FALMOUTH HARBOUR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday 15th July 2026 09:30
Sea of Discovery Cruise Ship

FALMOUTH HARBOUR
UK's Atlantic gateway.

Attendees:

Nigel Tipple, Non-Executive Director and Chair	NT
Miles Carden, CEO	CEO
Natasha Collings-Costello, Non-Executive Director	NCC
Michael Glanville, Non-Executive Director	MG
Angela Harvey, Finance Manager	AH
James Langley, Non-Executive Director	JL
Kay Penney, Non-Executive Director	KP
Tristan Rowe, Head of Commercial Operations	TRW
Andrew Williams, Non-Executive Director	AW
Emma-Jane Wood, Head of People & Corporate Services	EJW
Andy Wright, Non-Executive Director, Deputy Chair	AWT
David Owens, Chair of the Harbour User Group	DO
Vicki Spooner, Environment & Quality Systems Manager	VS
Rachel Squibb, Finance Manager	RS
Chad Whitehouse, Operations & Governance Coordinator	CW

Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

1. Chair's Welcome and Announcements

- Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked JL and colleagues for their hospitality.
- As CW had recently joined and was taking the minutes, attendees introduced themselves around the table.

2. Apologies

Ifor Pedley, Harbour Master IP

3. Declarations (Includes Declarations of Interest and Statutory Declarations)

- NCC's standing declaration as MD of Cornwall Environmental Consultants was noted.
- MG's standing declaration relating to consultancy work with ScaffFloat was noted.
- DO declared interests as Chair of Trustees of Flushing Sailing Club and as a mooring holder, particularly in relation to leisure pricing.
- MG noted a connection with a firm being considered in relation to marina safety checks, harbour assist and AI technology. It was noted that an NDA had been signed and that the proposed development work would be at no cost to Falmouth Harbour.
- KP advised that she will become Chair of Truro and Penwith College from September and has closed her consultancy as a result.
- EJW will circulate updated declaration of interest forms approximately every six months.
- JL is Chief Operating Officer at Saga. As a cruise company Saga uses the facilities of A&P and FH.

Minutes to Approve and Note

4. Approval of Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24th March 2026

- The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed.
- It was noted that sub-committee name changes had been reflected through the Terms of Reference.
- A correction was made on page 3, item 10, to amend "thrash" to "trash".
- A wording amendment was requested on page 4, item 11, to clarify that legionella management is a management matter.
- Subject to these amendments, the minutes were approved.

5. Matters Arising

- Previously distributed for information.
- The CEO went through the matters arising.
- Items relating to sub-committees were noted as broadly complete.
- Events, the Amenity Centre and related matters remain ongoing.
- Matter 21 was agreed to remain on the list.
- The corporate plan group will continue to develop the relevant workstream.

Safety Updates (Lead CEO/IP)

6. Safety Moment

- MC highlighted the regular involvement of the maintenance and pilot boat crews in safety incidents and rescues on the water.
- The Board noted the value of having a trained crew presence available 24/7 in the port, as there is no other equivalent continuous presence.
- The recent medical and safety training undertaken by crew was discussed.
- The Board discussed whether first aid/emergency care training should be refreshed more frequently than the statutory 36-month requirement.
- It was noted that the current approach exceeds statutory minimum requirements and that refresher training has practical benefits for crew capability and confidence.
- The cost implications of a shorter refresher cycle will be considered through the budget process.

7. Incident Reporting

- In IP's absence, MC provided an update.
- A breach of pilotage direction was discussed. It was noted that minor breaches occur relatively frequently, while more serious breaches are rare.
- MC will bring a further safety moment or briefing to a future meeting on the implications of pilotage direction breaches.
- The Board discussed the value of receiving raw incident data. It was agreed that detailed incident reporting should be considered by Finance and Risk, with significant matters escalated through IP's report to the Board.
- The report will continue to be useful for HUG awareness and stakeholder engagement.

Reports and Committee Recommendations "as read"

8. Fuel Surcharge Letter

- The Board noted the fuel surcharge letter and the current 3.5% surcharge.
- The CEO recommended holding the surcharge steady to the end of the year, with further review as part of pricing and budget considerations.
- The surcharge is currently generating approximately £1,500 to £3,000 per month and helps mitigate fuel cost pressure.
- The organisation will not move away from its HVO resilience position.
- The Board discussed whether the surcharge should be increased if fuel prices rise and noted that a move to 5% may be considered if there is a clear trigger.
- The Board discussed the need to be bolder with charges in the current economic climate.
- Banking arrangements and manual cash sweeping were discussed. It was noted that improved functionality should be available once the bank consolidation is complete.

