

KEYHAVEN RIVER – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 New Forest District Council (NFDC) are responsible for the effective management of the moorings, dinghy parks and access to and from the Keyhaven river for all paying water users under a 99-year lease from the Meyrick Estate which expires on 24th June 2033. As such, we operate a system of annual fees and charges as well as allocating and charging for temporary moorings and daily launching of boats down to the size of a paddleboard.
- 1.2 Our 2-storey river wardens office on the quay at Keyhaven provides an ideal lookout post and focal point for all water users. We have over 500 moorings, of which 399 are Council moorings and 154 which are private. Of those private moorings, 74 are still licensed (2003 figures).
- 1.3 The Council dinghy park has space for 108 boats, limited to 16ft length overall.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To manage the administration and letting of moorings, the mooring waiting list and dinghy park spaces.
- 2.2 To ensure for an annual mooring inspection and maintenance programme, to ensure the availability of safe tested reliable moorings by 31 March each year.
- 2.3 To collect all mooring, temporary mooring, dinghy park, Launching fees and overnight mooring and anchoring fees
- 2.4 To ensure the River Warden team shifts are focused on the busiest periods – especially either side of high-water times where activity on and off the water is highest. This includes providing on-site support and information to the public as well as pro-active river patrols daily in the high season.
- 2.5 To work with other stakeholders, including NFDC coastal team (specifically relating to erosion and changes in the river and its topography), New Forest National park authority, Hurst Castle Sailing Club, Keyhaven Yacht Club, Keyhaven Sea Scouts, West Solent Boat Builders, Hurst Castle Ferries, Keyhaven Fishermen's Association and Lymington and Keyhaven Marshes Nature Reserve, to manage the river for the benefit of all.
- 2.6 To ensure provision of appropriate facilities for water-based recreation having regard to the needs of the local community and the environment. This includes allowing no additional moorings in the Keyhaven river but ensuring that those moorings currently available are managed to maximise revenue for the district balancing this with the need to provide affordable moorings for NFDC council taxpayers.

3. POLICIES

- 3.1 To be eligible for an annual allocation of a mooring or dinghy park space the applicant must be a Council Taxpayer to the NFDC.
- 3.2 Those non-taxpayers who already had a mooring or dinghy park space prior to the Council adopting this policy (1984) can remain on the River but pay a surcharge of 50% in addition to the standard fee.
- 3.3 those with a mooring or dinghy park space who cease to be Council Tax payer in the District may be allocated a mooring for the maximum of two years from the date they cease to be a Council Tax payer, after which point the mooring or dinghy park space will be re-allocated. In that period the charge will be 50% above the standard fee
- 3.4 The allocation of moorings and dinghy park spaces are done annually. They are an annual award and it always remains at the Council's discretion to reallocate boats elsewhere on the River for the purposes of good management – such as: avoiding conflict between boats; accommodate the needs of the waiting list or changing conformation of the River itself. As guidance, NFDC will, wherever possible, let mooring holders staying on their mooring allocated unless operational or safety reasons require the mooring holder to move their vessel to another mooring as directed by the NFDC River Warden.
- 3.5 NFDC reserve the right to withdraw any allocation if a mooring holder who changes their mooring or vessel, without informing the River Warden first. We will always do our best to accommodate requests, but the river has its limitations and there are often repercussions for other people, so it may not be possible to accommodate them, in which case no allocation will be made.
- 3.6 To allocate to people who actively use their craft. If a mooring holder sub-lets for whole or part of a season, that mooring will not be allocated again to that mooring holder.
- 3.7 To inform applicants about allocations as soon as is reasonably possible.

4. KEYHAVEN RIVER - NAVIGATION (Admiralty charts Admiralty 2021, 2035, SC5600 And Imray chart 2200.10 refer)

- 4.1 The entrance to the river is marked by port and starboard hand buoys with transit posts on the marshes.
- 4.2 Starboard hand buoys mark the curve of the deep-water channel up to the mouth of Mount Lake. The two buoys mark the southwest and northeast corners of Short Reach. These are followed by two starboard buoys leading to the quay.
- 4.3 In other parts of the river the moorings mark the deepest water, and boats pass across the bows of moored boats. The deepest water always being at the bows where the mooring is laid.

- 4.4 The entrance to Hawkers Lake is shallow to the East and deeper to the West and now has a red marker as a Port hand buoy to mark the western side of the entrance. Only those with a good knowledge of local conditions use Hawker's Lake entrance.
- 4.5 Speed limit signs are in place at the main river entrance, Hawkers Lake entrance and the quay to remind river users of the 4-knot speed limit.
- 4.6 there is erosion of the saltmarsh in the main river. This is leading to some navigational concerns as the nature of the erosion visually suggests a much wider channel, even at half-tide, than is the case. This is has become a very real issue, affecting the types of boats that can now be accommodated on the moorings. This is a process likely to continue and may have very significant impacts in future. There needs to be a greater understanding of what is happening to the profile of the main River and to the undoubted opening of the Creeks.

