

BANGOR

MARINA

Bangor Marina and Harbour
Bregenz House
Bangor
County Down
Northern Ireland
BT20 5ED

Dear Paddler and Rower,

Bangor Harbour Code of Practice for man-powered boats, specifically rowing boats, canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards

There are fantastic opportunities for sport, leisure and recreational activities to take place on the sheltered waters of Bangor Harbour and we want to encourage and support these activities. Of course, the leisure use of Bangor Harbour must be balanced with its role as a commercial harbour.

Bangor Marina is the busiest marina in Northern Ireland which, coupled with the commercial aspects of the Harbour can create a challenging waterway on which to navigate.

This is the first edition of the Bangor Harbour Code which is aimed at both rowers and paddlers, it is intended to be an easily understood user guide for those accessing the sea via harbour waters. It has been developed with the help of experienced rowers and paddlers and recommendations are based on risk assessments and the requirements of local and international regulations.

Bangor Harbour can, at times, be a busy waterway, and all users should ensure that they can cope with the expected conditions in a bustling marine environment. All activities should be risk assessed and undertaken safely, with appropriate good environmental practices and consideration for other water users.

Safety will best be enhanced by the application of three fundamental principles:

- Keep a proper lookout.
- Know and follow the rules.
- Show consideration for others.

Enjoy Bangor Harbour safely.

Yours faithfully,



Kevin Baird
Harbour Master

BANGOR

MARINA

Why does this Code of Practice exist?

The Bangor Harbour Code is a special navigational concession for users of man-powered boats – specifically rowing boats, canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards.

It must be made clear that being allowed to navigate within Bangor Harbour, on a man-powered boat, is a privilege conditional upon responsible, safe navigation, which may be removed if not observed. Bangor Harbour Byelaws 2005 (section 58) applies.

'No person shall bathe or engage in sub-aqua swimming, windsurfing, jet skiing, canoeing, rowing or group activities within the harbour without the consent of the Harbour Master and only in such area as may be designated by the harbour master and in accordance with such reasonable conditions as he may impose'

It is up to the rowing and paddling communities, clubs, associations, commercial providers and individuals to take responsibility for complying with the Bangor Harbour Code thus ensuring that the privileges enjoyed by many are not removed.

This Code of Practice is specifically aimed at rowing and paddling within Bangor Harbour. For guidance and advice on other recreational water activities that happen within the Marina please visit www.boatfolk.co.uk/bangor

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, a **rowing boat** is defined as:

A small, lightweight, narrow-hulled boat propelled using oars, where the oars are in contact with the hull and act as levers. The crew have their backs to the direction of travel.

Rowing is a generic term consisting of two basic techniques:

- Sweeping – each crew member has a single long oar which is drawn with both hands.
- Sculling – each crew member has two shorter oars, one in each hand.

Rowing boats can also either be coxed or coxless:

- Coxed – an additional, non-rowing crew member who steers the boat. The coxswain (cox) may be in the stern of the boat but will always face in the direction of travel.
- Coxless – the rowing crew steers the boat by using the oars. They will have their back to the direction of travel.

For the purposes of this Code, a **paddled boat** is defined as:

A small, lightweight, narrow hulled boat propelled using paddles, where the paddles are held directly by the paddler who faces in the direction of travel. Most modern kayaks and canoes are made of plastic although some older boats are often wooden. Racing class boats are more often of a fibreglass or carbon construction and inflatable kayaks, canoes and SUPs are very popular.

BANGOR

MARINA

Types of paddled boat:

The following examples of paddled boat are not definitive but refer to the most common types of paddled boat found using Bangor Harbour.

Kayaks

A kayaker sits in their boat and propels it with a double-ended paddle. The boats generally have decks, although sit-on-top kayaks are seen occasionally. Kayaks generally have crews of 1 or 2 people who sit in-line. They come in larger, more stable touring/sea-going classes or much less stable racing classes which are finer and faster.

Canoes

A canoeist may kneel or sit in the boat and propels it with a single ended paddle. They are usually paddled by a crew of 1 or 2 people who sit in-line. Open canoes are often referred to as 'Canadian' canoes and are generally used for touring and recreation, whereas racing class canoes have decks and are much finer and faster but much more unstable.

