

Dear Mr and Mrs Thorpe

As sole owners and directors of Bembridge Harbour Improvements Company, the Statutory Harbour Authority for Bembridge Harbour, we ask you four questions - about dredging, water purity, coastal defences and your management plan for Bembridge Harbour

1. Dredging

Bembridge Harbour Trust has been closely monitoring dredging activity this summer. We started with concerns that the dredger and hopper barge being used might not be big enough for the job, but your staff made a noble effort to get these works underway and towards achieving the amounts needed at Bembridge Marina. Those amounts demonstrated that the Statutory Harbour Authority did not have permission under the terms of its existing disposal licence to remove the sand and silt it would need to to get the situation back under control across the harbour. Our fears have been further exacerbated by the ad hoc and seemingly unlicensed dredging tactics that have been on display in August. On a number of occasions the dredger has been deployed to dig out sand around a few obvious pinch points. But instead of loading it into the hopper and taking it away, the sand and silts have been moved a few yards onto the nearest beach or adjacent seabed. It makes an unsightly mess at low tide for beach users and blocks up the access in and out of the harbour. It causes environmental damage too, and it is not clear if the harbour needs or has obtained any necessary permission for this from the Maritime Management Organisation.

BHT ask: When will the Statutory Harbour Authority explain its dredging strategy?



Spoil on the beach at Bembridge Boat Storage causes damage and obstruction for businesses



Spoil dumped on the beach at Attrills point. (Repeating heavily criticised similar works were carried out in 2019 by land based machines).



Works in the entrance channel, simply moving (not removing) spoil from one position to another, leaving obstacles and covering the established seabed, also cause concern.

2. Water purity

We also have concerns about the new houseboats being moored on the harbour's pontoons. All Statutory Harbours have a formal duty to the environment and with great fanfare you announced in the RYA spring magazine that you hoped for "8 or 9" more houseboat plots. *"It is important to care for the environment and I am passionate about this harbour"*. You also *"insisted new houseboats have sewage systems"* as part of an effort to make the harbour cleaner. But we see no evidence that the new houseboats on pontoon berths have sewage disposal facilities to match this pledge. Are we actually seeing more human waste being flushed into the harbour?

BHT ask: when will the Statutory Harbour Authority set out its water purity and general, environmental strategy for the harbour as a whole?

3. Coastal defences and groynes

When you bought the Statutory Harbour Authority in 2011 you doubtless informed yourselves of the responsibilities you were taking on. They were laid out very clearly in the 1963 local Harbour Act and the [management plan](#) of 2008, updated in 2010.

In this management plan (see section 6.2.4) the previous management of the Statutory Harbour Authority very clearly acknowledge that the maintenance of the groynes on either side of the harbour mouth (Attrill's Point Groyne and Bembridge Groyne) is the responsibility of Bembridge Harbour Improvement Company - the entity which you bought.

This is what those groynes look like today.



Bembridge No 1 Groyne 26th August 2020



The St Helens Groyne 26th August 2020.



There was more than enough room for 3 games of croquet on the hard sand of the ever growing sand bank today (26th August 2020). That is why a groyne repair and a replacement for HJ Bennetts is so critical.

BHT ask: when will the Statutory Harbour Authority fulfil the obligations you took on when you bought the Statutory Harbour Authority in 2011 and repair these groynes?

4. Management Plan

And finally ...

BHT ask: when will you publish a coherent overall management plan as: “*The board’s job is to set an organisation’s strategic aims, ensure that the necessary financial and human resources are in place to meet those objectives and to review management performance in meeting them. All board directors must act in the best interests of the SHA consistent with their statutory duties*” From [Ports Good Governance Guidance March 2018](#) (see Section 2 Part A applying to **ALL** Statutory Harbour Authorities).

The Trustees

Chris Attrill, Jonathan Bacon, William Bland (co-opted), Jeremy Gully (chair), Felix Hetherington (secretary), Phil Jordan (co-opted), Norman Marshall, John Raymond, Sara Smith, as Trustees

For and on behalf of

Bembridge Harbour Trust

www.bembridgeharbourtrust.org

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