

# ANNUAL REPORT

---



**BRITISH PORTS**  
ASSOCIATION







# Inside BPA



**Mike Sellers - Portsmouth International Port**  
Chair (2024)



**Doug Bannister - Port of Dover**  
Deputy Chair (Chair 2025)



**Maurice Bullick OBE - Belfast Harbour**  
Honorary Treasurer



**Richard Ballantyne OBE**  
Chief Executive



**Mark Simmonds**  
Director of Policy & External Affairs



**Eileen Salmon**  
Association Secretary, Head of Membership & Corporate Services



**Shenaz Bussawon**  
Events, Marketing & Programmes Manager



**Rhona Macdonald**  
Senior Sustainability Advisor



**George Finch**  
Policy & Economic Analyst

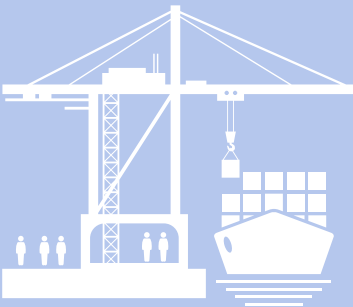
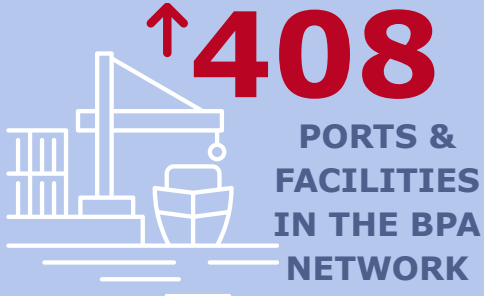


**Zoe Ojo-Earl**  
Finance & Administration Assistant

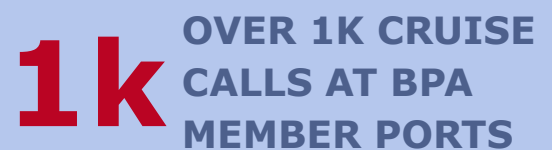




# 2024 In Numbers



ESTIMATED  
LEISURE  
CRAFT SAILED  
THROUGH BPA MEMBER  
PORTS







# About the BPA

**The British Ports Association is the national membership body for ports in the UK.**

We represent the interests of operators that handle 86% of all UK port traffic to Westminster and devolved Governments, and other national and international bodies.

We are an inclusive and progressive association, open to all and committed to the fair treatment of ports up and down the country.

As our membership comprises many ports, terminal operators and port facilities, all of varying size, location and nature, the Association is able to draw upon a wide range of experience and knowledge to represent its members' interests.

We also have a strong network of Associate Members who add much to the value of membership.





# 2024 BPA Annual Report

<b>1. Representing Members</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>2. The Domestic Agenda</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>3. Environment and Planning</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>4. Port Governance</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>5. Navigational Safety</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>6. Pilots' National Pension Fund</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7. Ports Skills And Safety</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8. Maritime UK</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>9. BPA Conference</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>10. BPA Events</b>	<b>15-16</b>
<b>11. BPA Working Groups</b>	<b>17-27</b>







# Report of BPA Activity in 2024

## 1. REPRESENTING MEMBERS

The British Ports Association (BPA) is the UK port sector's national trade body. Our primary objectives are:

- to represent members' interests and champion the whole of the ports industry
- to provide information to members, particularly political and regulatory developments which could impact their businesses
- to create networks for sharing expertise.

We represent over 120 port and terminal members across the UK that collectively manage more than 400 ports, harbours, and marine facilities. This includes the majority the country's major ports (ports that handle more than 1m tonnes of freight per year). We also represent all of the UK's main energy gateways and passenger terminals, 19 of the top 20 fishing ports, and an extensive network of ports and harbours that facilitate over one million leisure craft and yachts each year. Our membership accounts for 86% of all UK port tonnage and they handle 85% of all vessel visits at UK ports.



In representing port interests, the BPA regularly lobbies various tiers of government in the UK and beyond. We are an inclusive organisation and welcome any type of port to join. Our policy is that all ports, whatever their size, location, or ownership, should have equal representation.