Stand-up paddleboards (SUP)

This is a fast-growing water sport with links to surfing and although some touring and racing boards differ in style, most SUPs are like a surfboard. Commonly a single person maintains an upright stance on the board and uses a long single paddle to propel themselves through the water.

Using this Code

In general, the information in this Code applies to both rowers and paddlers. Of course, both have their own terms to describe their equipment and processes and the Code aims to use the most suitable generic language. Within this Code the following terms are used:

- Small boat - any small man-powered rowing or paddled boat.
- Outing - any training, journey or trip which uses Bangor Harbour waters.
- Helm - any person steering the small boat whether a coxswain, crew member or paddler.
- Crew - people propelling a multi-person boat (+ coxes).
- Inbound - moving into the Harbour.
- Outbound - moving out of the Harbour.

What to check before going afloat

It is the responsibility of everyone whether afloat solo, as a crew/ group member or as a coach/group leader to ensure that they have evaluated all the following factors which may affect their outing.

- Do not proceed if your checks identify a problem with your equipment, knowledge, experience, or fitness.
- The novice/inexperienced rower/paddler should not allow themselves to be coerced by peer-pressure, into going afloat if they are not comfortable with any aspect of the planned outing.
- Who is afloat? Clubs and schools are advised to keep a log or sign-out board of who/which boats are afloat and when they expect to return. Members should also know what to do if a

BANGOR

MARINA

boat fails to return or is overdue – this information should be part of a club's standard operating procedures and displayed near the signing-out board.

- In addition to signing-out, or in non-club situations, paddlers are advised to inform Bangor Harbour before going afloat and again on their return.

Communications

A means of communicating with the Emergency Service and with the Harbour Office is essential. You should carry either a mobile phone (in a buoyant, waterproof case) or a personal VHF radio set (Channel 11):

VHF Radio - Bangor Harbour constantly monitors VHF Channel 11.

A personal VHF handset is an invaluable tool for keeping a listening watch on the intentions of other vessels or to receive critical information. Users do not need a licence to listen on VHF but do need a licence to broadcast. Having such a licence means small boats are also able to make other marine users aware of their intentions. Many modern VHF sets also include the option of a Digital Selective Calling (DSC) button which will send a pre-defined distress signal, including your location.

Phones or radios should be carried where they are readily accessible (on a lanyard for example) and not tucked away in a hatch or bag. SUP leaders must carry a VHF radio.

Weather conditions

Weather conditions at Bangor Harbour can have a significant impact on the safety and handling of small boats. The harbour although offering shelter can during certain wind conditions be exposed and the weather can create small choppy waves.

- Wind - Because of their low weight and minimal freeboard, all small boats must take the effect of the wind into account when planning an outing. Wind speeds can vary and noticeably increase through the opening of the harbour entrance. The wind can have an extra chilling effect on the body which will lower the level at which cold is felt and can lead to exposure and even exhaustion, especially if wet.
- Rain - Rain can very much affect the perceived temperature and it will feel much colder if a rower or paddler is wet, particularly if it is also windy. Rain can also seriously reduce visibility, particularly the ability for large motor vessels to spot small boats.
- Temperature - Hot temperatures, although rare in this climate, can be as physically demanding as cold ones so consideration should be made to both when deciding on the duration of an outing and what kit to wear.
- Visibility - As well as rain causing reduced visibility, do not attempt to go afloat if the visibility is less than 300m. A good guide is that if you cannot see the Red Beacon at the end of the Eisenhower Pier then do not go afloat. Fog is often a more serious hazard than darkness and, although large motor vessels may have radar, small boats do not show up on radar. Correctly lighting your boat is also essential in reduced visibility, such as fog

BANGOR

MARINA

- **Lightning** - Lightning is potentially fatal and if experienced a thunderstorm, get off the water as soon as possible. No boat should go afloat unless 30 minutes have elapsed since the last visible lightning.

Experience

The experience of all rowers and paddlers (whether solo or as members of a crew/group) should be considered, particularly concerning the sea and weather conditions:

Long-distance outings may not be suitable for the inexperienced.

For the inexperienced consider using larger or more stable boats accompanied by leaders/helms familiar with the Harbour.

Leaders or coaches must have the necessary qualifications and experience to take a group afloat within the Harbour.

