

Coad Cove Finger Pontoon Trial – Customer Feedback

Dear Berth Holder

As you know the Harbour Authority are conducting a trial on the Coad Cove Pontoon B with finger berths.

The reason for the trial is to make best use of the available pontoons to accommodate customer's requirements. Currently the minimum boat size on deep water moorings is 7.5m but there are a number of smaller boats currently on deep water facilities and 106 customers waiting for deep water moorings for boats under 8m. We also have a need for larger berths, the harbour moorings were laid out when a 10m yacht was considered big, so now we only have 20 large moorings (over 12m) in the harbour. By moving the smaller boats to fingers we could free up 90 of pontoon berth which would enable some movement in the waiting list for both the small (under 8m) and larger (over 12m) berths.

As you have been part of the trial I would welcome your thoughts so that I can provide the Board with the information they need to decide on the future berthing options.

We look forward to hearing from you.

1	7.15m Jeanneau Merry Fisher	<p>Thank you for your email of 27th July regarding the trial of finger berths on Coad Cove Pontoon B.</p> <p>As fuel prices go higher there will undoubtedly be an increase in the number of smaller fuel efficient boats; and people today seem to be rushing here there and everywhere requiring everything instantly, so they will need their little boats at any state of the tide.</p> <p>I entirely understand the need to create more berths from the existing stock and finger berths along the inside of Pontoon B and possibly Pontoon D do, on paper, make a lot of sense. However the practicality is a little different because of the position and flow of the tide, both incoming and outgoing. The flood tide sets a course approximately at 45 degrees to the finger berths, flowing upstream at up to 4.5 knots; the ebb tide often has a back eddy which also flows upstream at the same 45 degrees, but not so briskly. This back eddy is not predictable. Also the prevailing wind is Southwesterly which is also at 45 degrees to these fingers.</p>
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		<p>So the effect is that berthing and leaving is challenging to say the least. However with considerable practice, it can be done. On leaving the finger I have to go out astern fairly fast so that I do not hit either the end of the finger or the boat on the other side of the finger (luckily having a bow thruster aids this manoeuvre). But it's easy for the stern to be taken around if one is not quick enough or has set the wheel incorrectly.</p> <p>A boat weighing 2 to 3 tons moving at 4.5 knots and affected by the wind will cause damage to other boats, people and pontoons especially the finger ones. So the more experienced the owner the better.</p> <p>I would strongly advise that between each set of 2 boats (between fingers) a Lightweight Mooring Arm be positioned. Hopefully this would stop boats careering into each other. I am aware that the length of a Finger pontoon is often considered to be 75% of boat length (i.e. 6m for boats of 7.5 meters) – but I would suggest it may be advantageous to go to a 7.5m finger.</p> <p>Finally there is the small consideration of sleeping aboard – lying abreast at full flood creates so much noise that one doesn't get much sleep – not very conducive to going to sea alert and refreshed, but perhaps not many small boat people sleep aboard.</p> <p>I hope the foregoing will be helpful to you and the Harbour Board in deciding future berthing arrangements.</p>
2	7.6m Boston Whaler	<p>The location of Coad cove pontoon and therefore the finger moorings is such that they take the full force of the tide whether ebbing or flowing. When attempting to moor the boat it is very nearly impossible in the tidal flow when attempting this short handling and even worse when single handed. Someone needs to be standing on the pontoon to catch the line or in some situations catch the boat to do this safely. Given the size of boats that are moored there it is highly likely that users will want to use them short or single handed.</p> <p>When you add even a small amount of wind to this mix the situation is even worse and becomes very dangerous to other users and other boats. There will be some serious accidents and damaged caused by boats trying to moor or come off the finger mooring and hitting adjacent boats. I am a qualified skipper and have handled much larger yachts in difficult moorings so I'm not a novice on this. I know my boat has already been hit by another boat while it has been moored. I ha sent to add that I haven't been notified by whoever the owner of the other boat was!!</p>

		<p>Also, again due to the positioning of the finger moorings, there is a large amount of debris and rubbish collected around the boats as is take the full force of tide. It makes a mess of the boat and also gets in to the engine bays. I've had to untangle debris and driftwood from propellers. My mooring is close to the end so I'm sure I get more of this than others.</p> <p>I hope this feedback is somewhat useful. Even if the content is not perhaps what you wanted or hoped for. I understand and commend what you are trying to do to create room for larger boats but my view is that the current finger moorings are not an adequate answer unfortunately. I'm at a loss to suggest alternatives without adding additional non visitor swing moorings, another residents' pontoon for larger yachts or positioning pontoons with fingers in less of the tidal flow.</p>
3	6.5m Doral	No feedback Received
4	5.3m RHIB	No feedback Received
5	5.18m Dell Quay Dory	I think it is a very good thing to be doing.
6, 7 & 8	Variety of Boats, Blue Water Commercial berths.	<p>Customers with larger boats with cabins have found it difficult to berth on the fingers, this is due to high windage making boat handling more difficult.</p> <p>Customers with RHIBs and sports boats have enjoyed using the finger pontoons.</p>