



MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 13th January 2026

Minutes of a meeting of the Fowey Port User Group
held on this day at 10:00 at the Harbour Office

Present:	Apologies:
Richard Jeffery (Chair)	Nick Gill – FHC Chairman
Penny Tuck – Mixtow Residents (Vice Chair)	Emma Riley – Canoeists
Brian Cook – Polruan Town Trust	John Barker – Licensed Boatmen
Charles Clare-Dunbavand – Lanteglos Parish Council	Maggie Carter – Swimmers (represented by Ali Wittamore)
Philip Henson – RFYC / POFROC	Gary Barr – FGSC
Peter Robinson – Fowey Tourist Information	Nick de Sarandy – RYA
Lucy Daniel – Fowey Chamber of Commerce	Alex Taylor-Morrall – Imerys
Ali Wittamore – Swimmers (stood in for Maggie Carter)	Alex McKay – Yachting Community / Sailing Schools
Cllr. Jim Candy - Cornwall Council	Andy Dellow – Fowey Town Council
David Guiterman – Lostwithiel Boat Owners Association	Ian Wilson – Cornwall Council
Simon Robins – Golant Quay Users / Boatwatch	
Frances Day – Fowey Town Council	
Capt. Paul Thomas – FHC, Harbour Master & Chief Exec.	
Hannah Smith – FHC, Minutes Secretary	

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (24th June 2025)

The June minutes were signed off.

QUICK ACTIONS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Passage Slip: The issue of Passage Slip was raised again. A letter was sent, by the Chair on behalf of PUG, to Rachel Tatlow (Cornwall Council Highways) – copied to Chris Jones (Cornwall Council Maritime Manager) - who responded that cleaning was carried out on a 'reactive' basis. Philip Henson noted the slip was cleaned in October but needs cleaning again – even dogs are slipping – and conditions were especially bad mid-December. Jim Candy advised framing the matter as a health and safety risk to get the Council's attention. Capt. Thomas reminded the group that the slip falls under the Port Marine Safety Code and that FHC has twice written to the Council requesting RA documentation, which has not yet been received. Chris Jones is due to visit FHC, and the issue will be raised again, with an emphasis on previous FHC standards (cleaned every 2 weeks in summer and monthly in winter). Even with regular cleaning, FHC has been challenged in past incidents. Philip Henson added that Cormac photographs the slip monthly – but generally only from the top at high tide. The new railings (installed by Cornwall Council and South West Water) are also reportedly loose. Peter Robinson reiterated raising the matter with Cornwall Council Health and Safety and Lucy Daniel emphasised regular use of the slip by ferry passengers. Capt. Thomas suggested a comparison with other local councils' standards and including Cllr. Ian Wilson in the conversation, given his proactive support. Richard Jeffery and Capt. Thomas to meet after FHC's discussion with Chris Jones to prepare to place Cornwall Council formally on notice.

Tour of Harbour Facilities: Members expressed interest. Capt. Thomas to liaise with Imerys on a suitable date.

REPORT FROM FHC – Capt. Paul Thomas

Capt. Thomas gave an update on Fowey Harbour operations. **Cargo and Forecasts:** China clay and aggregate throughput is as forecasted or slightly improved. The 2026 forecast is expected to remain in line with 2025, with no major changes anticipated. Fowey remains highly competitive with Falmouth for road salt cargos. **Cruise:** Kate O'Hara (Head of Cruise at FHC) continues to work hard on cruise bookings. It can take years of work and relationship-building for bookings to materialise. Projected cruise call numbers per year are finite, due to logistics and capacity of the Harbour to host vessels and visitors, but cruise income is increasingly vital. Cornwall Council continues to emphasise cruise tourism benefits – Sarah Preece, local Councillor, now holds the visitor portfolio. Fowey continues to receive no funding, which is disappointing, compared to other Cornish ports, something that the Harbour is focussing on resolving over the longer-term. Jim Candy asked whether the local MP had been engaged. Capt. Thomas confirmed that Noah Law (originally from Fowey, with a shipping industry background) had recently visited, and that FHC is also engaging with the Marine Plan Review. **Cruise Day Artisan Market:** A breakthrough has been made with the application process, and 8-10 dates in 2026 are now being proposed. **General Directions / Harbour Revision Order:** These are now ready to go to public consultation and to be laid before Parliament. Fowey is currently sixth in the queue. **Finances:** FHC saw a windfall due to a recent MOD contract in Falmouth, which has now ended. However, operating costs are rising significantly (e.g., chain prices up by 30%). FHC operations are split into distinct business units – all are now profitable except leisure. Since 2022, a phased plan has increased leisure charges above index to help balance this. It is hoped the Harbour can begin to return to standard indexing, subject to wider economic conditions. **Fowey Rivers / Schedule of Charges:** Capt. Thomas reported on a recent meeting with Kevin Cocks, Chair of the Fowey Rivers Association, following concerns raised over increased charges for Fowey River class dinghies. During the meeting, it emerged that some discrepancies exist between the declared lengths of these vessels on mooring applications. In response, the Harbour Office will be reissuing these bills to ensure fairness and standardisation. Mr Cocks was also unaware of the existence of the Port User Group. Capt. Thomas reiterated that the Group provides an appropriate and constructive forum for raising such concerns. Philip Henson queried what message should be passed on to members of the public expressing concern over charges. Capt. Thomas noted that: the Harbour's own budget is under increasing pressure, for example, employer National Insurance contributions alone were increased at the spring statement by £80,000; the 2026 Schedule of Charges was published in November 2025, in accordance with the statutory six weeks' notice requirement; and that some form of explanatory note might be considered to accompany future publications of the Schedule. **Caffa Mill Funding:** Thanks were extended to Alex McKay for support with an application to the National Lottery Community Fund for 'Blue Space Access'. The bid is for a walkway and pontoon at Caffa Mill with additional upgrades at Berrill's Yard and Albert Quay. While enthusiasm is high, expectations are realistic.

