



Dart Harbour

# Port Masterplan

Printable Summary

Dart Harbour 2026-2050

Note that this is the printable summary of the Port Masterplan. The full version can be found here: <https://arcg.is/0GPfHu>

## Consultation

Following extensive consultation to establish what stakeholders wanted to see included in the Port Masterplan, this is the final draft for further consultation. We want your opinion on the plan, as this is your harbour! There are a number of ways for you to give us feedback, and understand more about the plan:

- Complete our [online feedback form](#)
- Send us feedback by email to [harbourmaster@dartharbour.org](mailto:harbourmaster@dartharbour.org)
- Pop in to the Harbour Office, 6 Oxford Street, Dartmouth, TQ6 9AL
- Attend one of our presentations or casual drop-in sessions on the plan. There is no need to book for these sessions. The presentations will be a more formal presentation followed by questions, so we would ask you to arrive promptly where possible. The drop in sessions are informal, and you can visit at any time

Place	Type	Date & Time	Location
Ashprington	Presentation	Thursday 7th May 19:00	Ashprington Village Hall, TQ9 7UL
Dartmouth	Presentation	Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> May, 18:30-20:00	Ballroom (Upstairs), Guildhall, Victoria Road, Dartmouth, TQ6 9RY
Kingswear	Drop-in	Mon 15th June, 13:00-18:30	Hoodown Workshop, Kingswear – accessed via railway path.
Totnes	Presentation	Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> June, 18:30-20:00	Totnes Boating Association, Steamer Quay Road, Totnes, TQ9 5AL
Galmpton	Presentation	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 18:30-20:00	Galmpton Village Institute, 24 Greenway Road, Galmpton, TQ5 0LT
Dartmouth	Drop-in	Sat 25th July, 12:00-17:00	Dartmouth Harbour Office, 6 Oxford Street, Dartmouth, TQ6 9AL

## Executive summary

This masterplan sets out Dart Harbour’s vision for sustainable growth and development over the next 25 years. It provides a strategic framework to help the harbour respond to economic, environmental, technological, and social changes while strengthening its role as a driver of local prosperity and community value.

The harbour currently operates at a good balance between usage and environmental protection, with over 3,600 moorings and strong demand, particularly from the leisure sector which generates more than 80% of revenue. While this provides financial stability, the plan seeks to diversify income by expanding commercial, marine services, and large-vessel activity, while maintaining its core leisure offering.

Safety and navigation remain central priorities. The harbour will continue to invest in infrastructure, maintain navigational standards, and improve access for all users, including those with disabilities.

Governance as a trust port ensures reinvestment into operations, supporting long-term resilience and flexibility, with a strong and flexible team to deliver this plan.

Growth opportunities include expanding facilities for yachts and small boats, enhancing visitor amenities, supporting local marine industries, and increasing capacity for larger vessels such as cruise ships and superyachts (within defined limits). The harbour also aims to address service gaps and ensure continuity where private providers may withdraw.

Environmental stewardship is a core pillar of the plan. The harbour commits to improving ecological health, restoring habitats, achieving net-zero operations by 2050, and addressing pollution, particularly water quality in the upper estuary. Climate adaptation measures, including resilience to sea-level rise and storms, are also integral.

The masterplan emphasizes the harbour's role as a community asset. It supports local employment, skills development, and inclusive access to the river. Enhancing connections between communities and the waterfront, encouraging recreation, and engaging underrepresented groups and young people are key goals.

Finally, the plan recognises the harbour's rich heritage and seeks to preserve and celebrate it while enabling modern growth. Though ambitious, the masterplan is designed to be adaptable, acknowledging that future conditions may require updates over time.

The Masterplan has created a suite of policies, and details a range of projects to enhance and protect the harbour, and ensure that the goals of the harbour's strategy are delivered.

## Introduction

This printable summary gives an overview of the masterplan and policies and plans contained therein. It does not contain the full detail of the plan itself.

### **Purpose**

This masterplan sets out Dart Harbour's vision for how we expect the port to develop over the next 25 years, outlining how we intend to respond to existing opportunities and change. It looks at what is happening at the port now, and why. It then explains what needs to happen in future and sets out how we intend to get there.

A port masterplan helps a port and stakeholders to understand the nature of the very rapid commercial, environmental, technical and social changes that are going to hit economies over the coming decades and then seeks to map out the investments needed over the short, mid and long term to ensure the port prospers in the future.

We have aimed to be ambitious with this plan. A strong port should be a catalyst for local economic growth and employment, and at present Dart Harbour is not necessarily taking all possible options to do this. This plan will help us to become fit for the future.

Dart Harbour undertook extensive consultation with all stakeholders in the preparation of this plan, details of which can be found in the [appendix](#). This masterplan represents the position of the Dart Harbour board in 2026. Whilst we have tried to be forward-thinking, the world is a rapidly changing place, and it is likely that our successors will need to update and revise this plan over the years.

It should be noted that a masterplan is not an application for planning permission and does not constitute approval for any proposal. However, it will assist in developing future projects and planning applications, and in helping the harbour authority give a response to other's plans.

### **Structure**

The masterplan is divided into six main sections - analysing the harbour itself, our core markets, the environment and local community, followed a SWOT analysis summarising the identified needs, and then the projects needed to deliver the plan.

## The Harbour

Dart Harbour covers 11 nautical miles (21 km / 13 statute miles) from harbour limits on a line from Inner Froward Point to Combe Point, all the way to the weir at Totnes.

### **Capacity**

There are presently 3619 moorings on the river, which we believe provides the optimum balance between its use as a harbour, and the impact on the environment and character of the Dart. There may be opportunities for additional moorings for small (<6m) boats and in Totnes.

### **Navigation & Safety**

Safety is Dart Harbour's primary concern and we will continue to implement our safety policies, and endeavour to retain our excellent safety and compliance record.

The Dart estuary is navigable throughout its length, and the channel is safe, relatively easy to follow and has few hazards. We will continue to provide clear aids to navigation and hydrographic information, maintain a large ship channel from sea to Sandquay, and the main fairway as suitable for navigation by commercial vessels to Totnes, with dredging if necessary. We will also develop an 'inshore route' channel for small craft from Warfleet to Maypool.

We have a comprehensive safety management system and incident management plan, and also work with emergency services to ensure that there is a full and appropriate emergency response capability on the Dart.

