken through the Executive Team midsummer, with a view to starting the work later in the year. GP will be meeting with Martin Lloyd, and feedback can be shared at the next meeting of this forum. To provide some reassurance CB clarified that all the concerns with the moving and handling of the pontoon has been highlighted with the Parkol Team, and contractors are aware.</p> <p>CB wished to note that in respect of the Lighthouse on the pier, the works have been passed to Property colleagues to progress, and it is being that monies from the Capital Programme have been secured.</p> <p>GP has been approached by the Town Council around tackle the issue of disposing of rubbish and have made the request to set up a working group to try and mitigate this issue. There may be some funding available to support this through the Beach Esk Project. Members agreed that volunteering and community engagement is key to supporting any harbour improvements and everyone was in agreement that this is something to consider when engaging in projects such as the Beach Esk Project.</p> <p>Action GP to meet with Martin Lloyd to seeking project update on Parkol.</p>	GP
8.	<p>Harbour Strategy CB provided members with an update on the current Harbour Strategy.</p> <p>The report is currently in production and a lot of work has been undertaken with around 70% completion of the paper. The intention is to take it back to the Area Committee around September 2025. An internal first draft will be taken internally through NYC Executive Team in Summer and CB will devise a route map for this full final report to be disseminated externally for consultation with elected Members and non-elected members such as this forum but it is crucial that it is shared with the right people at the right time. Any comments on the strategy would be welcomed and feedback will be taken onboard for writing the second draft. The aim is to have this full report published by the end of 2025.</p>	
9.	<p>Any Other Business <u>Crane in Harbour</u> Is there a chance of the secondary crane being but back into action? GP noted that this will need to be reviewed. Action for GP to investigate this further.</p> <p><u>Power Outage</u> There was a power outage on 28th May, but GP noted that he believes this was an isolated incident and electrician was on site relatively quickly.</p> <p>Action GP agreed to review the Crane and the possibility of getting the second crane back in use.</p>	GP

10	Date of Next Meeting Thursday 21 August 2025 at 14:00 in Whitby Yacht Club as confirmed during today's meeting	