

Harbour Committee

18th March 2025



Report of: Patsy Mellor - Director of Management of Place

Title: Bristol Harbour Master's Quarterly Report - February 2025

Ward: Hotwells and Harbourside, Centre, Lawrence Hill, Brislington East, St George Troopers Hill, Southville.

Officer Presenting Report: Pete Seed / Tony Moore, Acting Harbour Master

Bristol Harbour Master's Quarterly Report

February 2025



PURPOSE

This report provides an overview of Bristol Harbour's performance and activities for the past quarter. It gives operational updates essential for the Harbour committee and stakeholders to assess our progress and challenges.

HARBOUR OPERATIONS

Harbour Patrols and Inspection Routines

Harbour patrols completed daily, inspections conducted, and flotsam removal undertaken when required.

Locking Services

All Locking services provided as published in Notices to Mariners.

Harbour Movements and Navigation

The Ebenhaezer was towed from Welsh Backs to the dry dock for disposal without incident. Hanham Lock remains closed due to a build-up of silt and a sunken vessel, disrupting one of the main access points to Bristol Harbour. There is a reluctance to dredge until the river has settled down.

We are actively working with the Canal and River Trust to clear the obstruction, aiming to reopen the lock within the next month.

Incidents, Collisions and near misses

There have been three fires on live-aboard vessels in the last 12 months, the latest occurring on 4th January 2025. All incidents were managed promptly, with no significant injuries reported. Our continued focus on safety training and awareness initiatives contributes to a safer environment for all Harbour users. We are consulting with Avon Fire and Rescue, who are planning an on-water visit to the docks to provide fire safety advice to vessel owners.

A collision occurred between the City of Bristol Rowing Club's Junior Rowing 4 and the passenger boat Bagheera (Bristol Packet) on 1st December 2024. The Bagheera was stationary at Castle Park when the rowing four collided with its stern. The rowing four sustained light damage, and no injuries were reported.

Environmental Compliance

Port Waste Plan and Oil Spill Response Plan are in place and reviewed in line with MCA requirements.

Pilotage Services

The Harbour Authority will undertake a review of Pilotage Directions. This will involve a period of engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Duty Holder Meetings

Formal and informal Meetings between the Harbour Masters and Duty Holder continued through the quarter.

ENGINEERING AND REPAIRS

The Engineering Department continues with their program of maintenance and repairs, prioritising work on safety and provision of service grounds. Work is programmed on Prince Street Bridge, the Entrance Lock, and Netham Lock.

Redcliffe Bridge has been handed over to the Harbour Authority after refurbishment works. Harbour staff have been trained in its operation, and regular test swings will be undertaken to ensure continued function.

Work continues refurbishing of pontoons and fingers around the Harbour. We are currently upgrading and making good progress with the pontoons at Cabot Cruising Club.

The Harbour Walkway is being installed at Temple Meads Tunnels and should be completed in the next few months. Pontoons are arriving at the Entrance Lock in March and will be towed to the site for installation by the Harbour Authority.

OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

Stakeholder Engagement

A Stakeholder Group and Harbour User Group (HUG) have been formed, with regular minuted meetings taking place. The team have also commenced regular meetings with our commercial partners and customers which has included Underfall Yard, Bristol ferry's, Bristol Packet, and our cruising clubs.

Harbour Authority Staff Recruitment.

An additional Engineering Assistant and Estates Officer have been recruited. These appointments will improve adherence to planned maintenance schedules for docks plant, enhance in-house capabilities for dealing with breakdowns, improve safety, and enhance the environment on the quaysides and estate.

Engagement with Community Beat Team

A meeting between the Harbour Authority and Police Community Beat Team took place in January with the intention of renewing the relationship and opening channels of communication. Better liaising with the beat team will build awareness of problem areas and activities within the docks and estate, with a view to better tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

Safety Training Initiatives

Three safety training sessions were conducted this quarter, with participation from over ten attendees. These sessions covered:

First Aid at work
Dealing with confrontation
Bristol City Council Code of conduct

These initiatives reinforce our commitment to maintaining high safety standards throughout the Harbour.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IDENTIFIED IN MARINE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- **Operational Risk Assessments**
Risk Assessments are reviewed annually, when there is an incident, or a substantive change of staff.
- **Oil Spill Contingency Plan**
The Oil Spill Response Plan has been approved, with the required number of training exercises (5) completed and reported to the MCA. Training for additional 4P and 2P staff has been arranged for next quarter. The updated 5-year response plan, along with the yearly incident update, has been submitted to the MCA for approval.
- **Reported Incidents**
Collisions and near misses reported to the Harbour Authority are investigated within 7 days and closed within 1 month, adhering to the specified time limits.
- **Weekly Minuted Staff Meetings**
Staff meetings take place with Health and Safety as a standing agenda item. Minutes are recorded.
- **Aids to Navigation**
All aids to navigation meet General Lighthouse Authority standards, with the Trinity House light inspection in December confirming that everything is in order.

Conclusion:

This quarter has seen good performance, with noteworthy progress on Harbour repairs and refurbishments, and only a small number of reported incidents and collisions. Our focus remains on enhancing operational efficiency and safety, addressing stakeholder issues, and fostering partnerships that support the Harbour's long-term growth and sustainability. We are encouraging stakeholders to provide feedback and participate in ongoing initiatives to ensure Bristol Harbour's future success.