

**Minutes
Whitby Harbour Users Group
23 July 2026
Whitby Lifeboat Station Meeting Room**

Present:

Adrian Fusco (Chair, Whitby Yacht Club)
 Richard Dowson (RNLI)
 Linda Wild (Whitby Town Council)
 Neil Swannwick (North Yorkshire Councillor for Whitby Streonshalh)
 Ian Butterworth (North Yorkshire Maritime and Renewables Hub)
 Alan Page (Under 10 metres fishing)
 Sam Whitfield (Assistant Harbour Master Leisure)
 James Buck (Deputy Harbour Master)
 Chris Bourne (Head of Harbours and Coastal Infrastructure, North Yorkshire Council)
 John Woodhead (Engineer, North Yorkshire Council)
 Richard Askam (Project Lead, North Yorkshire Maritime and Renewables Cluster)
 David Moore (Whitby Boating Association)
 Sally Atkinson (Commercial Director, Park Hall Marine Engineering)
 David Warwick (Whitby Cruising Association)

Apologies:

Councillor Mark Crane (North Yorkshire Council)
 Shaun Wood (TG Wood Ltd)
 Kirsty Patullo (North Yorkshire Council)

	Executive Summary	Action
	The meeting covered a wide range of topics, including the formal introduction of the North Yorkshire Maritime and Renewables Cluster, which aims to unify and promote the sector across the county. Significant discussions took place regarding planned major maintenance for the Whitby Swing Bridge next year, including proposed mitigation measures, and ongoing issues with the dredger and associated communication with berth holders. Updates were also provided on pontoon improvements, Fisheries and Seafood Fund applications, and the challenging progress of the SI Wharf project.	
1.	Welcome, Introductions & Apologies: Adrian opened the meeting, and introductions were shared for the purposes of the minute Apologies: Cllr. Mark Crane, Shaun Wood and Kirsty Patullo.	
2.	Minutes of last meeting: The minutes from the previous meeting were approved, with a correction noted for Neil Swannwick's name.	

	Flare Disposal: David Moore raised the ongoing issue of safe disposal of flares. Sam Whitfield confirmed that it remains the responsibility of boat owners. Chris Bourne noted previous pushback against a community disposal scheme due to concerns about transporting explosives. Richard Dowson provided a contact at Illumination Pyrotechnics, who might be able to offer a local collection service. Chris Bourne committed to following up with Gary to ascertain if this is the same contact previously approached and to explore the feasibility of a community event. Action: Chris Bourne/Gary Pearson. An action item for Gary Pearson regarding pot storage was deferred for later discussion.	
3.	Introduction to North Yorkshire Maritime and Renewables Cluster (NYM&R) Richard Askam, Project Lead, introduced the new cluster, highlighting its mission to connect businesses, education, and investment across North Yorkshire's maritime and renewables supply chain. The initiative stems from a recognised need for cohesion within the sector, drawing parallels with successful projects in Grimsby (Project Renewable) and the Tees. The mission is to create a single, unified voice for the industry, drive economic growth, attract investment, influence government policy, and develop a skilled workforce. It aims to be an internationally credible centre for maritime and renewables activity. The cluster covers the entire county of North Yorkshire, recognising that the maritime economy extends inland (e.g., manufacturers in Ripon, engineers in Harrogate). Coastal communities (Whitby, Scarborough, Filey) are at its heart. Official launch is planned for September, with a series of events across the county. Initial funding is from national government and North Yorkshire Council for the setup and initial operational phase, with a long-term goal of sustainability through membership. North Yorkshire Council will be a founding member. Neil Swannwick welcomed the initiative, noting it as an "operation catch up" for the region, particularly with proximity to Dogger Bank. Alan Page raised concerns about Whitby's tidal harbour and mooring access as potential disadvantages for large-scale operations. Richard Askam clarified the cluster's role is to maximise existing opportunities, not change fundamental constraints. David Wall questioned the tangible impact on harbour users (leisure, fishing, charter). Richard Askam explained it as an umbrella members' organisation for the entire sector, promising more substantive updates by the next meeting. The cluster will operate digitally across North Yorkshire to avoid perceived favouritism towards any single location. It was agreed that NYM&R would be a standing agenda item for future meetings, with regular updates provided. Action: Chris Bourne.	CB
4.	Bridge Openings Working Group Chris Bourne presented the second draft of the Terms of Reference (ToR), incorporating feedback from Whitby Yacht Club and Whitby Boating Association. The group agreed to adopt these ToR.	