5. THE QUAY AND RIVER WARDEN OFFICE

- 5.1 The quay is the focal point of all boating activities at Keyhaven, both for participants and observers. It is an all year-round meeting place for any people who work or take their leisure at Keyhaven and on the river.
- 5.2 On weekdays it is a working quay for the boatyard, the fisherman, ferries and many others whose business is to do with boats and the sea. However, at weekends during the summer months April to October it becomes a leisure centre for all types of water sport.
- 5.3 Vehicular access is always essential in order that boats may be loaded and unloaded and to assist in the launching of boats.
- 5.4 The boatyard uses the quay to launch and haul out vessels using their yard, using a heavy mobile crane, but they do not work at weekends except in an emergency. During the peak summer weeks, the crane is not usually in daily use. Heavy loads requiring transport to Hurst Castle are usually loaded at the quay and conveyed by ferry or barge.
- 5.5 Charter fishing boats pick up and drop off passengers at the quay in suitable tide conditions.
- 5.6 The quay is a busy place that is designed for boating use. In the past there have been "near misses" involving swimmers and craft in the vicinity of the quay. Swimming in the vicinity of the quay is prohibited.

6. DINGHY PARK

- 6.1 The Council dinghy park has space for 108 boats, limited to 16ft length overall. The current waiting list is 4 year. Keyhaven is a river where people are active; boats should be used and not just stored. Owners of boats who do not use their boats for a season will be invited to remove their boats from the dinghy park to make way for active boat users. Boats abandoned or where owners fail to pay their annual fee will be removed and disposed of after

suitable notifications are made via e-mail to the last known keeper of the boat. If no contact details are held, then the boat will be disposed of.

- 6.2 The two clubs operate their own waiting lists for their dinghy parks.
- 6.3 West Solent Boat Builders offer space for parking dinghies in their yard during the summer months, after the boats in winter storage have been re-launched.

7. MOORING MAINTENANCE

- 7.1 Annual moorings maintenance work has been subject to competitive tendering since 1987. In March and April 2021 all the swinging moorings and the fore and aft moorings were replaced with much heavier ground chain (up to 38mm in the main channels and fore and aft moorings). Over 4200 metres of ground chain was pulled up and replaced. In addition, all thrashers, risers, shackles and swivels were replaced at the same time.
- 7.2 As part of a new maintenance schedule, risers, shackles, swivels and buoys will be inspected annually from 2023 and where necessary replaced. The new mooring system has been set with longer thrashers so that the riser shackles connecting to the swivel is nearer the surface and therefore more easily accessible to the river warden staff, thus saving time and costs if a specific mooring needs replacement work carried out.
- 7.3 Minor running repairs, which do not require the use of winching gear, will be carried out by the River Wardens throughout the year where requested by mooring holders or where the river wardens come across a problem out on the water which they can readily fix.
- 7.4 The existing strategy is to maintain a rigorous inspection and replacement programme, achieving as much standardisation of materials as possible, together with strengthening features (such as added stabilising spans) when storms reveal potential weaknesses in the original design of the system. This programme will enable us to build trust in the reliability of our moorings with mooring holders.

8. FEES AND CHARGES

Any fees payable are 'Keyhaven river dues' and it is the use of the river on that particular day/week/month/year that you are paying for.

- 8.1 the slipway is open to all comers on payment of the appropriate launching fee - apart from 'personal watercraft' (Jet skis) which are not suitable for the river due to its 4-knot maximum speed limit in all areas.
- 8.2 Overall length limit is governed by what can be reasonably handled on and off a trailer by its crew - generally no bigger than 20 ft length overall.
- 8.3 Fees are payable per launch or by the purchase of a season ticket from the River Warden. The fees are based on length of craft. Paddleboard, canoe and kayak users will be specifically invited to purchase a season ticket which will

reduce the admin time spent collecting these fees and provide better value for those water users.

- 8.4 No charge is made for dinghies from the Council, Keyhaven Yacht Club, Hurst Castle Sailing Club and West Solent Boat Builder's dinghy parks, providing they are displaying a current licence badge.
- 8.5 Fees are collected by the River Wardens.
- 8.6 Visiting vessels can anchor in the pool south of the main river entrance on payment of the required fee. In addition, vessels can be directed to vacant moorings and charged the required fee subject to the River wardens' discretion. In 2021 it is anticipated that there will be 7 visitors mooring buoys provided at the eastern end of hawkers' passage for which the standard visitors mooring fees (short stay/overnight) will apply.
- 8.7 Fees and charges are reviewed annually by the Environment and Coastal Services Portfolio holder in September each year and a decision is published on the NFDC website. This sets the fees and charges for the next calendar year and enables annual mooring holders to pay for the next years moorings in the off season.
- 8.8. Direct debit is the preferred method of payments for mooring holders and as such we are currently considering offering a 10% discount to annual mooring holders who pay by this method.

9. FERRIES AND LICENSED PLEASURE CRAFT

- 9.1 Hurst Castle Ferries operate up to 12 boats from a small pontoon jetty on the south wall providing a service to Hurst Castle and Yarmouth.
- 9.2 Cruises to Alum Bay and The Needles run regularly during summer months and ferries can be chartered for private rents.
- 9.3 River is at capacity in terms of the operation of licensed pleasure craft. Whilst such activity is a part of the current mix of activities at Keyhaven there is no scope for more. There will be no more additional permissions for the operation of licensed pleasure craft from Keyhaven. If a craft changes the nature of its work within the licensing scheme, this is a change within the current levels of activity and would not be regarded as additional.
- 9.4 The arrangements for the licensing and inspection of small passenger vessels carrying not more than 12 passengers for hire or reward has been revised as a result of legislative changes. The Council's licensing team in co-operation with the City of Southampton is the team in the the District.