CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

WHITSTABLE HARBOUR BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on Friday, 9th October, 2026 at 3.00 pm in The Community Classroom, South Quay Shed, Whitstable Harbour, Whitstable, CT5 1AB

Present: Councillor Cornell (Chair)
Councillor Dixey
Councillor Paget
Councillor Turnbull
Councillor Butcher
Sandy Ackord
Peter Steen

In attendance

Officers:	Liam Wooltorton	-	Head of Engineering
	Matthew Young	-	Harbour and Foreshore Manager
	Adam Wright	-	Principal Property Surveyor
	Andrew Pullen	-	Technician Engineer
	Claire French	-	Senior Coastal Process Scientist
	Stephanie Williamson	-	Democratic Services Officer

Guests: Simon Storey and James Green, Oyster Festival Organising Committee

324 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received Neil Webster and Councillor Mellish

325 **Substitute Members (Councillors)**

Councillor Butcher was substitute for Councillor Mellish.

326 **Declaration of interests by Board members and officers**

No declarations received in advance

327 **Public Participation**

The Chair advised that there were no speakers registered for the meeting.

328 **Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2026**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June were confirmed as a true record by general assent.

329 **Summer Events Feedback**

Simon Story and James Green of Oyster Festival Organising Committee provided a verbal update on the Oyster Festival.
The Board discussed the update, and the following points were made:

- The Oyster Festival has continued to develop since becoming independently organised, with activities now centred around the harbour and taking place in September.
- The 2026 festival was considered the most successful to date, attracting significant visitor numbers and positive feedback.
- Community-led activities, including live music and youth performance opportunities, formed a key part of the programme.
- Local businesses, including hospitality venues, reported increased trade during the festival period.
- The festival continues to provide opportunities for young performers and support wider community engagement.
- Members discussed opportunities to build on the success of the youth-focused entertainment programme and explore additional events throughout the year.
- The potential expansion of festival activities to other harbour locations and car park areas was discussed.
- Consideration was given to parking arrangements, and the impact of future infrastructure works in the harbour area.
- Members welcomed the positive economic and social benefits generated by both Harbour Day and the Oyster Festival and supported their continued development.

The update was NOTED by general assent.

330 **Review of Harbour Charges 27/28**

The Harbour and Foreshore Manager introduced the report detailing the proposed Harbour Charges for 2027/28.
The Board discussed the report, and the following points were made:

- Proposed increases to a range of harbour fees and charges were outlined, including visitor berthing, pontoon berthing, storage facilities, commercial shipping charges and beach hut fees.
- Members welcomed the continued support provided to the fishing sector through discounted charging arrangements.
- Discussion took place regarding the current fuel levy and pressures arising from increased fuel costs.
- Members considered the potential future use of alternative and more sustainable fuel sources and the implications this may have for harbour users. A full report will be brought to the March meeting.
- It was recognised that further work was required to understand the impact of any changes to the fuel levy and wider fuel supply arrangements.
- Members requested a comprehensive report outlining the range of support and discounts currently provided to the fishing sector.

It was proposed, seconded and when put to a vote, RECOMMENDED that:

RECOMMENDED (to Council):
That the proposed Schedule of Charges was approved, with the following amendment: That the Fuel Levy remains unchanged, rather than applying the proposed 1.5% increase.
And

NOTED:
That a standardised approach or guarantee for the discount provided to the fishing sector would be investigated, with a report brought to Whitstable Harbour Board in January.
Action:
A report would to be brought to Whitstable Harbour Board in April about the fuel supply and the Fuel Levy would be reviewed and discussed as part of that.
A recorded vote was taken as follows:
For: (7) Councillors Chris Cornell, Dixey, Butcher, Paget and Turnbull, Mrs Ackord and Mr Steen.
Against: 0
Abstained: 0

331 **Engineer's report**

The Technician Engineer introduced the report which provided a summary of ongoing engineering projects and forthcoming works.
The Board discussed the report, and the following points were made:

- An update was provided on the Section 3 Quay replacement project.
- The existing quay alignment has resulted in additional engineering considerations and potential removal of the pontoon.
- Officers advised that options were currently being assessed to minimise any impact on project delivery and harbour operations.
- Officers advised that the project remained on programme, with no anticipated impact on the overall completion date.
- The new seating area had been completed and was receiving positive feedback.
- An update was provided on electrical connection works associated with the wet fish concession project.

The report was NOTED by general assent.

332 **Harbour and Foreshore Manager's Report**

The Harbour and Foreshore Manager welcomed questions on the revised Port Marine Safety Code Safety Management System, Pilotage Directions and Shore to Ship Passage Plan recently updated with our advice from our Designated Person, Peter Steen. In response to questions, the board received reassurance that:

- A written training record of training received by members is held in the Harbour Office and sits alongside the online staff training record
- Notices to Mariners are circulated to other recreational water sports organisations and including members of the council's watercraft membership scheme along the coast through the Whitstable and Herne Bay Water Safety Committee
- Copies of all these documents are available to visiting mariners on the Harbour Website

Amendments recommended included:

- Updating 4.2 to specify that the Harbour Board met 5 times a year and not 6 as stated (four quarterly meetings and one annual stakeholder forum)
- Updating 18 to note that members of the Harbour Board are open to stakeholders and questions on the working of the Harbour welcomed

- Updating 20 to list the month and year at which the review of the policies listed came to the Harbour Board rather than simply the year
- Members discussed whether Notices to Mariners should also be published online as well as distributed through email. The Harbour Master will review the protocols used by neighbouring authorities and report back on whether this is appropriate.

The Harbour and Foreshore Manager introduced the remainder of the report as follows:

- Trinity House inspections confirmed that navigation aids remain in good condition and fit for purpose.
- Members received updates on cargo operations, customs compliance, beach hut maintenance, toilet facilities and harbour cleaning arrangements.
- Progress updates were provided on the Harbour Forum, website improvements, Community Classroom and Sound Map projects.
- Members welcomed progress towards the Sound Map launch and associated signage improvements.
- Discussion took place regarding use of the Community Classroom and arrangements for future educational and community activities.

The report was NOTED by general assent.

333 **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is 3pm on Friday 15th January 2027.

334 **Any other urgent business to be dealt with in public**

None advised.

335 **Exclusion of the press and public**

It was proposed, seconded and when put to vote RESOLVED by general assent that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act or the Freedom of Information Act or both.

336 **Property Action Plan Updates**

The Lead Property Surveyor introduced the report, which gave updates on active property cases.
The recommendations of the Lead Property Surveyor, in terms of the matters detailed in the report, were agreed by general assent.

337 **Any other business which falls under the exempt provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or both**

There was no other business that fell under the exempt provisions.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 4.39 pm