Items for Decision – Confidential Papers Identified

11. Trainee Pilot Recruitment Paper

- MC advised that Paul Smith had resigned, having been with the organisation for nearly seven years after joining as a trainee pilot.
- The eight-month notice period was noted, together with the need to recruit and train a replacement pilot.
- The Board noted the obligation to recruit and train a pilot, who would move into the LLP once trained, ticketed and authorised.
- EJW outlined the recruitment process, which had been prepared subject to Board approval.
- The Board noted the need to maintain 4.5 pilots.
- Monthly reviews will be undertaken during the training period. If the candidate is not suitable, this should be addressed promptly rather than waiting until the end of the period.
- The recruitment route will include industry networks and word of mouth.
- KP asked whether ex-marine or ex-navy charities could be used to help increase the candidate pool.
- TRW asked whether the pilot boat could be used outside live manoeuvres to increase boat time and competencies.
- MG asked about liability. MC confirmed the trainee would be under training and would not pilot vessels independently.
- The Board noted that local knowledge is essential and that even experienced pilots would need sufficient local training.
- The Board approved recruitment and employment of a trainee pilot and the associated budget provision.

12. Harbour Board Terms of Reference

- The Terms of Reference were noted as needing review following the AGM.
- EJW and NT will review and update the Terms of Reference prior to the AGM.

- The Board discussed commissioner visibility and stakeholder perceptions as well as the potential for closer engagement with HUG, including a joint Board and HUG session or greater Board attendance at HUG.

13. NED Recruitment

- The Board discussed the forthcoming NED recruitment following AW's due departure.
- A consultant will not be used for this recruitment round.
- The process will focus on word of mouth, direct approaches and a less formal engagement process.
- The Board noted the importance of attracting a local candidate with relevant harbour, marine, business or stakeholder experience.
- HUG will be asked to help identify and encourage suitable local candidates.
- It was noted that this is a significant opportunity and that the next comparable NED opportunity may not arise for some time.

14. Financial Resilience and Liquidity Strategy 2027-2029

- The CEO introduced the paper as a direction of travel document to inform work over the next 12 to 18 months.
- The Board discussed work underway on pricing strategy across commercial and leisure income streams, cashflow options, borrowing, possible property options, and cost-saving contingencies.
- The Board discussed five broad areas of focus and noted that significant decisions may be needed by September.
- MC sought Board support to investigate borrowing against the pilot vessels as a potential liquidity option.
- MG summarised the Finance and Risk Committee discussion, noting the distinction between long-term P&L sustainability and short-term cashflow resilience.
- The Board noted that the purpose of any borrowing would be to provide a commercially effective cashflow facility, rather than to fund day-to-day operating losses.
- MC & MG discussed options including overdraft, asset disposal, payment timing, PNPF payment management and vessel-backed borrowing.
- It was noted that non-core asset disposal is not currently preferred unless a significant over-value opportunity emerges.
- The Board discussed approaching Lombard and benchmarking against at least one other provider.
- MG discussed whether any facility could allow early repayment or staged drawdown. NCC asked whether three tranches could be requested instead of two.
- The Board discussed the need for the harbour to cover its costs, including PNPF obligations, and the need for careful communication with stakeholders.
- Leisure pricing was discussed in detail, including early settlement discounts, possible three-year debenture-style arrangements, and over-inflation increases.
- MC noted the need to avoid displacing activity in a challenging leisure market and the importance of benchmarking and customer communication.
- The Board discussed market pressures on boating participation, mooring vacancy levels, and the need to understand the income impact of vacancies.
- The Board noted that mooring fields represent approximately 16% of annual turnover.
- The Board agreed that early engagement with HUG and stakeholders is essential.
- DO, MC and TRW will meet to review leisure pricing comparisons and prepare for HUG engagement.

- The Board approved continuing negotiations and exploration of borrowing options, with recommendations to return to Board, potentially via Teams if timing requires.

ACTION: MC and DO to sit down with TRW to discuss leisure pricing comparisons and stakeholder communication.
ACTION: Borrowing recommendation and options to return to Board for decision via Teams.

Items for Information/ Noting

15. CEO's Report - Organisation Dashboards

- MC invited questions on the CEO's report.
- MG asked that the Board or Finance and Risk review KPIs, expectations and targets relating to commercial activity at the next meeting.
- It was agreed that targets should be measurable, with regular updates against them.

