

Feedback from Harbour Community Forums, Commercial Operators and Clubs

The HM wrote on 17 October:

You may or may not be aware that there is considerable concern within the Harbour about the number of unreported minor collisions and the consequent damage to boat's topsides.

Bye-Law 14 requires any collision to be notified to the harbour Authority as soon as practicable after the event. Unfortunately, there must be many harbour users who are either unaware of the Bye-law or chose to ignore them.

The Harbour Board have been considering how best to tackle the problem and would welcome your comments on how your organisation suggests the Harbour Authority tackles the issue. It would be impossible to eliminate all accidents, but it should be possible to find a way of informing and educating harbour users of their responsibility to report collisions so that unsuspecting owners do not constantly have to find damage to their property when they visit their boats.

I am writing to all Harbour Forums, user groups and businesses to enlist their support. The subject will be discussed at the January 2013 Board Meeting, could I therefore request any thoughts you might like to contribute to the debate on this issue by 12 December?

Bye-Law 14

Notification of Collisions etc

14. The master of a vessel which

- (a) has been involved in a collision with any vessel or property or has been sunk or grounded or become stranded in the harbour or
- (b) by reason of accident fire defect or otherwise is in such a condition as to affect its safe navigation or to give rise to danger to other vessels or property or
- (c) in any manner gives rise to an obstruction to a fairway

shall as soon as reasonably practicable report the occurrence to the Harbour Master and thereafter provide the Harbour Master with full details in writing and where the damage to a vessel is such as to affect or be likely to affect its seaworthiness the master shall not move the vessel except to clear the fairway or to moor or anchor in safety otherwise than with the permission and in accordance with the directions of the Harbour Master

	Feedback
Yeowards	Improved Signage, Instructions in Harbour Guide, Note with all issued Harbour Dues stickers.
South Sands Ferry	<p>My thoughts are;-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definition of collision needs to be clarified. 2. "Bumps" between 2 boats with owners on board and no damage – no report. 3. " Bumps", no damage, no owner on board – report yes. Damage often not Immediately obvious 4. Collision with damage should be reported unless both owners on board and both agree that damage can be easily fixed and no fault. Why escalate and involve SHA? 5. Use a simplified "Accident Report Form" ie not the MAIB form which implies the incident will become an overkill involving the MAIB. 6. Dinghy racing should be banned from the foreshore mooring – too congested, high risk area. 7 If a racing dinghy collides with a moored vessel the dinghy should suffer a penalty (ie 360 degrees). This would make the 'helm' take more care and leave more safety margin. 7. Obviously any collision involving injury must be reported.
Member of SYC	<p>I wonder if there is some mileage in the Harbour Master building a map of where the collisions occur, the extent of the damage and the identities of the proven culprits. If repeated occurrences happen in specific locations, perhaps the solution is to move the moorings?</p> <p>Some of the collisions with moored boats that I have heard of are with boats that are moored alongside the</p>

	<p>channel in the bag, and if there is a cross tide these boats are often abeam across the channel.</p> <p>Maybe the density of moorings in the harbour is too high for safe navigation by other harbour users.</p> <p>As the member of SKEA points out, collisions with moored boats is not exclusively the domain of small craft. Incompetence also extends to owners of larger boats who are often insufficiently experienced to control their craft at low speed in our tidal waters. "</p>
Member of SKEA	<p>From my own experience it depends on independent observers reporting the incident. Some years ago there was an incident in the Bag when two irresponsible young men on a HobiCat holed a Salcombe Yawl on its moorings. A local fisherman witness the event and reported it to the Harbour Master.</p> <p>On another occasion, a German visiting yacht failed to allow for the tide stream and struck my yacht, a 41 foot long-keel ketch, on its mooring in The Bag and failed to report it. I was informed by the owners on the yacht moored behind me who had witnessed the incident. I went over to the German yacht, which was moored in the entrance to Frogmore Creek. Fortunately for me, there was little or no damage to my boat which was of heavy construction, but it had obviously been a collision of some force, as shown by the damage to the toe-rail and stanchions on the German boat.</p> <p>So as an initial suggestion, perhaps a note in the harbour guide to encourage harbour users to report any incidents that they witness</p>
KEBC	<p>Thank you for your request to comment on the issue of minor collisions. The topic was discussed at a recent committee meeting and members were given the opportunity to add any further comment at our last club meeting. The views expressed supported your assertion that this is a significant issue and comment is provided below. The committee asked that I take the opportunity to comment on 2 other issues.</p> <p>Minor Collisions: The club will broadcast to members the need to be aware of Bye law 14 and its contents. The 'Boatwatch' teams will also be asked to keep a special eye open. However, it was felt that many casual users of the estuary are not made aware of the Bye law and should be.</p> <p>The drivers of self drive hire boats were seen as a particular target community who appear to receive a minimum</p>