### **Access to the Harbour**

There is reasonable road access to the harbour, as well as limited public transport options. We would encourage local councils to improve access to the harbour, and have policies to encourage green transport options. We are committed to providing easy access to boats on the river for all, regardless of any mobility or sensory disabilities, and have provided some facilities for this, which we intend to expand.

### **The Harbour Authority**

Dart Harbour is a trust port, overseen by a volunteer board. A trust port is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation, with all revenue reinvested in the port. Dart Harbour believes our current legal structure, governance and staffing is fit for purpose to deliver this masterplan as it has both strength, accountability and flexibility. Our current funding model also provides sufficient funds to deliver this masterplan.

We have a good system of safe operations, including maintaining harbour assets. We operate a number of marine services and will look to grow these services. Dart Harbour's viability as a port is underpinned by a variety of businesses, ranging from boatyards to the fuel barge. Some of these are single points of failure, and if any of these shut down or reduced service in the future, the harbour authority would consider stepping in to provide replacement services.

## Harbour Users

In order to plan for the future, it is very important that Dart Harbour understands the needs of its customers. As a self-funded organisation, our customers fund all the work the Harbour Authority does, so by continuing to provide facilities and services for them the harbour can continue to thrive, though this also needs to be balanced against other priorities in other chapters of this plan.

### **Revenue Split**

Over 80% of Dart Harbour revenue - almost £2M annually - comes from the leisure sector, mainly from yachts on Dart Harbour moorings. This gives a good level of certainty for revenue, as most mooring revenue is predictable, and the loss of even our largest customers would not be catastrophic, though it comes with a risk that the harbour is vulnerable to any decline in the leisure sector, especially the

mid-market yachts that represent the core of our business. We will look towards a more balanced revenue split in the future, by targeting growth in local commercial, large ship and marine services sectors in particular, without neglecting our core leisure business.

### **Yachts**

This sector is our core business, providing well over 50% of our annual income. We provide a range of moorings to around 1000 yachts on the river, and there are a further 750 in marinas and 200 on moorings from other providers. This number includes a small number of liveaboard vessels – we will continue to allow a similar number of these vessels to be safely moored.

In general this sector is booming. We have long waiting lists for all our mooring types, though are some indications that the boom may not continue. Larger yachts are increasing in popularity. The majority of Dart Harbour's moorings are on buoys, which are lower cost but less popular than pontoon moorings and we will look to replace less popular moorings whilst continuing to provide a range of moorings for yachts, as well as a low-cost yacht taxi.

Visitor numbers are relatively steady over the long term, varying annually depending on weather and other factors. We aim to be considered the destination of choice in the southwest, and we have an excellent range of moorings in Dartmouth an upriver, however other facilities such as water, power, toilets and showers are more limited, and we will look to improve these. We attract a range of events and rallies to the river and will continue to promote and attract these, given their community benefits.

The marinas and boatyards on the river continue to be successful, and we will support them as they provide excellent service and facilities to their customers. The Dart can be considered a centre of excellence for leisure boat maintenance and service.

### **Small boats**

Smaller boats – ranging from RIBs, dayboats and dinghies to paddle craft and personal watercraft remain very popular, and the waiting lists for moorings for these boats are some of the longest in the harbour. We will look to increase the number of moorings for these vessels. The range of clubs on the river are very busy. Launching facilities for small craft are very limited. We encourage paddle vessels to the river, and will introduce further facilities, launch & access points, paddle trails etc to help encourage this.

It is likely that future technology will provide even more new ways to enjoy the river, especially in smaller craft, and Dart Harbour will be ready to embrace these new opportunities providing that it does not cause significant challenges to existing river users or compromise safety standards.

### **Local Commercial Vessels**

Dart Harbour has significant local commercial activity, including passenger boats, fishing, aquaculture, workboats, marine civil engineering and of course the Britannia Royal Naval College. There has been some decline in the local passenger boat and fishing sectors in recent years and we will work with operators to ensure that these sectors remain viable and sustainable, including provision of necessary infrastructure. We are working with the Royal Navy to revitalise and expand officer training on the Dart. We will support existing and new operators the development of the workboat and aquaculture sectors.

### **Large Commercial Vessels**

The retention of the Dart as a port for larger vessels is a priority for us, recognising that the town of Dartmouth wouldn't exist without the historic port. We are absolutely committed to maintaining a strong pilotage service. This will require a small but sustained increase to the current number of commercial vessel movements on the river annually.

Whilst we recognise that cruise ships are not universally popular, they provide excellent economic activity, and complement the land-based tourism sector well, so we will continue to encourage cruise ships to visit the port and invest in providing excellent facilities for them. We can currently

accommodate ships up to 200m. We are investigating the provision of a larger mooring that could take ships up to around 250m, though we will never accommodate very large cruise ships in the river.

We will also aim to attract other larger commercial vessels, from superyachts and tall ships to short layups or weather sheltering of cargo vessels, as well as opportunities in the electric and unmanned sectors.

### **Waiting Lists**

Dart Harbour continues to have long waiting lists for most yacht and dinghy moorings, though the Fisherman's Pontoon, mud moorings and some up river moorings do not have a wait. Pontoons are especially popular.

## **Environment**

### **The Dart Estuary Ecosystem**

The Dart is an important natural habitat for a wide variety of life. Dart Harbour will work to protect and restore key ecological features and species of the estuary, including kelp beds, riverbank oak woodlands, intertidal mud and rocky shores, saltmarshes, seagrass, plants, fish, birds, invertebrates and marine mammals. We would like to see the ecological status of the river to be restored to good condition.

### **Designations & Policies**

The Dart Estuary sits within the South Devon National Landscape, and protecting and restoring its natural environment is particularly important. A resilient River Dart that is in excellent ecological health, supporting increasing wildlife, better quality of life for people and communities and a sustainable local economy. We work with other partners to ensure a collaborative approach to maintaining and restoring the estuary environment, its setting, water quality, biodiversity and key ecological features and species.

### **Zoning & Planning**

We have developed a zoning plan for the river, and detailed planning policy as part of this masterplan, to detail where we would support or object to new developments, including evaluating our own projects.