	Chris Bourne reported difficulties in securing an independent chair, facing internal resistance to external payment. He proposed approaching a councillor not directly involved in coastal projects. CB to identify and approach a suitable independent chair (potentially a councillor) for the Bridge Openings Working Group. Action: Chris Bourne. Chris Bourne requested nominations for the working group. Initial nominations included John Anderson (Whitby Yacht Club), David Moore (Whitby Boating Association), a representative from Harbour Staff (likely Gary or James), and Alan Page was encouraged to participate or nominate someone for fishermen. Phil Richardson (Bridges Manager) to be aware/involved. Consideration for party fishing boats/angling boats (James Cole was mentioned). It was acknowledged that the group would need to balance diverse and often conflicting requirements (e.g., large vessel access overnight, yacht club daylight openings, fishermen's tidal needs). Arrange the inaugural meeting for the Bridge Openings Working Group. Action: Chris Bourne with Kirsty Patullo.	CB CB/KP
5.	Harbour Maintenance and Infrastructure Projects Pontoon Improvements: John Woodhead outlined four proposed improvements: renewing pontoons adjacent to Endeavour Wharf, extending the central finger on the Trident pontoon, additional pontoons adjacent to the Chicken Run (east side), and a new waiting pontoon at the end of the East Pier. Chris Bourne will seek funding approval from the Harbour Executive and North Yorkshire Council. Chris Bourne also requested John to investigate a suitable landing point on the east side for use by a potential water taxi if the swing bridge is closed. Swing Bridge Maintenance: Recent Issues: The bridge has experienced frequent sticking due to metal expansion in high temperatures. A temporary fix has been implemented by breaking out and moving edge plates, creating a 5mm gap. Future Plans: A light-coloured surfacing may be applied to reflect heat. Significant maintenance is planned for next year, involving long closures (months, not weeks, but not continuous). This will be outside the main summer season. Mitigation: North Yorkshire Council is planning alternative arrangements to minimise disruption, including a minibus service and a water taxi across the harbour. John Woodhead will assess east side pontoons for public water taxi access. Communication: David Moore stressed the importance of clear, proactive communication to the public and harbour users regarding planned closures and alternatives. Chris Bourne confirmed a specific communications plan would be developed well in advance. Dredging Update: James Buck provided an update on the dredger "Sandsend". Breakdowns: Recent issues include a catastrophic failure of the excavator arm (now replaced with a new manufactured arm) and a breakdown of the splitter engine pump (rebuilt and reinstalled, expected to be operational by Monday). History: The dredger has faced ongoing issues since being taken back in-house requiring extensive repairs to bring it back to full operational status. The hull remains sound, with most issues relating to attachments.	

	Programme: The intention is to resume the dredging programme as soon as possible, with Scarborough also requiring attention later in the season. User Concerns: Adrian Fusco and David Moore raised significant concerns about the lack of communication regarding dredging schedules and breakdowns, leading to inconvenience for berth holders (e.g., extended stays on visitor moorings, rafted boats). Communication Commitment: James Buck acknowledged the need for improved communication (e.g., newsletter, regular email updates) to keep users informed of progress, good or bad. The idea of a WhatsApp group for berth holders was suggested, though email was preferred by Chris Bourne. Pontoon Integrity: David Moore highlighted concerns about the west side main pontoon at low springs, where it hangs at an angle off the gangway support, raising fears of joint failure. Sam Whitfield confirmed similar issues on the east side, requiring specialist floating excavators for remediation. John Woodhead noted issues with the Trident Pontoon awaiting licence approval. Chris Bourne confirmed these issues are known and in hand, but require time for licencing and specialist work.	
6.	Fisheries and Seafood Fund Applications Chris Bourne reported that North Yorkshire Council has submitted five expressions of interest for funding from the £300 million government fund: Maritime Cluster Development (£230,000), Clean Ports Power (£1.635 million), Fishing Workforce Resilience (£1.875 million), Shellfish Processing (£625,000), and West Pier Extension Feasibility Study (Scarborough) (£200,000). Updates on these applications will be provided as dialogue with the MMO progresses.	
7.	Tindeavour Vessel The replica vessel "Endeavour" has gone into liquidation. North Yorkshire Council confirmed the vessel is for sale and is expected to be removed from the harbour, which will free up significant berthing space.	
8.	Port Marine Facility Safety Code James Buck provided updates on compliance and safety. PMSC, OPRC, ISPS, and Port Waste Management Plan are all compliant and revalidated. Trinity House Audit: A recent audit scored 97.4%. A private company has been commissioned to survey aids to navigation for future improvements. OPRC Exercise: A Tier 2 oil spill exercise in February was successful. Scarborough Harbour will also be brought under the Tier 2 OPRC umbrella by end of September. Safety Navigation: New speed limit signs are to be fitted at bull noses and Scotch Head. Recent Incidents:	