Charles Clare-Dunbavand praised the well thought out communication of last year's notices for pontoon removal. He also reported that in regards to dinghy storage at Polruan, Cornwall Council Highways are unsure whether they hold full rights over the 'keep clear' area.

Philip Henson asked whether the closure of the drying sheds at Par would impact Fowey. Paul confirmed it was not expected to, as Par Harbour is a separate statutory authority with its own Harbour Master. However, Fowey is the Competent Harbour Authority and provides pilotage to Par.

Richard Jeffery asked about moorings demand. Capt. Thomas confirmed waiting lists remain long, with some lists now closed as it is unrealistic to offer spaces within 10-15 years. However, turnover has slightly increased, potentially due to cost of living pressures. All facilities are currently let out, either permanently or temporarily, with the exception of Golant. At Caffa Mill, all spaces have been let, although two spaces will remain available for seasonal visitors.

FOWEY SEAGRASS RESTORATION TRIAL – Capt. Paul Thomas

Cornwall Wildlife Trust has begun a trial of inter-tidal seagrass planting further up the estuary at St Winnow, including volunteering, monitoring and education work. There may be opportunities for Fowey Harbour for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through habitat offsets or for Carbon Credits. Charles Clare-Dunbavand asked whether planting might affect the navigation channel. Capt. Thomas responded that no impacts are expected. Other surveys show good presence of subtidal seagrass off Polruan.

LOSTWITHIEL BATHING WATER STATUS – David Guiterman

David Guiterman reported that an application has been submitted to designate bathing water status 100m downstream from the medieval bridge in Lostwithiel. If the application is successful, Cornwall Council will be responsible for signage, whilst the Environment Agency would undertake the weekly water quality testing.

WATER QUALITY / SWIMMING – Ali Wittamore (representing Maggie Carter)

Ali Wittamore reported that Noah Law has been working with South West Water to encourage forward planning in the 2025–2030 period. Fowey remains second on the priority list behind Newquay. The bathing water at Readymoney Cove is currently rated as 'Good'. Storms seem to have affected swim buoys, with some appearing out of place. There are concerns about hire boats mooring to them [the mooring attachments have been removed].

Jim Candy noted that WaterFit Live <https://www.southwestwater.co.uk/environment/rivers-and-bathing-waters/waterfitlive> may be useful for updates. Philip Henson noted that pump upgrades on Passage Street were reported on the website.

Ali Wittamore concluded by reminding the group about the swimmers' WhatsApp group.

MEMBERSHIP - REAPPOINTMENTS – Richard Jeffery

Re - appointments (automatic) were confirmed. It was reiterated that membership terms are three years (renewable though re-appointment by FHC for up to three terms) and that members may step down at any time.

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR & VICE CHAIR – Richard Jeffery

Chair: Richard Jeffery (re-elected)

Vice Chair: Penny Tuck (newly elected)

The Group expressed thanks to Chris Ogg, the previous Vice Chair who has stepped back from the PUG, and to Richard for continuing his role as chair.

STAKEHOLDER'S FEEDBACK / ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Lostwithiel Bank Safety: David Guiterman noted that the Lostwithiel Royal Lifesaving Society is compiling a report on riverbank safety. This will be shared with FHC when available.

Artisan Market – Road Closure: Lucy Daniel asked whether the road through Fowey would be closed on cruise market days. Capt. Thomas confirmed this would not be the case.

Lifeboat Flotilla: Charles Clare-Dunbavand praised the recent farewell flotilla for the Trent-class lifeboat and enquired as to whether future similar events could require all vessels to have radios. Capt. Thomas confirmed this is a requirement under the General Directions but acknowledged that enforcement is logistically challenging.

RNLI Update: Richard Jeffery noted the most recent shout had been to a medical emergency at Sawmills. Fowey's very own new Atlantic 85 lifeboat has been undergoing sea trials and is due to arrive soon, with a naming ceremony scheduled for 25th July. Crew feedback for the change to Fowey's class of lifeboat is positive. Capt. Thomas added that docking arrangements will be revised – the Berrill's Yard pontoon is being extended northwards, and a Versadock will be installed on the inshore side. This part of the pontoon will be for exclusive use by RNLI and FHC vessels. Richard also confirmed that the new Lifeboat Operations Manager is Paul Gamble.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held in June, date TBA.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their input and there being no further business, the meeting closed at 1115.