### **Climate Change**

Devon has declared a climate emergency and put together a carbon plan with the aim of achieving net-zero carbon by 2050. We aim to achieve net zero in our own operations by 2050. For Dart Harbour's own vessels, a plan is being developed to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2032 and by 90% by 2040 – we have already converted two vessels to electric propulsion.

We will also be a facilitator to reduce the carbon emissions of other river users, though this is significantly more challenging and is not a problem that Dart Harbour can solve alone. The blue carbon sequestration potential of projects such as Saltmarsh restoration is a useful by-product of this work, but we do not think there are any opportunities for significant renewable energy generation on the Dart.

We will need to prepare for sea level rise and the increasing impact of stronger and more frequent storms.

### **Pollution**

The Dart estuary is a designated bathing water, with excellent water quality (in 2025) in the lower reaches, but poor water quality in the upper reaches. We will work with polluters to restore all parts of the Dart estuary to Excellent water quality. This includes our sewage from boats action plan. In general the Dart is reasonably free of other kinds of pollution, but we also have plans for all kinds of pollution from bilge water and biosecurity to abandoned vessels to air quality and light pollution.

## Community

### **Employment**

The marine sector is an important employer in the Dart Valley. We will encourage the retention and development of high-quality marine employment, and training opportunities for local people. The Dart should be considered as a hub of marine and tourism employment, and a marine career seen as a desirable and long-term option for local people. We encourage the development of a wide variety of different employment sectors at a range of sites

### **A Local Asset**

The Dart is part of what makes the places along the river 'home'. Whether local residents sail, swim or paddle on the river, walk its banks, enjoy views across it, or just feel an intangible sense of comfort at its presence, it certainly impacts the lives of all in the area.

The Dart is a local asset, and we will encourage the community to benefit from it, whether that is through employment, leisure boating, tourism or simply enjoying the beautiful location. Physical links and views between the river and communities are very important. We would also welcome opportunities to work with local artists to better tell the story of the river. We particularly encourage younger people to enjoy the river, including through Dart Harbour Community Fund and projects such as the new swim zone in Dartmouth.

### **Connecting river and community**

Providing easy access between the land and the river is a key part of allowing our communities to enjoy the harbour. The projects section describes a number of physical ways we would like to see these connections improved, including regeneration type schemes in Totnes and Galmpton.

The Dart has a number of small beaches around the Bight and Range, as well as popular swimming areas up-river. These are well used by locals and tourists alike. Most locations have no facilities and limited access. This is part of their charm, but a few sensitive improvements could improve their enjoyment for generations to come.

We also support the further development of the Dart Valley Trail network of paths, and would encourage further links, especially those near to the river banks, where this does not impact the natural heritage of the estuary

We recognise the importance of the iconic views of and from the river, and will endeavour to protect the identified views from development

### **Community Engagement**

Young people are the future of the harbour. Dart Harbour has a number of schemes to encourage local young people to use the harbour. As well as children, there are other groups of local people who do not benefit from living near to the Dart. Dart Harbour will continue and expand its work, through the Dart Harbour Community & Environment Fund to encourage young people and others who may not consider the Dart as their asset to use the river.

Dart Harbour has many channels for engaging with stakeholders, and has a good relationship with local councils, stakeholder groups and our customers. New ways will be sought to broaden this group and engage even more thoroughly.

### **Heritage**

Dartmouth has been a port since the twelfth century, having been host to vessels as diverse as the Crusades fleets, the Mayflower, Sir Walter Raleigh, Castle Mail Packet Co mailships to South Africa and the yacht British Steel. We will build upon the traditions and heritage of the port by maintaining a flourishing harbour which can actively demonstrate its heritage

## Analysis

This section summarises all of the findings from the detailed description of the harbour above, and presents it in the form of a SWOT analysis.

### Strengths

- Safe, well-managed and highly navigable harbour with strong operational track record
- Established reputation for professional marine operations, safety culture and harbour management
- Experienced, committed staff, management and board
- Trust port structure enables long-term, place-based decision making
- Financially stable with ongoing investment in skills and training
- An excellent reputation for marine operations with strong in-house capabilities and a multi-skilled workforce
- Strong stakeholder relationships and community integration, with huge volunteer resource of keen & experienced local people.
- Broad range of moorings and berthing options across multiple locations
- Excellent, modern, well maintained facilities.
- Attractive, high-quality destination with diverse on-water and shoreside experiences
- Flexible infrastructure and service model (e.g. yacht taxi enabling dispersed moorings)
- Highly attractive leisure destination with strong demand and waiting lists
- Diverse harbour use: leisure, visiting vessels, local commercial, large vessels, Royal Navy etc.
- Strong identity as a multi-destination estuary with active clubs and events
- Harbour is covered by strong environmental protection.
- Harbour authority has strong track record of investment in environmental projects
- A popular river for swimming, with excellent water quality in lower estuary.
- Good levels of local marine employment and training
- The Dart is a focus of local life, with an excellent connection between community and river and stunning views.
- A long history as a port with many heritage assets.

### Weaknesses

- Very limited land ownership constraining development and revenue diversification
- Dependence on Duchy lease arrangements, limiting financial flexibility
- Physical constraints: limited road access, parking, and commercial quay space
- Shortage of modern, serviced, and walk-ashore berths
- Limited shoreside facilities (toilets, showers, pump-out, accessibility)
- Insufficient infrastructure for larger vessels, fishing vessels & workboats and evolving user needs
- Limited launch facilities and upstream pontoon landings
- Small organisational scale creates delivery constraints and key-person dependencies
- Limited ability to support pilotage training and retain specialist skills
- Gaps in in-house marine service capability (e.g. dredging, towage)
- Heavy reliance on leisure market for income
- Some services (e.g. yacht taxi) are run as loss leaders
- Marine industry causes pollution, including generally high carbon footprint.
- Dart Estuary has moderate ecological status and fail chemical status, with some habitat loss, invasive species issues and salmon almost extinct on the river.
- Bathing water in the upper reaches is poor quality.
- Government funding for environmental projects is patchy with no long term plan.
- Some gaps in community connection with the water
- The Dart is a barrier to transport, especially in the evenings.

