

Harbour User Group (HUG) Report for TTEF April 2026

The Harbour User Group (HUG) for Port of Bideford held its first meeting in April 2024. The purpose of the HUG is a vehicle for the Port of Bideford Harbour Master to consult on all matters substantially affecting the conservation, protection, regulation, management, maintenance and improvement of Bideford Harbour and its navigation. The composition includes representatives of: berth holders, commercial and leisure users, heritage, biosphere, Navantia, Bideford TC and Harbour Master.

At the January 2026 meeting HUG covered points including:

Harbour Masters Report - animal feed cargos best handled at New quay and not in Bideford due to dust and mess. Clarified Navantia 2-year agreement for use of New Quay ends January 2028 and profit from TDC invoices for pilotage, wharfage, crane is shared. HUG agreed policies about Marine safety Plan and Pilotage. Once adopted by Harbour Board they will be posted on TDC website Harbour page

It was noted in discussions about the Marine Safety Plan that: Port of Bideford is compliant, Fish Dock Appledore requires management to become compliant, Instow Royal Marines are compliant and Navantia is ready for sign off after review with Harbour Master.

Code of Conduct- Deferred to next meeting

Water Quality - sea buoys now in place and delivering data. River buoys on Torridge Bridge now due to be deployed Spring 26. River Champions project continues.

Crown Estates and vessel mapping / register report - Nothing further to report

Plan Bideford Fisherman's Quay Update - Nothing further to report. Fountain works continue - completion aiming for March 26

Reports from members included:

Bideford Town Council - passed motion in favour of creating a Trust Port alongside local government reform as Torridge District Council and Devon County Council, who currently have powers to regulate the rivers, will be abolished in May 2028. <https://www.bideford-tc.gov.uk/bideford-town-council-calls-for-measures-to-tackle-the-decline-of-the-port-of-bideford/>

This was discussed along with recent announcement of Harbour Revision Order consultation for Exe Estuary.

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68e919e6e5f463a62cb9866e/Draft_Port_of_Exe_Harbour_Revision_Order.pdf).

This process in Exe is similar that would be required for changes in Torridge/Taw

HUG Terms of Reference, Composition and Full Minutes are available on Torridge DC website: <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/article/22103/Harbour-User-Group-HUG>

The following dates are proposed for HUG meetings 2026:

- Thursday 16th April

- Thursday 16th July
- Thursday 8th October

Mike Teare
Chair Harbour User Group
March 2026