Group briefings for coached and group outings it is important that all helms or paddlers are briefed beforehand by the coach or leader on what to expect and the purpose of the outing. The briefing should cover group management, becoming separated and emergencies.

Paddle group management

A paddle group should consist of no more than 10 boats. If there are more participants then consider splitting them into smaller groups, each with a suitably qualified group leader. As well as leaders having suitable qualifications, groups should have a sufficient ratio of leaders to participants which will vary depending on the experience of the group and where they are paddling.

Clubs and organisations should produce their own guidelines for this although SUP groups must have a minimum 1:6 ratio of leaders to paddlers.

Rowing flotillas - when going out for training purposes, any rowing flotilla (and its coaches) must comply with the Harbour Code, the ratio of coaches to boats will be determined by the club's own guidelines.

Afloat in the dark and reduced visibility

Going afloat in the dark or in reduced visibility is much more hazardous than in daylight so requires additional equipment and different clothing - as well as more thorough planning and risk assessment.

- All boats must be correctly lit.
- As far as possible, wear high visibility clothing and hats (white or bright colours) preferably with reflective trim.
- Someone must know who is afloat. Use a sign-out board and inform the Harbour office.
- Always carry means of communication: mobile phone or VHF handset (Channel 11) or other means of attracting attention such as a torch and/or whistle.

BANGOR

MARINA

- Use of reflective tape on boats and/or oars/paddles is a very effective way of improving a boat's visibility in the dark. On paddles boats the ID should ideally be applied over a reflective base.
- Solo paddling is not recommended in the dark and paddlers should proceed in a group, as a group can be more easily seen.
- Sunrise and sunset times are displayed on both the Met Office and BBC weather forecasts.

Boat lighting

By law, boats must correctly lit in darkness and reduced visibility. If boats do not have the correct lights when afloat, then the Master of the vessel is breaking the law.

Small boats need to be as visible as possible, so lights must be displayed at all times of reduced visibility such as mist, fog or rain and of course at night or in the early morning.

Darkness is defined as before sunrise or after sunset. If an evening outing is planned, even if the intention is to return in daylight, lights must be taken as daylight can fade very quickly or an unexpected delay may be encountered. If in doubt, use lights.

Emergencies

Phone **999** or 112 and ask for the **Coastguard** who will coordinate the appropriate response.

VHF alert the **Coastguard** on **VHF channel 16**, who will task the appropriate emergency response or other vessels in the vicinity who may be able to offer even more immediate assistance.

If you are unable to communicate by either phone or VHF then attempt to attract attention from other vessels nearby or people on the piers. A whistle is very effective for doing this as it carries further than a shout. You may also be able to attract attention by waving or flashing a light.

You should immediately report the following if:

- You see or hear someone in difficulty.
- You think someone might be in danger or is about to do something reckless – report it before it happens!
- A boat or group is significantly overdue back, and you are unable to contact or locate them.

Commercial operators

Any club, individual or company which offers paid 'tour guide' style trips on the Harbour requires permission from the Harbour Master. Detailed Passage Plans, Risk Assessments and Safety Management Systems are required for operations such as this and these need to be approved by the Harbour Master.

Roles and Responsibilities

Master of the vessel – In the context of international and local regulations, the helm (paddler or coxswain) is deemed to be the "Master of the Vessel". As such, the helm is legally responsible for the navigation, safety and behaviour of the crew. Therefore, all helms should be suitably authorised by their club or organisation to take a boat afloat. New helms gaining experience must be accompanied

BANGOR

MARINA

by a suitably authorised/qualified [rowing] coach or [paddling] group leader until they have completed their authorisation.

Personal responsibility – Individual rowing crew members or paddlers are responsible for checking the boats that they are about to go afloat in, their clothing and equipment and also for assessing the environmental conditions plus their own ability and experience. They should understand this Code of Practice and be familiar with rules, regulations and emergency procedure.

Paddle Group Leaders' responsibilities

Groups should appoint a person to 'take charge' and take an active role to maintain the size, shape, position of the group in line with the guidance in this Code. Whilst individuals are ultimately responsible for themselves, leaders are put into a position of trust by the other group members, so they have a duty of care to ensure their experience and 'local knowledge' are sufficient to be able to make the right decisions and dynamically risk assess the outing. Leaders are encouraged to have gained a British Canoeing Coach or Leadership Award in their specific discipline. It is recommended that group leaders hold a First Aid qualification.