### Opportunities

- New Port & Marine Facilities Safety Code and General Directions improve safety.
- Dart Harbour's nimble organisation means it is well placed to take advantage of new opportunities.
- Strong demand for higher-quality, serviced and walk-ashore berthing
- Opportunity to increase mooring density and optimise existing water space, alongside providing improved services.
- Potential to enhance Totnes and upstream locations as active waterfront destinations
- Future lease arrangements could unlock development potential
- Opportunity to expand our marine services business, potentially outside the harbour.
- Continued growth in UK leisure, cruise and domestic tourism markets
- Expansion of paddle sports, swimming, and low-cost boating broadening user base
- Potential to reposition the Dart as a multi-location destination within one estuary
- Opportunities linked to offshore wind, aquaculture, regional marine services, events and new leisure technologies.
- Potential to develop as a support or maintenance hub for commercial fleets whilst developing the harbour further as a centre of excellence for leisure vessel service and maintenance.
- Transition to low-emission vessels and supporting infrastructure
- Opportunity to lead in sustainable harbour operations and influence user behaviour
- Use of technology to improve safety, monitoring, and harbour management
- Harbour authority plans to make sustainability central to decision-making, and enhance the Dart Harbour Community Fund.
- Redevelopments and increased use of Britannia Royal Naval College.
- Closer collaboration with local stakeholders.
- Leveraging heritage, events, and environment to strengthen tourism and identity
- Good plans and opportunities to recover local habitats and reintroduce species.
- Expanding core markets should lead to improved employment and make the harbour a driver of local economic growth.

### **Threats**

- Increasing storm intensity, sea level rise, and shoaling impacting infrastructure and operations
- Biodiversity decline, water quality issues, and invasive species affecting harbour health
- Regulatory and planning constraints and slow consenting processes limiting development, especially in protected environments
- Over-reliance on leisure market leaves harbour exposed to downturns
- A focus on new opportunities may impact our core business
- Significant reduction in local fishing fleet and shellfishery
- Decline in entry-level boating and changing ownership patterns
- Increasing popularity of liveaboard boats by owners who may not understand the safety issues.
- Reduced domestic tourism or changing visitor behaviour
- Macroeconomic pressures affecting investment and demand
- Increasing regulation or government policy changes, for example of passenger & fishing vessels, environment, taxation, pensions etc
- Loss or deterioration of critical third-party infrastructure, including impact of local government reorganization.
- Risk associated with Duchy lease arrangements
- Pilot National Pension Scheme is a significant risk to harbour finances
- Growth in inexperienced users and declining skill levels
- Increasing complexity of harbour use (new vessel types, drones, high-speed craft)
- Rising number of poorly maintained or end-of-life vessels

- Overtourism and development impacting character and community support
- Declining local engagement with marine activity over time
- Limited national level plan for leisure vessel decarbonization or sewage reduction.
- Increasing issues with invasive species.
- Development may be restricted by community concerns.

## Projects

### **North Embankment:**

Dart Harbour are planning significant investment in the North Embankment area, to provide a range of facilities that the port currently lacks - including floating slipway, toilet and shower facilities, inner navigable route, mini-fingers on LWL pontoon and additional walkashore moorings

### **Upriver Landings:**

A common factor in our consultation was that river users would like additional places to land upriver, to allow them to explore the amazing estuary. This also fits with our new 'One River, 8 Destinations' marketing campaign. We have identified a number of potential locations for future landings, including Totnes Weir, Longmarsh, Fleet Mill, Old Mill, Lighthouse Beach & Warfleet to fill this need, as well as potential 3<sup>rd</sup> party projects at Noss, Dolphin boatyard, Blackness, Sharpham and Baltic Wharf.

### **Stoke Gabriel Mill Point Pontoon**

We are replacing Stoke Gabriel Mill Point pontoon with a permanent structure, with better access to the shore. In the future further upgrades to this pontoon may be practical.

### **Totnes Waterfront:**

Totnes is an extremely vibrant town, that is let down by its waterfront. Both sides of the river have generic industrial buildings and under-utilised car parking that do not inspire people to make use of the quays, and do not contribute to a great welcome to the town for ferry passengers or leisure boaters. The river itself, constrained between high artificial banks has none of the life or attraction that is found elsewhere.

We would like to see a general improvement to the landing facilities and waterside public realm at Steamer Quay in Totnes, in partnership with the local council and other stakeholders. Any development on the Steamer Quay side would need to be well designed and balanced to attract community support. We imagine additional food and drink outlets, enhanced children's play, public events space including a small amphitheatre, and a free outdoor museum/gallery of the river.

We want to install a landing pontoon for dinghies at Steamer Quay. In the future a low-water landing pontoon towards the south end of the range may also be a sensible development, to significantly improve the tidal accessibility of Totnes.

We would also like to add some form of pontoon mooring at Totnes for annual berth holders. This could be in the mill tail or turning basin.

### **Galmpton Riverside:**

Despite its long maritime heritage Galmpton village has limited physical connection with the water. Dolphin Boatyard are developing their site and have created a much improved destination for the local community and for visiting boats. In addition, they are supporting local marine employment and creating a hub for marine environment, aquaculture and classic boat restoration businesses, on an ideal brownfield site within disused quarries.

Dart Harbour supports this development, and would like to see future expansion to provide improved leisure facilities (boat mooring, landing & launching, food & beverage, accommodation, retail etc) on the eastern and southern sides of the creek, alongside increased boat maintenance (including

commercial vessel maintenance) and employment facilities on the north side of the creek and in the quarries. This obviously must be in conjunction with the local community

All development in this area would need sensitive design, making use of natural barriers to minimise the visual impact from the estuary.

### **Fishing Fleet Infrastructure:**

We currently provide quite basic facilities for the local fishing fleet. Following discussions with the Shellfish Association and their members, in the short term we intend to provide an ice machine, improved davits, some form of parking in conjunction with the councils, floating equipment storage and additional tender berths.

In the longer term we would like to provide more walkashore berths for the fishing fleet, an improved compound, and potentially a larger fishing base for the future, to be better able to compete with more major ports.

### **Cruise ship mooring**

Dart Harbour began discussions with the local community in 2023 on the possibility of reinstating the former large ship mooring off of Warfleet Creek, to allow larger cruise ships up to ~250m to visit the port.

