



PORTHCAWL HARBOUR ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

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1. Introduction

Porthcawl Harbour

Porthcawl Harbour is situated on the Bristol Channel. Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) are granted powers to assist in the operation, maintenance and development of Porthcawl Harbour and must act in the capacity of the Harbour Authority under the provisions of Part V of the Mid Glamorgan County Council Act 1987 (“the 1987 Act”). The Council is identified as being the Harbour Authority with the undertakings associated with the Harbour being vested in the Council. A plan of the harbour area (shaded red) can be found in Appendix 1.

Operational management is conducted by the Communities Directorate with a Harbourmaster and operational staff structure in place. The asset management and repair and replacement obligations are reported to the Harbour Board who ensure that the Council’s obligations under the Mid Glamorgan Act 1987 are complied with.

Porthcawl Harbour is home to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution’s (RNLI) busiest inshore lifeboat station in Wales and consequently a very active branch of National Coastwatch Institute (NCI). Both charities are dedicated to working with BCBC to improve water safety across the coastline of Bridgend County Borough.

The Harbour now attracts various groups of individuals, some visiting the site for social purposes to visit the commercial food and drink premises or to participate in a full range of coastal and water-based activities. Activities include, but are not limited to, fishing, sailing, powerboating, water-skiing, stand-up paddle boarding, open water swimming and kayaking. The Harbour has also become a popular location for events including BeachFest, RescueFest, numerous Triathlons and the Harbour played a significant role in the Porthcawl 10K in recent years.

Porthcawl Marina

Located in the Harbour, Porthcawl Marina has performed well in terms of generating income and has a healthy demand for moorings with a consistent waiting list since opening in 2013.

The service is evidencing good performance in relation to occupancy and retention, with targeted income generation and control over controllable costs. The nature of the environment and patterns of usage can however often generate maintenance costs that are hard to foresee.

Porthcawl Marina and its capital redevelopment has been a strong contributor to the regeneration of Porthcawl and the continuing investment plans for the area. The creation of a 70 berth Marina with spaces for commercial operators and visitors has transformed the vibrancy of the area and increased usage considerably.

The Marina is well-located to attract visitors from across the Bristol Channel and the service can evidence high demand. The occupancy of berths is high, generating close to maximum income and visitor income has remained steady.

The Marina also fulfils the function of providing safe-haven for vessels and works in partnership with the RNLI. Maintaining the assets in good order and maintaining a safe and customer responsive environment are key objectives for the service.

Harbour or Marina – what’s the difference?

From an operational standpoint, an observer could be forgiven for assuming that the Porthcawl Harbour and Porthcawl Marina are one in the same. However, there are some important distinctions.

- The harbour is a legal entity that has powers and responsibilities attached to it (BCBC is designated as a Harbour Authority under the Mid Glam Act 1987)
- The harbour encompasses a large area (see Appendix 1) with many stakeholders and responsible BCBC departments. The marina accounts for a much smaller area within the harbour (see Appendix 2), and is the responsibility of the Harbourmaster & Harbour Board.
- The harbour and marina are financially distinct; the marina attracts berthing fees that meet the needs of its operation. The harbour does not have any income associated with it, and significant asset maintenance costs (walls, dredging, sea defences, breakwater etc.)

2. Service Usage

Marina Berths

6 metre	8 metre	10 metre	12 metre	Commercial	Visitor	Total
15	30	16	2	3	2	68

Annual Berth Occupancy

6 metre	8 metre	10 metre	12 metre	Commercial	Total	%
15	26	14	2	3	60	91%

Completed Visitor Bookings

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1	1	1	3	17	8	16	13	8	1	1	1	71

3. Strategic Objectives & Foundations for Delivery

The following objectives were defined during the recent update of the Porthcawl Marina Operational Business Plan. Although created for the marina, the objectives also provide a strong foundation for the operation of the harbour.

