

Bideford Harbour Masters report to:
The Port of Bideford Harbour Users Group
and to the:
Taw and Torridge Estuary Forum

Item 1 – Commercial Vessel Movements

1. Bideford:

- a. No large shipping movements have come to Bideford in the last quarter.
- b. It has been established through ‘third parties’ that Sibelco’s export of North Devon Ball Clay, that used to come through Bideford, is still happening but, that it is now being transported from the Torrington Quarry by road to be loaded in 8,000-10,000ton cargo batches in larger ships sailing from Avonmouth; a 24 /7 port with no tidal restrictions. Word has it that in 2022, Avonmouth Port Authority made Sibelco an offer which they would have been foolish to refuse and one with which Bideford could not commercially compete (despite many efforts).
- c. Going forward, it seems that, unless the costs, the reputational damage and the carbon tariffs that come from using such a long, congestion inducing, heavy road haulage export option rise to an unacceptable level, it is unlikely that ball clay exports will return to Bideford.
- d. The option to bring other ships and other cargoes to Bideford remains open and is being actively pursued.
- e. Not forgetting that Bideford remains the ‘home port’ for the passenger ship ‘Oldenburg,’ is the home base and port of Registry for the 3 vessels of Severn Seas Limited (‘Severn Scimitar,’ ‘Riparian’ & ‘Mair’), is the home of the Freshspring Trust, is the home port for ‘Algapelago,’ the harvesters of sea weed and is a newly appointed Historic Harbour.

2. Harland and Wolff – Newquay:

- a. The **“Greetje,” an 84m cargo ship**, unloaded 3090 metric tons of rape meal 18th-23 October 2024. Departed in ballast (empty).
- b. The **“Baltic Anka,” an 88m cargo ship**, unloaded 2901metric tons of rape meal 2-4th January 2025. Departed in ballast (empty).
- c. The **“Amadeus” a 78m cargo ship** unloaded 1650 metric tons of wood pellets on 13th January 2025. Departed in ballast (empty).

- d. Future prospects are encouraging, potentially with an animal feed ship coming every month and a wood pellet ship coming every quarter.
- e. Work continues with shipping agents to explore other cargoes that could be removed from the road network and brought to North Devon by sea.
- f. The ultimate goal of achieving a 2 day discharge 'slot' for each ship was reached for the Baltic Anka, successfully unloading 2901 tons of cargo in 36 hours. This opens the tantalising future possibility of 2 ships discharging during each spring tide period (5-6 days) and **potentially** accepting up to 4 ships per month.

3. Yelland:

- a. The Boskalis Westminster dredger, the "Deo Gloria" conducted one of her periodic campaigns, extracting high quality sand from the Bristol Channel and unloading it to Yelland, 1st December to 17th December 2024.

Item 2 – SV 'Waverley' Confirmed Call to Bideford: 7th June 2025

1. Considerable effort has been expended to try and bring the Steam Vessel 'Waverley' back to Bideford for at least 3 or 4 visits during her Bristol Channel cruise in early summer 2025.
2. It is unfortunate that the way the tides fall in 2025 means that the only suitable day for a cruise from Ilfracombe to Bideford and back, means that there will only be a single call on the afternoon (1300 - 1600) of Saturday 7th June 2025.
3. While disappointing that there were not more dates available, it does happily fall on the same day as the Bideford Fair and discussions are in progress to ensure that maximum benefit is made of this happy coincidence.

Item 3 – Port of Bideford, Draft Code of Conduct

1. At the September HUG meeting the HM agreed to adapt and write a draft "Code of Conduct for Bideford Harbour users.
2. The present draft has taken best practice from other ports Codes (Salcombe, Torbay, Dover & North Sunderland Harbours) to see if a Code of Practice would be 'useful' for the Port of Bideford.
3. The first draft Code of Conduct is presented to the HUG for reading and then discussion with members at the 30th January HUG meeting. There will inevitably be additions and revisions, and the intention is to work through this over the spring quarter and to present a fuller and finished version for consideration by the Harbour Board.