This project would be a good way to ensure the long-term viability of the port, as well as providing a significant economic impact to the town. Following a pause after our last consultation, more work is being done to fully analyse the benefits and impacts of this project, which will then lead to further consultation before a decision is reached on how to move forward

### **Sandquay**

The marine facilities at Sandquay are underused and many parts are in a state of disrepair. Dart Harbour are working with the Royal Navy to help provide new pontoons for the college's training fleet, which help to create a world-class marine college.

Other parts of Sandquay will remain unused after this work, especially the Admiralty Jetty. Whilst there is repair work needed, this facility is structurally sound, and should be an asset for the harbour, for use by commercial and/or naval vessels.

### **Kingswear Marina**

The existing K Pontoons have a very space-inefficient layout, and are not walk-ashore. These are amongst our most popular berths, and attract a premium price. As they reach the end of their life, we plan to replace them with new pontoons in a marina-style layout, potentially also extending to the north to replace an area of trot moorings. It would be possible to replace the current 137 pontoon berths with around 270 finger berths, allowing the removal of a similar number of trots and upriver moorings.

This would also allow improved facilities for commercial vessels

### **Dittisham Pontoon**

Dittisham Pontoon is one of Dart Harbour's busiest landings, and an extremely popular facility for mooring small boats, with a waiting list of over 10 years. There is the potential to extend the pontoon by around 20m into deeper water with minimal impacts to other moorings, the environment or the visual footprint of the pontoon. This could allow improvements such as the addition of around 20 additional annual moorings for dinghies, replacement of existing running moorings with mini-fingers, an improved dinghy / rib landing area, improved facilities for ferries, and a drop off / overnight berth for larger yachts.

### **Town Jetty**

The Town Jetty was designed when two local boat trip companies were both offering up to 15 sailings per day. This is no longer the case, and it is now seeing increased use for mooring of larger vessels, superyachts and cruise tenders. Recent use for mooring PS Waverley, tall ships and warships has

shown it is an excellent facility for this task. In the future, a rearrangement of the Town Jetty could provide even better facilities for these vessels, as well as additional visiting yacht moorings, whilst still providing ample space for the Kingswear Passenger Ferry and trip boats.

### **Buoyage improvements**

In the Broad Stream and Long Stream areas, the existing buoyage is very limited. Adding in additional cardinal marks to show Flat Owers, additional buoyage around Higher Gurnow Point, and marking the middle back channel through Long Stream would make this area clearer to navigate.

### **Saltmarsh Project**

This is a multi-year project that started in 2022, with work project managed by Dart Harbour and mainly funded by the EA and other partners, but with in-kind contributions from Dart Harbour. It aims to restore the estuary's saltmarsh habitats. The next phase aims to restore lost saltmarsh in The Gut area.

### **Rewilding and Mooring removal**

We are planning to remove an area of moorings around Maypool, to make a more peaceful undeveloped area - good for wildlife, but also good for sailing and boat trip passengers. Moorings would be removed when given up, and relocated into more dense areas as part of other projects, keeping the total number of yacht moorings on the river the same.

### **Other Environmental Projects & Environmental Capital Plan**

The Dart has a wide range of ecosystems, and is host to a wide variety of wildlife, as described in the environment section of this masterplan. Whilst much of the Dart Ecosystem is in an excellent condition, some habitats need work to return them to good condition, and certain species, most notably the Atlantic Salmon have low or reducing numbers. There may also be a need for future interventions to protect the Dart against climate change or human activity.

Dart Harbour has recently begun a project to catalogue the natural capital of the estuary, and identify actions that are needed to support the environment in our estuary.

### **Telling the story**

The details of the Dart Estuary's ecosystems and wildlife is not as well understood by the public as they should be. There is also an opportunity to encourage eco-tourism to the Dart. Dart Harbour will look at opportunities to tell this story. Whilst a full visitor centre would probably be excessive, a permanent outdoor exhibition display could be an excellent addition to Steamer Quay for example. We are also developing digital resources such as online trails, which could be accessed via QR codes on navigation marks.

## **Policies**

### **The Harbour**

***Policy MP-H1:*** We believe that the current number of yachts on the Dart provides the optimum balance between its use as a harbour, and the impact on the environment and character of the Dart. There is a strong local desire to avoid the Dart being completely dominated by marinas and dense moorings. Car parking is also a limiting factor.

***Policy MP-H2:*** It is Dart Harbour policy that the number of yacht moorings on Dart Harbour Fundus is capped at 980. From time to time moorings may be moved, resized or redesigned, but that number should not be exceeded. An exception to this is in Totnes, where there may be opportunities for additional moorings whilst improving the character of the river.

***Policy MP-H3:*** Dart Harbour policy is that the four current private marinas is the right number, but there should not be further private marinas built on the river. There may be opportunities for the current marinas to expand slightly, provided navigation and the environment are not impacted, but not hugely from their current sizes.

**Policy MP-H4:** It is Dart Harbour policy that there should be no new private moorings on the river. This particularly applies to new pontoons and jetties from private homes. There are a very large number of homes on the waterside, and if all were allowed a pontoon, the character of the river would be completely changed. Running moorings from private homes or new pontoons that provide genuinely useful public access to the river without detriment to others or the visual appeal of the harbour may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Policy MP-H5:** Safety is Dart Harbour's primary concern and we will continue to implement our safety policies, and endeavour to retain our excellent safety and compliance record.

**Policy MP-H6:** Dart Harbour will continue to maintain and improve the Aids to Navigation on the river, with the aim of ensuring an intuitive passage.

**Policy MP-H6:** Dart Harbour will continue to maintain a large ship channel from sea to Sandquay, and the main fairway as suitable for navigation by commercial vessels to Totnes. In the future repairs to the training wall in Long Stream may be needed if its deterioration does lead to shoaling of the channel.

**Policy MP-H7:** Dart Harbour will develop and restore an 'inshore route' channel for small craft between Warfleet and Maypool, as well as making changes to general directions to allow for safer swimming and small unpowered craft activities in inshore areas, whilst giving larger vessels priority in the main channel.

**Policy MP-H8:** Dart Harbour will continue to conduct hydrographic surveys of the harbour regularly, with each area surveyed at least every 5 years. We will consider the need for dredging as required

**Policy MP-H9:** Dart Harbour will resist the laying of additional cables and pipelines outside the existing cable areas.