Events' responsibilities

An 'event' is classed as the use of the Harbour for anything other than normal training or recreational purposes. This includes races, regattas, stunts or anything with media interest.

The event organiser must advise the Harbour Master as far in advance as possible.

Any event that involves more than 15 boats on the water at any one time, or if the Harbour Master deems it necessary, would normally have a full Harbour closure, which requires a Notice to Mariners (N to M) and a minimum of two weeks' notice. The organiser must provide:

- A risk assessment and event plan.
- Proof of public liability insurance.
- Details of any boats involved in the event working for hire or reward.
- Information on how to access the Harbour Code for visiting clubs.
- Event organisers should inform the Harbour Office that the event is about to start and again once the event has finished.
- The environmental impact of an event must also be considered.

Pollution

Litter – Bin your rubbish! Do not drop litter in the harbour or leave it where it will be taken or blown back into the water. If organising an event, where litter is likely to collect with spectators, plan your event to minimise the litter generated and ensure event-specific items like flags or banners are secured. Plan to review the area following the event to prevent any litter from ending up in the water.

Water pollution – If you see any pollution floating on harbour waters, please report it to the harbour office by phone or VHF (Channel 11). Take photos if possible, but do not take samples and keep a distance as the pollutant may also be damaging to health. After heavy or prolonged rainfall, the harbour waters will appear muddy, two freshwater rivers flow into the marina. These rivers will contain

BANGOR

MARINA

road runoff and unfortunately at times raw sewage. All incidents of sewage discharge are reported to the NIEA pollution hotline. Avoid boating after those events as far as possible.

Noise pollution- Please be considerate towards those who live on and near the Harbour. Avoid abusive language, playing loud music or shouting during unsociable hours. Megaphones must not be used.

Health

Be aware of the risk of Weil's disease which is spread by rodents' urine. All cuts and grazes should be covered before going afloat. If a bleeding wound occurs during an outing, wash it thoroughly as soon as you return and treat it as an infection risk. Always wash your hands after an outing and before eating. If you become ill after being afloat, seek medical advice immediately.

Personal floatation devices.

All PFDs should have an EN/ISO number and be rated to support the weight of the wearer, taking their clothing into account.

Paddling

Paddlers should wear a PFD at all times while afloat. The most suitable type of PFD for paddle sports is a Buoyancy Aid. The main benefit of buoyancy aids over other types of PFD is that they are 'inherently buoyant' (i.e. they don't need to be inflated for them to do their job). Paddlers who are weak swimmers or who have a medical condition that may require it, should consider a higher-rated PFD or manually inflating life jacket.

Rowing

All occupants and coxes must wear a PFD at all times while afloat. The most suitable type of PFD for non-rowers is a Life Jacket, which are necessary as these people are generally wearing more and heavier clothing and footwear. Rowing-compatible PFDs are available. Self-inflating (automatic) life jackets, with crotch straps and a minimum 150N rating, are advised.

Fitting a PDF

- The PFD should be worn on top of all other clothing and must remain done-up at all times while afloat, including the crotch strap, if fitted.
- It should be easy to put on, take off and adjust.
- The fitting should be snug but not tight. It should let the wearer to freely move their arms and allow them to bend at the waist. Loose-fitting PFDs could come off in an emergency so always ensure proper adjustment before going afloat.
- The PFD should allow the wearer to swim easily in water and keep their face above the water.
- Having a whistle and light attached to PFDs is also recommended.

Maintenance of a PDF

- Check PFDs regularly for things such as rips or stitching coming undone, broken buckles and zips or missing ties. If you are unsure about any aspect of a PFD, do not go afloat with it and contact the manufacturer or an approved retailer for further advice.
- Have PFDs regularly serviced by an approved supplier according to the manufacturers' instructions.

BANGOR

MARINA

- Do not machine wash or tumble dry PFDs.

Storing a PFD

- After use, rinse in clean water, hang it up and allow to dry naturally.
- When dry, store in a cool dry place ideally out of direct sunlight and away from direct heat

GETTING AFLOAT

Basic Navigation – Port and Starboard

Port and Starboard are not terms generally used by paddlers and rowers but everyone must understand this terminology.

Port is the left side of the boat, seen by an observer aboard the boat looking forward.

