

Heritage Harbours: Joint Statement (published 8 June 2022)

National Historic Ships UK, Historic England and the Maritime Heritage Trust are working together on 'Heritage Harbours'. Heritage Harbours are places of historic maritime significance that retain original features, buildings and facilities important for supporting historic vessels and maritime skills, which help connect the public to the UK's maritime past.

'Heritage Harbours' is not a form of legal designation like listing a building or registering a park. Rather, the term underlines the historic importance and potential of harbours identified by this label.

The Heritage Harbour concept emerged from a desire to safeguard and restore the infrastructure and skills necessary to support maritime heritage, including historic boats and ships still in use or preserved. All three organisations are committed to exploring how the Heritage Harbour concept might be developed and promoted in practice.

Affording recognition to Heritage Harbours offers a way to breathe new life into these places as hubs of heritage-led regeneration and venues for events, open days, activities and trails, providing opportunities for wider public engagement with historic boats and ships. Heritage Harbours have the potential to contribute to local distinctiveness by encouraging the presence of regional boat and ship types that reflect past trades or industries. Heritage Harbours can also serve as focal points for education and training, volunteering and well-being.

Heritage Harbours are expected to provide or restore suitable berthing and accompanying facilities such as small shipbuilding and repair yards, slips and dry docks. Historic harbour facilities are important and valuable because without them, the capacity for maintaining or building traditional vessels could be lost through disuse and decay, or by redevelopments that remove or block working maritime infrastructure. The facilities presented by Heritage Harbours are likely to encourage a mix of light industry, retail, catering and commercial offices as well as activities linked to maritime heritage.

The Heritage Harbours concept was first introduced to the UK in 2019 by the Maritime Heritage Trust, working in partnership with National Historic Ships UK. Since then, the idea has been embraced and built upon by communities across the UK. This has seen the establishment of local steering groups, forums and volunteer led initiatives, as well as investigatory work into what individual Heritage Harbours could offer in the future. This grass roots activity has been fostered by the Maritime Heritage Trust and recognised by National Historic Ships UK through the zones in its Shipshape Network framework. Historic England has joined with National Historic Ships UK and the Maritime Heritage Trust to explore how Heritage Harbours in England might benefit the heritage of coastal places and the communities that work and live in them.

Signed: National Historic Ships UK, Maritime Heritage Trust, Historic England



Historic England

Notes:

National Historic Ships UK advises the Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and a range of grant giving organisations on priorities for ship conservation and is the official voice for historic vessels in the UK. It maintains the National Register of Historic Vessels, which lists over 1,500 significant historic vessels: www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/registers. It also manages the Shipshape Network, set up in 2010 to promote the regeneration of traditional maritime skills, encourage regional activities and improve sector communications.

The Maritime Heritage Trust is the only national membership body for the maritime preservation sector and is the direct descendant of The Maritime Trust created in 1969 under the patronage of Prince Philip. It campaigns nationwide for a better deal for historic ships, gives advice and support to individual preservation projects, supports preservation organisations in local planning and operational issues and represents the UK as a member of European Maritime Heritage.

<https://maritimeheritage.org.uk/>

Historic England is the public body that helps people care for, enjoy and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment. It does this by championing historic places, identifying and protecting our heritage, supporting change, understanding historic places and providing expertise at a local level.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/>



Historic England