	<p>amount of instruction but have the ability to go almost anywhere in the estuary with vessels that can inflict significant damage. It was felt that greater oversight of the preparation of the users was necessary. This is considered important to aid prevention and increase awareness of the Bye law to aid reporting. The club is not aware of any minimum requirements for qualification to use any of these boats. The committee felt that these boats should be clearly and individually identifiable from all aspects when in use. It was also questioned whether the number and freedom of these vessels should be restricted in order that areas such as congested trots etc are not available to unfamiliar boat drivers.</p> <p>It was also recognised that during racing the pressures on helmsmen are considerable and this can be a source of both collision and non reporting. Visiting racers should be reminded of the obligations on helmsmen for both safe navigation and collision avoidance.</p>
SYC	See Appendix 2
Salcombe Dinghy Sailing	<p>I am quite sure that there must have been occasions over the years, when one of our hire boats has been in a minor incident and it has gone unreported to us or the harbour office. It is very unlikely that this involves any tuition boats, as these nearly always have an instructor in the boat or a rescue boat alongside on a one to one basis.</p> <p>Any occasion where one of our dinghies is seen alongside a moored boat is always checked out. However it is impossible to be everywhere, and it is quite likely that a hirer could do some damage and not own up to it. If there is no damage to the hire boat and nothing was seen, then there is no reason to suspect anything has taken place, All hirers are asked if there is anything to report and if they have had a good sail. There have been several examples of incidents taking place and we have contacted the owner and paid for minor repairs. There have been two or three incidents over 15 years where insurance companies were involved with a more major collision. Last season as far as I am aware was completely trouble free as the weather was generally poor and the novice sailors did not generally venture out. Our hires were well down on previous years.</p> <p>We do take a lot of precautions to try to prevent incidents taking place. All our Wayfarers have double bow puddings on them as one does not necessarily absorb all the impact. Hirers are checked out for their experience and in some cases are limited to a defined sailing area which is in open water. If the conditions are difficult, they have their sailing area restricted. We arrange tows through The Bag and meet crews at the entrance of Frogmore Creek if conditions or hirers look as if they could pose a risk. We rig the boats with small sails if it is windy and sometimes change a hire to a tuition session if we think the hirer is not competent in the prevailing conditions of wind and tide.</p> <p>I think the harbour knows quite well which groups or organisations contribute the biggest problem. Less</p>

experienced sailors bringing their own boats down for their holidays and sometimes letting their children loose in them should not be overlooked. Certainly we have had to provide assistance to quite a few. However I would suggest that pressure of use is the main issue and that a lot of user groups contribute to the overall problem. The harbour can pose challenging conditions for even the more experienced water users, particularly around half tide. At low tide there is very little by way of water to use and in the summer a lot of people wanting to use it.

One frustrating statistic in the harbour is that a lot of the boats cluttering up the fairways are very rarely used and just sit there taking up space. Not sure how you tackle that one! I've tried to be as honest as possible with your request for feedback. The following are a list of proposals for consideration. I really do feel we go out of our way to reduce the risks as far as we can.

1. As a hirer of boats, it would be very useful information for the harbour to provide a scatter graph of where in the harbour these minor collisions have taken place. Extra precautions can then be taken by everyone with regard to this in these areas.
2. Following on from this it would be very useful to know when the damage is occurring as far as this can be assessed. Regatta weeks??
3. Look into the idea of designated sail training area, like the entrance of Frogmore Creek where anchoring is prohibited between 10am and 5pm so there is always some water to sail on clear of boats.

Keep the fairways as clear as possible so that navigation is made easier through certain difficult parts of the harbour.