Starboard is the right side of the boat, seen by the observer aboard the boat looking forward.

The Collision Regulations.

The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea also known as the COLREG's are the "rules of the road" or navigation rules that set out the conduct of vessels including man-powered boats in any condition of visibility, in sight of each other and in restricted visibility. The rules were introduced to make it clear when you are the stand on vessel, when you are the give way vessel and what the correct action to take is when in close quarters with other vessels to avoid a collision.

The UK version of the COLREGs are provided by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), in the Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Regulations.

A copy of the COLREGS can be downloaded from

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281965/msn1781.pdf

Unlike our highway code which has 307 rules, the COLREGS only has 38 'rules' which are divided into 5 parts and 4 annexes. A commonly held misconception concerning the COLREGS is that it is a guidance document, something to help you understand who has 'right of way' in a potential collision situation. Wrong! They are rules and you have to comply with them!

Rule one of the COLREGS states, 'These rules shall apply to all vessels upon the high seas and in all waters connected therewith navigable by seagoing vessels.'

Your man-powered boat ie rowing boat, canoe, kayak, stand-up paddleboard is a vessel and pleading ignorance of these rules in any prosecution case is not going to wash.

BANGOR

MARINA

Before getting afloat we wish to highlight rule 5, 6 and excerpts from rules 7, 9 and rules 18.

Rule 5 Lookout

Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.

Rule 6 Safe Speed

Every vessel shall at all times proceed at a safe speed so that she can take proper and effective action to avoid collision and be stopped within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.

Rule 7 Risk of Collision

Every vessel shall use all available means appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions to determine if risk of collision exists. Continues

Rule 9 Narrow channels

(a) A vessel proceeding along the course of a narrow channel or fairway shall keep as near to the outer limit of the channel or fairway which lies on her starboard side as is safe and practicable.

(b) A vessel of less than 20 metres in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway. Continues

Rule 18 Responsibilities Between Vessels

Responsibilities Between Vessels Except where rules 9, 10 and 13 otherwise require: 18 (d) (i) Any vessel other than a vessel not under command or a vessel restricted in her ability to manoeuvre shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, avoid impeding the safe passage of a vessel constrained by her draught. Continues

Safe Navigation

Keeping a proper lookout is the single most essential feature of safe navigation.

Failure to keep a proper lookout is the biggest contributory factor in collisions and near-misses, both with other vessels and with fixed objects in the Harbour.

Listening for other boats, shouted warnings, sound signals and VHF transmissions from larger vessels are all considered an important part of the lookout process. This is known as Lookout by Hearing. Always when other vessels are moving within the Harbour, reduced visibility, or navigating in the vicinity of the Harbour entrance a more proactive lookout should be employed – every stroke if necessary.

Lookout also applies to larger vessels, but small boats should note that just because they can easily see a larger vessel, it is not necessarily the case that the larger vessel can see them, especially if both craft are nearby.

BANGOR

MARINA

Small boats should always make themselves as visible as possible and should never assume that they have been seen.