**Policy MP-H10:** As the digital transformation continues, Dart Harbour will continue to ensure that mariners and other river users are provided with clear, accurate, timely information as required to make a safe passage through the harbour. We will continue to look at ways to provide useful advice and assistance to those whose experience is more limited, to ensure that they can enjoy the river safely. We will improve monitoring of the river, using improvements in technology such as AIS, CCTV and drones to ensure that the harbour team has all information needed to carry out their work.

**Policy MP-H11:** Dart Harbour will continue to work with emergency services to ensure that there is a full and appropriate emergency response capability on the Dart. As a category II responder, Dart Harbour will maintain, develop and drill a detailed emergency plan.

**Policy MP-H12:** Access to the Dart, and thus the operation and development of the harbour is impacted by a number of road bottlenecks, severely limited car parking, and limited public transport. Whilst Dart Harbour cannot directly influence these factors, we encourage local councils to include them in their long-term plans.

**Policy MP-H13:** Dart Harbour would not support any proposal for a bridge across the river below Totnes Bridge.

**Policy MP-H14:** Dart Harbour aims to provide facilities accessible to all river users, including those with disabilities. throughout the harbour, particularly as part of new projects.

**Policy MP-H15:** Dart Harbour believes our current legal structure, governance and staffing is fit for purpose to deliver this masterplan as it has both strength, accountability and flexibility. Our current funding model also provides sufficient funds to deliver this masterplan, though certain projects may require loans or other external funding. Opportunities for grant funding should be explored.

**Policy MP-H16:** The ownership structure of the river and infrastructure does not cause any significant concerns. The Duchy's public aim "Generating meaningful social impact, supporting local prosperity, rural infrastructure and communities." is very much in line with Dart Harbour's policies, so hopefully future lease arrangements will even better reflect this. partnership.

**Policy MP-H17:** Dart Harbour will investigate opportunities that may provide more space ashore for our operations.

**Policy MP-H18:** Dart Harbour believe the current maintenance strategy is well-formulated to ensure infrastructure remains in excellent condition for a long life.

**Policy MP-H19:** Dart Harbour will look for opportunities to grow our marine services business, especially where there are chances to utilise our existing expertise in marine engineering, boat maintenance, workboat operations, fabrication, mooring design and management, marine safety and emergency management which could all be used to diversify our business, and to provide useful services to current and new customers in the area. We will also consider opportunities to provide marine services outside of harbour limits, especially if this could also result in a business case for providing a new service that would be uneconomic only within the harbour.

**Policy MP-H20:** Whilst Dart Harbour may consider diversification beyond our core business (for example operating marine service beyond our harbour limits, or operating a non-marine business adjacent to the harbour), we would only do this where it brings clear benefits to our core business and/or stakeholders. We will not do anything with the potential to compromise or distract from our core duty as statutory harbour authority for the Dart.

**Policy MP-H21:** Dart Harbour's viability as a port is underpinned by a variety of businesses, ranging from boatyards to the fuel barge. Some of these are single points of failure, and If any of these shut down or reduced service in the future, the harbour authority would consider stepping in to provide replacement services.

## **Harbour Users**

**Policy MP-U1:** Dart Harbour will look towards a more balanced revenue split in the future, by targeting growth in local commercial, large ship and marine services sectors in particular, as described above, though without neglecting our core leisure business. Ultimately we aim for at least 25% of our revenue coming from these sectors.

**Policy MP-U2:** Dart Harbour will continue to provide a range of moorings for residential yachts.

**Policy MP-U3:** Where possible Dart Harbour will look to replace less popular moorings with moorings such as serviced pontoon berths (with electricity, water, walkashore access etc) that have longer waiting lists. It is however, important that we continue to provide a wide range of moorings, ideally including a selection available with a minimal wait.

**Policy MP-U4:** We will work to ensure that there are opportunities for local people at a wide range of income levels and age ranges to be able to access the water, in yachts and dayboats as well as cheaper paddle sports and dinghies. This includes provision of low-cost moorings and supporting shared-ownership options and clubs.

**Policy MP-U5:** Dart Harbour intend to continue to run the yacht-taxi service on a low -price basis going forward.

**Policy MP-U6:** We support the marinas to continue to provide excellent facilities for river users. We would consider supporting small expansions of marinas where there are no significant impacts on navigation, the environment, the community or other river users.

**Policy MP-U7:** We want to see the Dart's Centre of Excellence position for maintenance of leisure vessels maintained and enhanced, and to include electric propulsion and other new technologies.

**Policy MP-U8:** We will continue to allow a small number of liveaboard vessels to continue to be moored on the river, with appropriate policies in place to manage their safety. Houseboats are not allowed on the Dart, therefore liveaboard vessels must be mobile and move regularly. Dart Harbour will consider all options to improve safety for these vessels.

**Policy MP-U9:** The Dart is not an appropriate location for houseboats, large accommodation ships or barges used for temporary housing.

**Policy MP-U10:** Visiting yachts are encouraged to visit the Dart, including moorings in all parts of the river. We aim to be considered the destination of choice in the southwest and will continue to provide and improve our visitor facilities in all areas of the Dart, including improved toilet & shower facilities, and quieter moorings in upriver locations.

**Policy MP-U11:** Dart Harbour will look to increase our number and range of moorings for RIBs, dayboats and dinghies, both permanent and visitors' moorings.

**Policy MP-U12:** Dart Harbour encourages paddle vessels to the river, and will introduce further facilities, launch & access points, paddle trails etc to help encourage this. We will also work with clubs to help provide training and events.

**Policy MP-U13:** Whilst Jet skis and other personal water craft can be controversial due to noise, wash, and limited facilities, Dart Harbour does not believe it is appropriate to ban these vessel outright. Instead we will allow their use within the framework of existing rules on the river, which minimises potential for disturbance.

**Policy MP-U14:** It is likely that future technology will provide even more new ways to enjoy the river, especially in smaller craft, and Dart Harbour will be ready to embrace these new opportunities. We support the development of new ways of using the river providing that it does not cause significant challenges to existing river users or compromise safety standards. Where new ways of using the river require new or adapted facilities, changes to rules, or changes to our navigational risk assessment, all relevant stakeholders will be consulted through the appropriate channels.