Strategic Objectives

- Provide a good standard of customer service and value for money
- Pursue maximum occupancy and ensure that demand for berths remains strong
- Ensure that processes are fair, consistent and transparent
- Actively pursue additional income streams
- Proactively invest in asset infrastructure
- Maintain focus on cost control
- Support public events and regeneration plans linked to Porthcawl
- Improve the quality of the service and promote via accreditation

Foundations for Delivery

- Fairness, Consistency and Transparency
- Provide value for money for customers and the community
- Safeguard our natural and built environments
- Promote maritime and coastal culture

These objectives are monitored via reports presented to the Harbour Board.

4. Governance

Harbour Board

The Harbour Board have recently agreed a new Terms of Reference document for its structure and activities. The following are elements of the new terms, and the full document can be found in Appendix 3.

Purpose

- The Harbour Board provides strategic governance, oversight, and decision-making for the management, operation, and development of Porthcawl Harbour.
- The Board ensures that the Harbour is operated safely, lawfully, sustainably, and in a manner that supports economic activity, service users, and the long-term interests of Bridgend County Borough Council.

Key Objectives

The Harbour Board's objectives are to:

- Ensure compliance with all statutory and legal obligations relating to the Harbour

- Oversee the effective governance and management of harbour and marina operations
- Support the ongoing development of the harbour area and planned investments
- Ensure that harbour and marina assets are properly maintained and remain fit for purpose
- Ensure that the business plan and financial performance meet agreed performance standards
- Ensure that service users and stakeholders are appropriately engaged in reviewing services and future plans.

Membership

Chair

- Corporate Director – Communities

Members

- Head of Service – Community Operations
- Economy and Natural Resources Manager
- Harbour Master
- BCBC Finance Manager
- Group Manager – Property Services / Senior Portfolio Surveyor

Attendance

- Other officers or advisers may attend by invitation to provide specialist input
- Substitutes are not normally permitted unless agreed by the Chair

Meetings

- The Harbour Board shall meet **twice per annum**, normally in **February and October**
- Additional meetings may be convened at the discretion of the Chair if required*
- Meetings may be held in person or remotely, subject to Council arrangements

*An example of an additional meeting is a single-issue meeting convened in June or July each year to sign off the previous year's accounts.

Stakeholders Group

Key Purpose

To ensure the safe and effective operation of the marina facility and advise the Harbour Board on matters of importance.

Chair	Harbourmaster
Membership	Senior Portfolio Surveyor Marina Group Representative NCI Porthcawl – Station Manager Absolute Property Management – Jennings Building Corporate Health and Safety Representative RNLI Representative
Status of Board	Advisory
Frequency of meeting	2 per annum (March, September)

Areas of Focus

- To review the operational systems and procedures in place at the Marina.
- To receive the views and issues presented by stakeholders.
- To review incidents and accidents and improve the safe operation of harbour.
- To identify opportunities for improvement of services and business development within the Marina.
- To review systems of promotion and communication relating to Harbour activities.

In addition to the above governance structure, the Harbourmaster meets twice a year with representatives of the berth holders of Porthcawl Marina. These meetings allow discussion and resolution of issues specifically related to the use of the marina facilities.