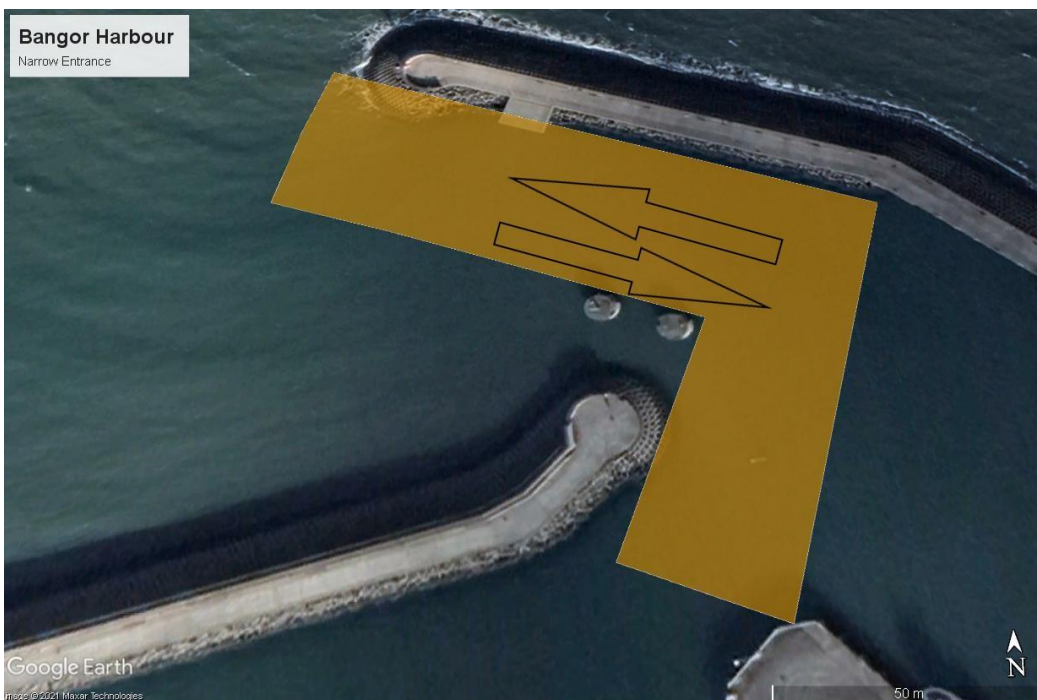
Rule 5 on look-out and Rule 7 are also closely linked. Under Rule 5 you must use all available means to collect information on the situation around you (look-out) and under Rule 7 you must use that information continuously to assess the risk of collision.

Bangor Harbour entrance is approx. 50 metres wide (fishing platform to the first dolphin) Depths range from -3.8 m to -3.5 m to Chart Datum. (Chart Datum is 2.01 metres below Ordnance Datum.)

We consider the entrance to the Harbour to be a Narrow Channel, as such paddlers and rowers must transit the harbour entrance keeping as near to the outer limit of the channel which lies to their starboard side as is safe and practicable.

Paddlers and rowers must not impede the passage of vessels which can only safely navigate within the channel entrance this includes vessels that are constrained by their draft.

Orange Area highlights the Harbour Entrance Channel



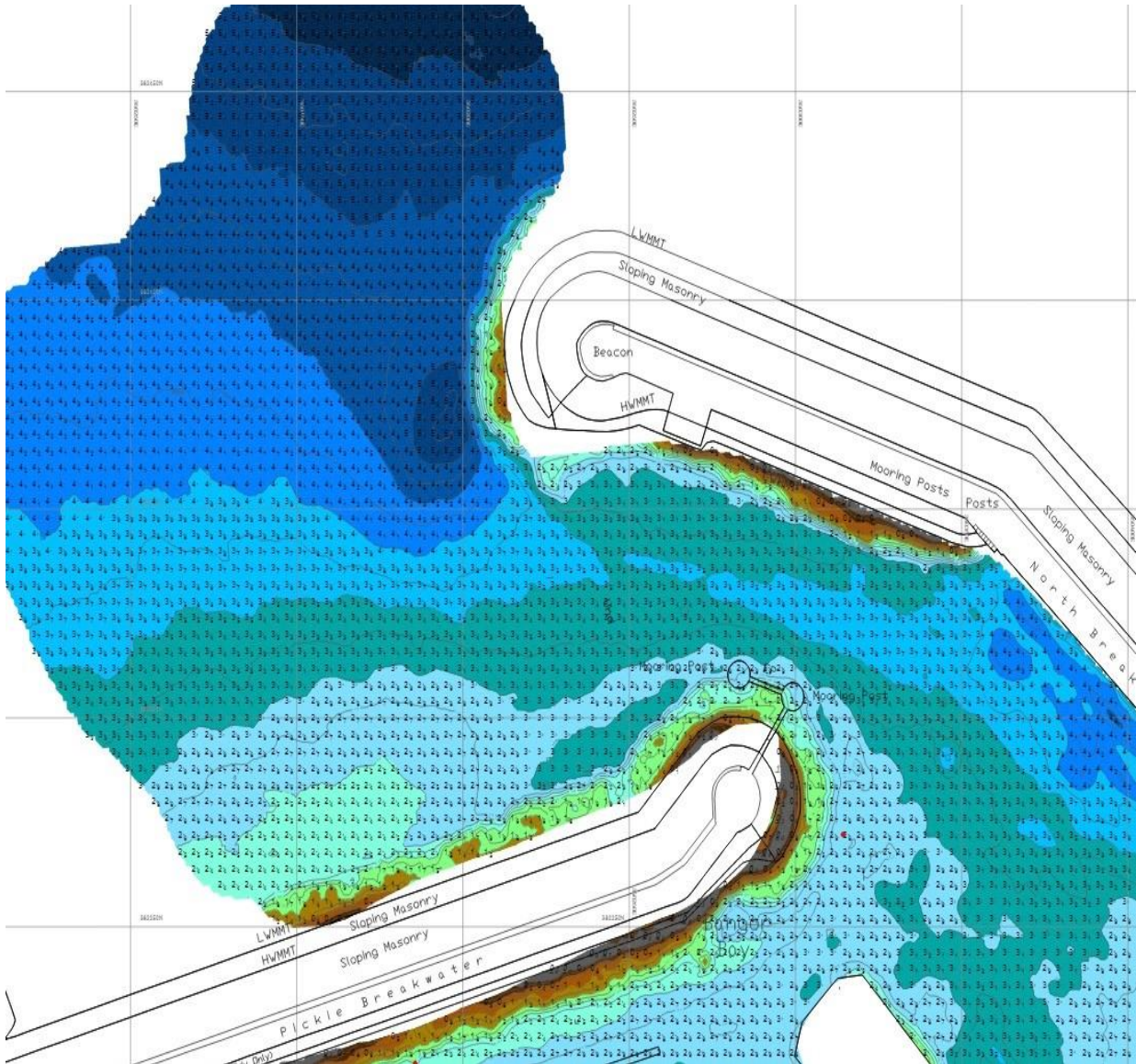
Proceed into the channel area if you are entering or departing the Harbour.