**Policy MP-U15:** Dart Harbour encourages the existing ferry and passenger boat operators to continue to operate a wide range of services. We will be supportive of new passenger boat operators who want to operate new services on the Dart, as there is ample space available at existing passenger landings. In addition we support the use of the river as an environmentally sustainable transport corridor, including supporting the decarbonisation of the passenger fleet on the Dart. This is likely to include provision of charging infrastructure.

**Policy MP-U16:** Dart Harbour supports the local fishing fleet, and work with the fishing and wider communities and take steps to find ways to support a reversal in the trend of declining numbers of fishing vessels in the port. This may include attempting to attract new segments of the fishing industry to the port.

**Policy MP-U17:** Dart Harbour will actively to seek to promote and enable shipbuilding and repair facilities and skills, including for the Brixham fishing fleet.

**Policy MP-U18:** Dart Harbour fully supports the development of the Dart as a hub for aquaculture, and will look to provide facilities and infrastructure as required. Following the likely loss of the Waddeton oyster beds, Dart Harbour will investigate opportunities to maintain aquaculture on the estuary, taking advantage of the shellfish water status.

**Policy MP-U19:** Dart Harbour will continue to work with the Royal Navy to retain and expand their presence on the Dart as the home of Royal Navy Officer Training.

**Policy MP-U20:** Dart Harbour will work with existing and new workboat operators to expand their use on the Dart, including taking advantage of the developments in unmanned vessel technologies.

**Policy MP-U21:** Dart Harbour will continue to encourage cruise ships to visit the port and invest in providing excellent facilities for these ships and their passengers, in order that the local economy can continue to benefit from this economic activity.

**Policy MP-U22:** Dart Harbour will continue actively marketing to Super Yachts and tall ships, and will look to upgrade the facilities available for them.

**Policy MP-U23:** Dart Harbour will begin to more actively encourage short to mid term layups or weather-sheltering of commercial vessels at periods where there is space for them, whilst taking care to avoid higher risk vessels.

**Policy MP-U24:** Dart Harbour is absolutely committed to maintaining a strong pilotage service. This will require a small but sustained increase to the current number of commercial vessel movements on the river annually.

**Policy MP-U25:** Dart Harbour will continue to investigate and take advantage of all new business opportunities from commercial shipping and the Plymouth & South Devon Freepoint.

## **Environment**

**Policy MP-E1:** The primary mission of Dart Harbour is to safely manage, protect and enhance the harbour, whilst supporting the local economy and community. The safe and effective operation of a port can sometimes appear to conflict with our aims for environmental and community benefits. We have shown over recent years that these potentially conflicting aims can work well together, when all factors are taken into account, and when we work together with a wide range of stakeholders. As an example, whilst we aim to reduce our carbon footprint, that cannot come by simply reducing traffic in the river. Instead we will look to work with sectors, companies and vessels that are also working towards environmental excellence.

**Policy MP-E2:** Dart Harbour will work to protect and restore key ecological features and species of the estuary, including kelp beds, riverbank oak woodlands, intertidal mud and rocky shores, saltmarshes, seagrass, plants, fish, birds, invertebrates and marine mammals. We are developing an

*Estuary Charter to ensure that the needs of the natural environment are fully considered in our decision making, and are part of our operating culture.*

**Policy MP-E3:** *Dart Harbour supports the target of restoring the Dart Estuary to Good ecological status by 2030, and maintaining that status. We aim to have an estuary teeming with life!*

**Policy MP-E4:** *Dart Harbour is committed to supporting projects to improve the water quality, biodiversity and ecological status of the estuary, being guided by the Dart Catchment Action Plan. This may include projects within the wider catchment.*

**Policy MP-E5:** *Dart Harbour fully support the work of the South Devon National Landscape, providing funding towards its work, and we will continue to do so, as well as working alongside other partners to ensure a collaborative approach to maintaining and restoring the estuary environment and its setting.*

**Policy MP-E6:** *Dart Harbour believe that the existing environmental designations give an adequate level of protection for the estuary, however we would encourage greater clarity as to the exact requirements of the MCZ and SAC, and a detailed action plan to protect it. Any additional protection must be balanced against the need to operate a harbour, for a reasonable amount of well-designed development to go ahead, and for local businesses to be able to function and grow.*

**Policy MP-E7:** *Dart Harbour regularly responds to planning and MMO applications for work and developments in or near the Dart Estuary. In general we are supportive of well-planned and appropriate development, however we will normally raise a concern or formal objection where:*

- *There is a negative impact on a protected or unusual natural feature*
- *There is a loss of public right to navigation, especially if the main channel is impacted.*
- *Additional private moorings or landings are created, unless there is a clear public benefit, such as a public landing in a new area of the river.*
- *There is a negative impact on marine employment or provision of facilities for boat owners.*
- *The development is out of character for that particular section of the river (as per this zoning map), especially if there is a severe visual impact from or of the river and/or building heights could impact the ability of vessels to sail*
- *There is a reduction in public access to the river.*
- *Lighting could impact navigation, or cause light pollution on the upper reaches of the river.*
- *There is a likelihood of additional pollution*
- *The construction phase of the development does not adequately minimise the impact on the environment and other river users.*
- *A new privately owned marina is proposed,*
- *An expanded marina is proposed unless it is clear that there will not be additional pressure on parking, there will not be additional marine toilet discharges on the river and the effect on existing river users will be minimal.*

*Dart Harbour will also use the same criteria to evaluate our own developments.*

**Policy MP-E8:** *Dart Harbour aims to achieve net zero in our own operations by 2050. For Dart Harbour's own vessels, a plan is being developed to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2032 and by 90% by 2040*

**Policy MP-E9:** *Dart Harbour will be a facilitator to reduce the carbon missions of other river users, with an aim of being a centre of excellence for low and zero carbon boating. Examples include:*

- *Providing infrastructure for charging and for alternative fuels*
- *Opening discussions, for example providing case studies to show customers how they can reduce their environmental impact*
- *Encouraging more efficient use*
- *Providing discounts for low impact vessels such as those without internal combustion engines and/or increasing charges for higher impact vessels*

- *Prioritising the provision of berths for low impact vessels*
- *Facilitating grant applications*
- *Use of General directions or other legislation to ban higher impact vessels.*
- *Working with other organisations such as the RYA, MCA, BPA etc – monitoring and implementing new policies developed by these organisations in this rapidly developing area.*
- *Working with utility companies to ensure adequate electric supply.,*
- *Marketing & communicating the facilities and options available.*