16. Commercial Services (Lead TRW)

- TRW provided an update:
  - Three significant recent events in the harbour were noted: Classics, the Shanty Festival and the lifeboat naming ceremony.
  - The events had gone well operationally. The marina looked good and the team coped well.
  - The Board discussed the need to obtain appropriate profile and value from sponsorship of events such as Classics.
  - The lifeboat naming ceremony was noted as a strong example of the potential of the quay as an events space.
  - The Board discussed whether there should be clearer guidance on which events NEDs/Commissioners should attend or prioritise.
  - Moorings occupancy was approximately 86%, with 13 further seasonal moorings required to reach the previous year's end-of-season position.
  - Visitor and fuel income were noted as broadly mirroring each other and slightly down on last year.
  - The marina was near full occupancy, although the waiting list had reduced.
  - Boat Park activity was operating well and picking up.
  - TRW updated the Board on HVO retailing. A procedure is being prepared, FAQs are being worked on, and the aim is to go to market as an early maritime retail supplier of HVO.
  - The current expected HVO retail price was approximately £2.75 per litre, compared with approximately £1.70 per litre for 60/40 MGO.
- The Board discussed the tax treatment and declaration position for HVO compared with MGO/red diesel arrangements.
- VS noted that Falmouth Harbour had won a British Marine sustainability award, progressing to the national awards.
- Applications for further awards, including VPA/EPA awards, were noted.

ACTION: CW to add to the events pages which events would be good for NEDs/Commissioners to attend or prioritise.
ACTION: TRW and VS to double-check the tax implications and declaration position for HVO.

17. HM Report

- In IP's absence, MC provided an update:
- The Arrow was at Mylor for works, with completion expected WC- 20/07/26.
- MC noted that much vessel maintenance is carried out in-house by the harbour master and pilot boat teams.
- The Arrow was expected to have been out of the water for around four weeks in total.
- JL discussed the need to increase awareness of incident and near-miss reporting to improve the safety triangle.
- Monthly harbour master reports and related information could be made available through SharePoint for Board members to access on a self-service basis.

ACTION: Reports to be added to SharePoint for members to access on a monthly self-service basis

18. Sustainability Plan

- VS provided an update on Natural England protected site strategy work.
- Natural England had indicated that up to approximately £50k of funding over two years may be available for Falmouth Harbour to act as a commercial partner.
- VS noted the importance of the proactive work undertaken on commercial anchoring, Maerl and seagrass.
- MS noted that Maerl is an important habitat and that the harbour has responsibilities as fundus owner.
- NT discussed the potential commercial advantage of being proactive in managing Maerl and seagrass issues rather than reacting to restrictions.
- The Board discussed the use of robotic marks, seasonal marks and race marks to reduce environmental impact.
- DO noted that marks are costly, with second-hand robotic marks costing around £10k and hire costs potentially around £20k for a week.
- The Board noted the importance of partnership working with sailing clubs and other harbour users.
- The Board discussed the need to communicate the Maerl work carefully and positively, including through HUG.

ACTION: Add Maerl communication work to the HUG agenda.

19. Seaworks 2026 Event Report

- MC thanked the Board for supporting the Seaworks 2026 attendance.
- The event was noted as successful, although arranged at short notice.
- Further preparation before and after similar events would be beneficial in future.
- The event was noted as a useful showcase for Falmouth Harbour and for business development opportunities.

20. Communications

- The media report and statements against enquiry were noted.
- The environmental statement against enquiry requires updating.
- The Board noted the need to be aware of changes at the Falmouth Packet, including retirement of a key local contact David Barnicoat.
- DO discussed a potential good news story relating to partnership work between Flushing Sailing Club, Falmouth Harbour and the Marine School; Electric and diesel work boats used for student training were noted as part of this initiative.

21. National Policy Statement for Ports – Policy and Government Response

- MC noted the policy statement and government response.
- The direction of travel was considered positive, although it did not go as far as the industry had sought in relation to ports as national infrastructure.
- NT suggested to keep the matter under review and continue engagement through BPA and other groups.

Deep Dive - Presentation/ Discussion

22. The Harbour Development Project

- MC introduced the consultation reports and stakeholder engagement papers arising from the pontoon project.
- The Board noted that the consultation had provided useful information on what stakeholders want, and do not want, from future harbour development.
- It was noted that financial constraints mean that not all potential projects can be pursued immediately.
- The Board discussed whether the next stage, including seabed site investigations, should be considered at a later date, possibly in the new year.
- MC discussed the importance of using HUG to develop stakeholder understanding and engagement over the next 12 to 18 months.
- AWT suggested that Board members could "buddy" key stakeholders to support relationship building and reduce pressure on the executive team.
- The draft statement against enquiry was approved by the Board.

Dates of 2026 Meetings

Wednesday 23rd September 2026 - Strategy Day
Wednesday 18th November 2026