Keep as close to the starboard hand side of the channel as possible.

BANGOR

MARINA

Channel Depths



Elevation in metres to Chart Datum – Irish Grid, 0.25 metre contour intervals, 4 metre sounding grid.

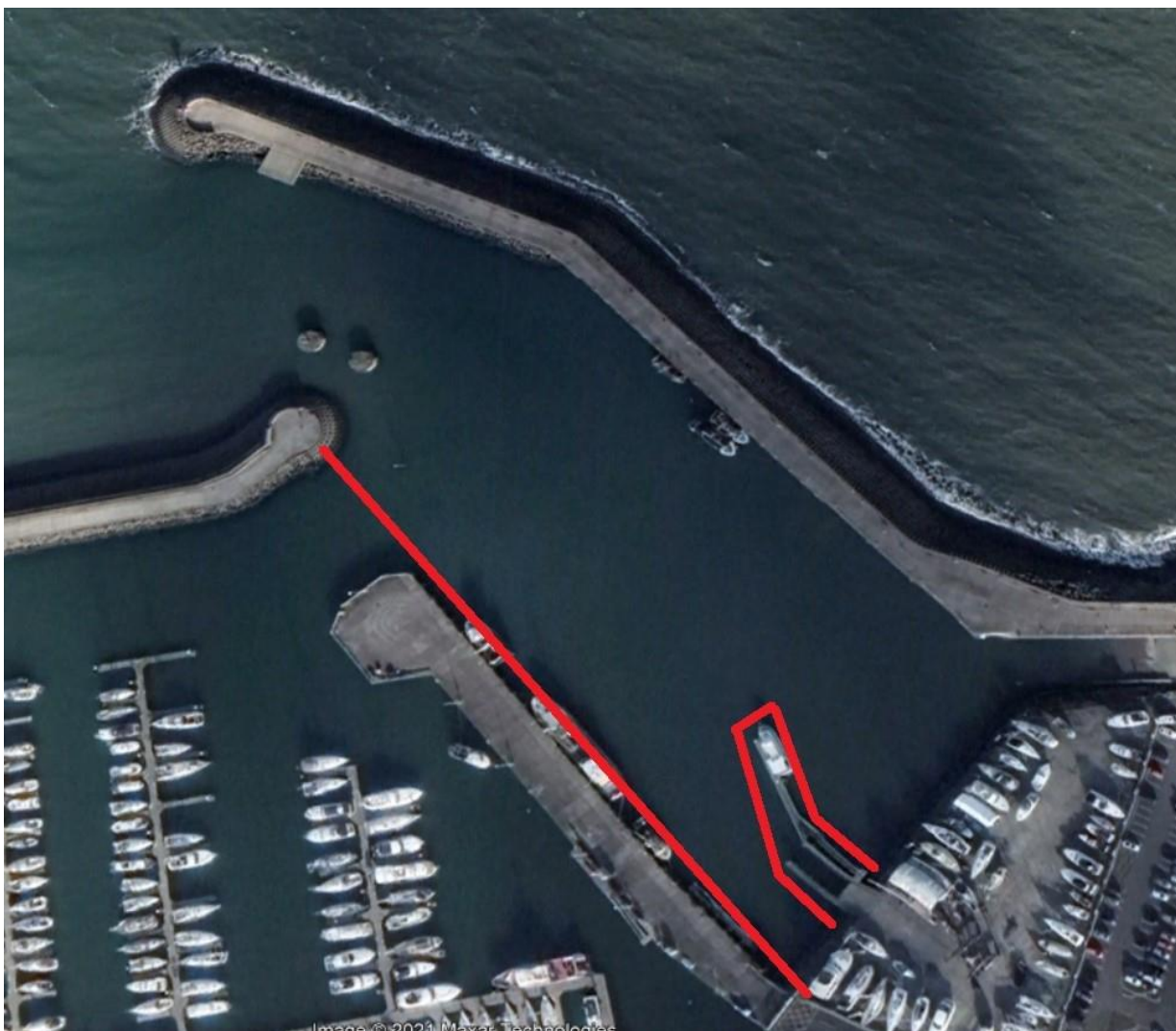
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MARINA