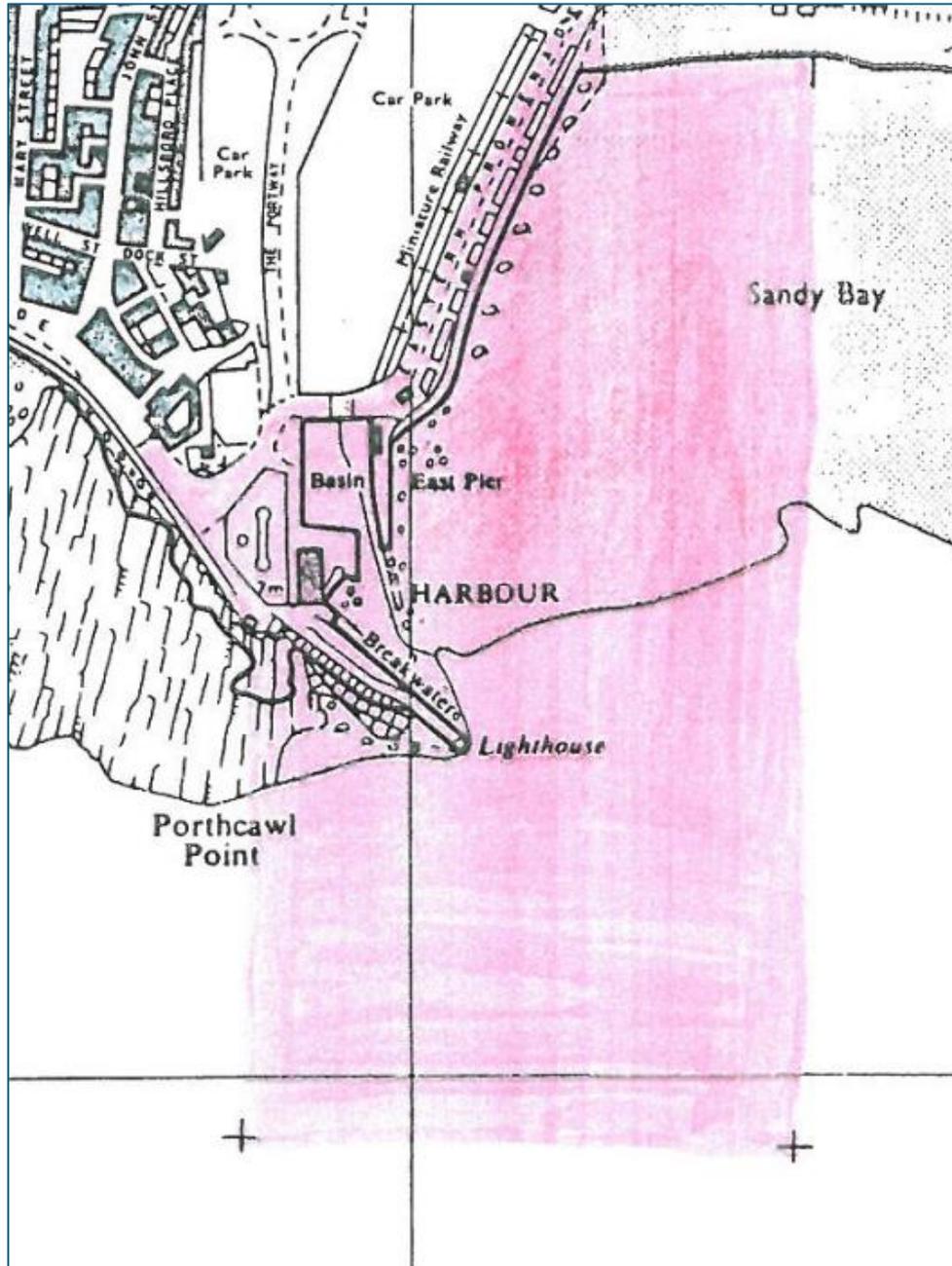
5. Financials

The detailed accounting and auditing requirements relating to Harbour authorities are set out in the Harbours Act 1964. In accordance with this Act, statutory Harbour undertakings (such as local authorities that are also harbour authorities) are required to prepare an annual statement of accounts relating to Harbour activities. This requirement is not met by the preparation of accounts that covers matters in addition to Harbour activities. Consequently, the inclusion of Harbour activities within a local authority's statement of accounts will not satisfy the Act and a standalone annual statement of accounts relating solely to Harbour activities, drawn from the local authority's accounting records, is required.

The accounts are available - <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/3uqhnv0q/porthcawl-harbour-annual-return-2024-25.pdf>

6. Appendix

Appendix 1- Mid Glamorgan Act 1987 – Porthcawl Harbour Plan



Mid Glamorgan Act
1987 - Porthcawl Ha

Appendix 2 – Satellite View of Porthcawl Marina



Appendix 3 – Porthcawl Harbour Board Terms of Reference



Porthcawl Harbour
Board - Terms of Ref