**Policy MP-E10:** *After reviewing options, we consider that there are minimal opportunities for renewable energy generation on the Dart beyond small local projects such as installing solar panels on Hoodown, as all potential options only give a very small generation potential, with a large footprint in an environmentally very sensitive area.*

**Policy MP-E11:** *Dart Harbour will work with other stakeholders to enhance habitats such as saltmarsh, and the blue carbon sequestration potential is a useful by-product of this work.*

**Policy MP-E12:** *Dart Harbour will need to prepare for sea level rise and the increasing impact of stronger and more frequent storms and work with other authorities on this. It is important that any measures for flood risk reduction are compatible with the operational viability of our quays.*

**Policy MP-E13:** *Dart Harbour will work with polluters including South West Water, local communities, farmers, boatowners etc. to restore all parts of the Dart estuary to Excellent water quality.*

**Policy MP-E14:** *Dart Harbour has developed a Sewage From Boats Action plan. This will require all boats on Dart Harbour moorings with a toilet to have a holding tank, chemical toilet, treatment plant or equivalent by 2038, with phase in dates from 2024-2038 based on vessel size and type, with more polluting liveaboard and passenger boats, and those new to the Dart needing earlier compliance. This will also require additional infrastructure to achieve - if we are unable to deliver this infrastructure we may need to adjust the associated dates.*

**Policy MP-E15:** *Abandoned vessels are a significant concern for harbour authorities everywhere. Dart Harbour continue to petition government to put a moderate amount of legislation in place to reduce this risk, such as requiring registration of vessels. Locally we have a range of procedures to try to actively manage poor condition vessels before they become an issue. We support national policy being used to manage this issue, such as compulsory vessel registration, and/or a French style funding mechanism.*

**Policy MP-E16:** *Taking action to reduce rubbish entering the river, and to remove it. This includes providing improved recycling facilities and continuing to work with 'Till the Coast is Clear' - providing them with a vessel and waste disposal for their volunteer work to remove litter from the river, foreshore and beaches.*

**Policy MP-E17:** *General directions will allow Dart Harbour to tighten rules on oily bilge water by requiring boat owners to keep their bilges clean, reducing the number of small oil spills*

**Policy MP-E18:** *Maintaining our dark skies policy, avoiding light pollution from the river above the Anchorstone.*

**Policy MP-E19:** *Using our biosecurity plan to help protect the estuary from invasive species, as well as taking specific actions such as working with the Duchy of Cornwall to remove Pacific Oyster farming from the Dart, and developing an action plan to remove feral Pacific oysters, providing boat wash-down facilities to avoid invasive species transfer and improving drying grid facilities - ideally including filter systems to avoid antifouling debris entering the water.*

### **Community**

**Policy MP-C1:** *Dart Harbour will encourage the retention and development of high-quality marine employment, and training opportunities for local people. The Dart should be considered as a hub of marine employment, and a marine career seen as a desirable and long-term option for local people.*

Dart Harbour will work with local councils, employers, colleges, landowners and others to encourage marine businesses in the area, from small local start-up businesses, to new sites for multi-national firms. Encouragement may mean providing new infrastructure, supporting development plans, improving transport networks, enhancing training opportunities etc. Dart Harbour will continue to encourage young people to consider a marine career, through apprenticeships, work experience and other engagement

**Policy MP-C2:** We would encourage the development of marine employment opportunities at sites including: Baltic Wharf, Dolphin Boatyard, Old Mill Creek, Sandquay, Yalberton industrial estate areas, Townstal industrial estates, Dartmouth Town Centre, Noss on Dart Marina.

Potential new business opportunities could include:

- Wind farm support - particularly if new wind farms are built in Lyme Bay;
- Fishing Vessel Maintenance - with a large fleet based in Brixham, a boatyard capable of maintaining these vessels could offer good year-round employment;
- Aquaculture - Especially support for aquaculture offshore;
- Increased commercial shipping; Boat building - The success of Ribeye could continue to grow.;
- Paddle sports - training, retail, maintenance businesses;
- Future technologies - South Devon College is already teaching electric propulsion courses which could see the Dart being a centre of technology for these vessels

**Policy MP-C3:** The Dart is a local asset, and we will encourage the community to benefit from it, whether that is through employment, leisure boating, tourism or simply enjoying the beautiful location. We particularly encourage the preservation and development of links between the river and the towns and villages on its banks, including landing points, public river frontage, foreshore and beaches, riverside businesses, footpaths and transport links.

**Policy MP-C4:** The Dart's status as a tourist attraction – both in its own right and as a backdrop to a tourist area is very important, and should be preserved and encouraged.

**Policy MP-C5:** Dart Harbour will continue to support events – large and small, new and long-standing to take advantage of the river.

**Policy MP-C6:** Dart Harbour will consider opportunities to work with local artists to better tell the story of the river.

**Policy MP-C7:** We support the full reopening of Lighthouse Beach in Kingswear as a community asset.

**Policy MP-C8:** The Swim Zone in Dartmouth has been very successful, and we plan further improvements to it, and look for opportunities for similar facilities elsewhere on the river.

**Policy MP-C9:** We support the further development of the Dart Valley Trail network of paths, and would encourage further links, especially those near to the river banks, where this does not impact the natural heritage of the estuary

**Policy MP-C10:** Dart Harbour recognises the importance of the iconic views of and from the river, and will endeavour to protect the identified views from development

**Policy MP-C11:** Dart Harbour will continue and expand its work, through the Dart Harbour Community & Environment Fund to encourage young people and others who may not consider the Dart as their asset to use the river.

**Policy MP-C12:** Dart Harbour's 2024 mooring policy aims to reduce the waiting list time for those who live within walking distance of their mooring, so reducing reliance on cars. We also plan to provide limited numbers of cycle racks at our facilities where there is space to do so.

**Policy MP-C13:** Dart Harbour will continue to make engagement with a broad range of stakeholders a key priority.

**Policy MP-C14:** *Dart Harbour will build upon the traditions and heritage of the port by maintaining a flourishing harbour which can actively demonstrate its heritage. We will work to protect heritage assets and promote the understanding of them by the public. This could include seeking heritage harbour status.*