	A vessel went aground last week due to attempting to sail at very low water springs and when a high atmospheric pressure was in place. James Buck noted the tide level was below the chart that day. MAIB reports included a fishing vessel fatality (Willaia, Wales) and a RIB incident (Peakyl Blinder, Portsmouth) involving an inebriated skipper. This incident is expected to lead to stricter enforcement against alcohol use in leisure boating. Links to the safety flyers can be found here MAIB safety information and flyers - GOV.UK Chartered Depths: Adrian Fusco enquired about the accuracy of charted depths in the Lower Harbour. James Buck confirmed they are generally accurate, with the Upper Harbour being more of a concern.	
9.	Fishing Industry Updates Alan Page reported a generally poor fishing year, exacerbated by licencing regulations. Tuna Licences: A positive development is the granting of several tuna licences (recreational and commercial). A crane scale has been fitted to the old Davit crane for this purpose. Neil Swannwick (also representing North East IFCA) raised concerns about unregulated fishing and potential mortalities from recreational licences, noting an emergency bylaw is in preparation. The one commercial tuna licence issued is for a vessel birthing in Whitby, contributing to port facilities. Market Hall Improvements: New electrical access for Endeavour Wharf, a new door for the bait store, a personnel door for the market, removal of old plywood, and new curtains are planned. A new, modern scale for the market hall has also been ordered. Fuel: Chris Bourne confirmed the fuel provision issue is still on his radar, but challenges remain with existing leases. Pot Storage: Gary is planning a physical walk-around with fishermen to finalise pot storage locations. A draft policy with indicative maps for Whitby and Scarborough will be circulated for comment before finalisation.	GP
10	Harbour Strategy The 10-year Harbour Strategy was adopted in full by the Executive in June, following consultation feedback which was incorporated and published. Neil Swannwick expressed disappointment that the rail link to the port was not included in the strategy, highlighting its potential for freight and connectivity. Chris Bourne explained that the decision was based on the current lack of cargo trade, but acknowledged its potential if trade reappears.	
11.	Any Other Business Eskside Wharf Project: Sally Atkinson requested an update. Chris Bourne reported significant difficulties in developing a workable project due to logistics and cost. Martin Lloyd is re-evaluating designs, including a mass retaining wall solution. Alarms on the wharf	

	have shown a "huge increase" in movement over the last two weeks, prompting an engineering review. Sally Atkinson stressed the urgency for Parkol Marine Engineering due to potential significant contracts starting later this year. Chris Bourne will ask Martin Lloyd to provide an update and noted a report with alternative options is due to Capital Board in September. Action: Chris Bourne. Fuel Supply : Richard Dowson reported issues with potentially contaminated fuel affecting RNLI operations. Fishermen were also having problems. He criticised the suppliers poor customer service and inability to provide alternative delivery (e.g., road tanker). Chris Bourne suggested exploring alternative suppliers who provided excellent service in Scarborough during similar issues.	CB
--	---	------------------

User Group Update

July 2026

Dredger "Sandsend" 2025



Dredger

You may be aware that we have suffered some "breakdowns" lately. We did anticipate that we would have some issues when we received dredger back from a third-party management firm.

In layman's terms the dredger can be regarded as two pieces of heavy plant operating in a hostile marine environment, one being a 360 excavator with an 18m reach and capable of reaching a dredge depth of 8m, and the other the vessel itself. The Sandsend has several differing engines which includes:

- Two Main Engines
- Two HRP 360 Azimuth Propeller Units
- A Splitter Engine
- Bow Thruster Engine
- Generator Engine
- 360 digger Engine
- Hydraulic systems for the operation of the 2x 14m Spud Legs

As you may appreciate this is quite a specialised piece of heavy plant and many parts cannot not be sourced by nipping to our local Halfords

This list does not include electrical systems and navigational equipment. The term often used is that the "dredger as broke down" these four little words can mean a multitude of scenarios.

The majority of maintenance issues have been centred around the 360 excavator which recently required a new digging arm due to excessive corrosion.

The latest issue is related to the vessel itself, the splitter engine pump. This is the engine which is required to open and close the vessel to deposit the spoil at sea. Our regular engineering contractor has had to sort repair from a specialist engineering firm, hence the prolonged timescale for repair.

As we have undergone some extensive and differing repairs both to the digger and vessel, we anticipate that potential breakdowns may be greatly reduced.

It is our intention to proceed with our dredging program as soon as reasonably practicable.

Dredging

Dredging Scarborough Harbour

Scarborough Harbour- An emergency dredge was implemented due to excessive sand ingress in the harbour entrance.