Exclusion Zones

For your safety, there are three exclusion zones where rowing and paddling are not permitted.

1. **Access to the Marina waters is not permitted unless with the prior written consent of the Harbour Master.**
2. **Access to the Commercial Fishing Pontoon and beneath the Commercial Pier is not permitted.**
3. **Access to the Boatyard pontoon and area beneath the boat lifting dock is not permitted.**



BANGOR

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Traffic Light System

The red beacon at the end of the Eisenhower Pier is fitted with a traffic light system. If three red vertical lights are displayed do not enter the Harbour.



BANGOR

MARINA

Launching of the Lifeboat

The slipway is primarily a means to launch Bangor RNLI Lifeboat. In the event of a Lifeboat launch, you will hear a **wailing siren**. This sound signal will be repeated if necessary, until the Lifeboat is afloat.

Action – if you are on the slipway, please vacate the slipway immediately. Rowing and paddled boats must not be left unattended.

Action – if you are on the water, keep the centre of the harbour waters clear so not to impede the Lifeboat's departure.

Action – if you are at the harbour entrance keep as near to the outer limit of the channel which lies on the starboard side of your boat as is safe and practicable as possible.

Please note that the Lifeboat will depart the Harbour at speed while complying with COLREG rule 6.

There will be slight wash from the Lifeboat which could affect the stability of your boat.



BANGOR

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Harbour Closures

There are times when the Harbour will be closed to facilitate the safe manoeuvring and berthing of large vessels. Access to the slipway and harbour waters may also be restricted during authorised events.

Slipway Permit Scheme

A slipway permit will be issued to those rowers and paddlers who are authorised by the Harbour Master or his deputy to launch and recover from the slipway and to navigate upon Harbour waters.

Permits are issued to those rowing and paddlers who sign up to and will comply with the Bangor Harbour Code of Practice for man-powered boats.

Permit holders will comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, the Bangor Harbour Bye Laws and the instructions of the Harbour Master and his representatives.

The permit will be valid for one year.

Checklist

Activity	Rower / Paddler Initial	Harbour Master or his representative
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Before going Afloat		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communications		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Weather Conditions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Experience.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group Management		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Visibility & boat lighting		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Emergencies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Responsibilities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pollution		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Health		

BANGOR

MARINA

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Flotation Devices		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic Navigation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The COLREG's 5, 6, 7, 9 & 18		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe Navigation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exclusion Zones		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic Light System & Harbour Closures		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifeboat launches & what to do.		

Name of Permit Holder

Address of Permit Holder

Telephone Number

Email Address

I will, always keep a proper lookout and continuously assess for the risk of collision. I will comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, the Bangor Harbour Bye Laws and instructions from the Harbour Master and his representatives. I will show consideration for others.

Signature

Date