Month	Loads	Activity Maintenance / Capital/ External Contracts	Material	Working Days
April 2026	353t 1 load	Maintenance/Emergency	Sand	1
May 2026	1,199t 5 loads	Maintenance/Emergency	Sand/Spoil	3

Dredging Whitby Lower Harbour Channel

Whitby Harbour – The Lower Harbour Channel campaign is now complete, and the Upper Harbour Campaign is now underway.

Month	Loads	Activity Maintenance / Capital/ External Contracts	Material	Comments
December 2025	3,774t 13 loads	Maintenance dredging	Spoil	Upper harbour
January 2026	3,600t 10 loads	Maintenance dredging	Spoil	Upper harbour
February 2026	253t 1 load	Maintenance dredging	Spoil	Upper harbour
March 2026	4,069	Maintenance dredging	Spoil	Upper harbour

Note: We are still in talks with the MMO regarding a variation to the Whitby dredging license in relation to the exclusion zone.

PMSC/Compliance and MAIB Reports

Code Compliance	Authorising Body	Revalidation/ Inspection Dates	Action
PMSC	MCA	Compliance Exercise Revalidated March2026	Green
OPRC	MCA	Plan approved April 2025	Green
ISPS	DfT	Revalidated November 2025	Green
PWMP	MCA	March 2026	Green
LAtN	Trinity House	AtN Audit scored 97.41% cat3 November 2025	Green

OPRC

Following a successful Tier 2 exercise at Whitby in February observed by the MCA Counter Pollution Officer, it was recommended that we re-assess the Risk Assessment for Oil Spill Response in Scarborough. The Deputy Harbour Master has been working closely with our Tier 2 Contractor and Scarborough Harbour Oil Spill Plan will be upgraded shortly.

Safety of Navigation

We have arranged for an external survey for our LAtN Local Aids to Navigation for both Whitby and Scarborough Harbours, this shall be conducted 21 & 22 July. This to action any faults and enhance navigational safety within our ports. In addition, we have also ordered new SLOW signs for Whitby and Scarborough Harbour entrances.

It is also my intention to review the Safety of Navigation documents in the near future; this will be completed with Harbour User consultation.

Trinity House report just released.

Recent Incidents

Incident- 12.30 16 July 2026 MFV Skipper acting in a manner to endanger safe navigation, and **grounding**.

Note:

- Local Notice to Mariners-active
- Entering the harbour at low water on a MLWS
- Observed tide lower than predicted tide



North-east Regional Coastal Monitoring, tidal data off the chart.

Facility Compliance

We have received a mixed response from our Third-Party Facilities, some have declared proportional compliance to the code, others have not responded. After attending the Northeast Ports Group many Harbour Masters have received the same mixed response.

This said I did work closely with our Designated Departure Point Vessels, who take large passenger numbers to sea, to assist them with their compliance.

MAIB Reports- Please see

- Safety Flyer -Peaky Blinder.
- Safety Flyer - Wilaya

Fishing Industry

Whitby

Two commercial Tuna Licenses have been granted, to assist with this new potential diversification for the Fishing Industry we are making a few upgrades to the Trawl Door Winch and adding crane scales.

New electrical access to be fitted on Endeavour Wharf.

New door to be fitted on Bait Store, and personnel door to be fitted on the market door. Old plywood facing to be removed.

New curtain screens to be fitted. (New curtains already fitted in SH.)

We are also looking at investing in new fish quay scales for both ports.

Scarborough

New electric pedestals installed on North Wharf

Extensive Fish Quay Piling repair undertaken.

Whitby

		2025	
October	Weight	32,731	Kilos
	Value	250,247	£
	Wharfage	7,629	£
November	Weight	18,051	Kilos
	Value	131,278	£
	Wharfage	3,938	£
December	Weight	10,785	Kilos
	Value	127,666	£
	Wharfage	3,830	£
Total to date	Weight	61,567	Kilos
1 October to	Value	509,192	£
31 December	Wharfage	15,397	£

October figures show grossing's to be 100% Shell

November figures show grossing's to be 2% Fish and 98% Shell

December figures show grossing's to be 1% Fish and 99% Shell

Scarborough

		2025	
October	Weight	77,460	Kilos
	Value	311,171	£
	Wharfage	9,335	£
November	Weight	27,718	Kilos
	Value	147,654	£
	Wharfage	4,429	£
December	Weight	14,887	Kilos
	Value	134,970	£
	Wharfage	4,049	£
Total to date	Weight	120,065	Kilos
1 October to	Value	593,795	£
31 December	Wharfage	17,813	£

- 1.4 October figures show grossing's to be 99% Shell, 1% Fish
 November figures show grossing's to be 99% Shell, 1% Fish
 December figures show grossing's to be 99% Shell, 1% Fish