**We are also the only organisation to promote the entire ports industry and regularly undertake activities to increase the profile of the sector. This was reinforced in 2024 with the new UK government recognising the BPA and through our engagement in regular briefings with the devolved administrations.**





## 2. The Domestic Agenda

In 2024, the buildup to the General Election and then the formation of new UK government dominated the policy agenda. Indeed, the BPA prepared a manifesto briefing resource and reference materials for new ministers across Westminster.

The new government's focus on growth and how to finance and resource infrastructure projects such as offshore wind related schemes, led to the creation of the National Wealth Fund. There were considerations over how this might be directed to ports and the BPA Council prepared an extensive paper on public funding and ports.

Elsewhere across government, we continued to be fully engaged with all tiers of policymakers around the UK on a range of policy and legislative influences on the UK ports industry. From transport and connectivity to marine licensing, and environmental protection, we have continued a programme of activity across the UK.

**Specifically, in 2024 we raised port frustrations around planning delays and consenting for marine licences. Most port operators are aware of the interest in their environmental impacts and are**



**mindful of new developments and activities being subject to increased assessment and safeguarding standards. We continued to highlight the need for such safeguards to be balanced and proportionate.**

One particular issue arose as an issue for the ports industry in 2024 with delays and challenges for Harbour Orders in England and Wales. This led to a number of discussions with the consenting bodies and particularly the Marine Management Organisation, culminating in a meeting with its board which resulted in the Department for Transport allocating a legal resource specifically to help ease the situation.





# 3. Environment and Planning

Planning and the environment continue to be a major area of policy interest for the Association. Planning reform formed a central plank of the Labour Party's economic growth election pitch and was a significant area of focus as proposals were developed by government post-election. The BPA has engaged with a series of asks around terrestrial and marine planning and consenting across the UK.

Decarbonisation continues to be a top priority for many ports, and the Association has been working to boost awareness of our members' needs around energy planning and connectivity with both government and energy networks.

We have followed developments around connections reform and strategic energy planning and worked closely with government, energy networks, and members. In October, the BPA was part of a winning bid for Ofgem's strategic innovation fund, with a six month project led by SSE and exploring how to improve long-term energy planning for ports (Project SeaChange).

**The BPA has undertaken significant policy work engaging on the expansion of the UK Emissions Trading Scheme and adaptation reporting in England. Other priorities included consenting challenges across the UK, with particular issues in Scotland around wet storage.**





## 4. Port Governance

The BPA represents the three main port corporate models: trust, municipal, and private ownership, as well as a collection of some other ports owned by parts of government. The Department for Transport's Ports Good Governance Guidance, published in 2018, continues to be a useful tool for ports as it is focused on corporate governance for all statutory harbour authorities in England, as well as Milford Haven.

It includes information relevant to all types and sizes of organisations that own or manage harbour and port facilities, with specific detailed guidance for trust ports and local authority owned ports. In 2024 the BPA fed into the reviews of the Port

Marine Safety Code and associated Guide to Good Practice which were due for publication in 2025. Welcomingly, both the Government and our members reinforced the value of the BPA as the industry standard bearer and highlighted that those handful of ports outside the BPA perhaps have more work to do on improving governance.

Trust port classification remains an issue we consider, and it remains our policy to encourage the Government to remove the classification of major trust ports to help them operate without the unhelpful categorisation. This is potentially something we will be discussing with the new UK Government.





# 5. Navigational Safety

In 2024 we continued to promote the principles of the Port Marine Safety Code and worked with government to increase its awareness. As mentioned, we expected both the refreshed Code and Guide to Good Practice to be published in 2024, but delays have meant that it is now scheduled to be completed early in 2025. The 2025 PMSC compliance exercise will be launched six months from the date of publication of the Code so that ports can have time to digest the new arrangements



**We have continued to organise online PMSC duty holder workshops, which we provide free to BPA member ports but encourage non-members to join for a small fee. These continue to be held in conjunction with the specialists ABPmer.**

**Separately, we followed wider issues across the maritime community including reports and recommendations promulgated by the Marine Accident and Investigation Branch, particularly in respect of towage and pilot safety issues.**





# 6. Pilots' National Pension Fund

The BPA provides the secretariat for the Association of Participating Bodies of the Pilots National Pension Fund (APBNPF) which was set up to manage the liability ports have stemming from the transfer of the scheme. The APBNPF 2024 AGM was held in January 2025 where the Trustees shared a summary of the PNPf liabilities which affect a number of UK ports.

At the AGM the Chair of the PNPf Trustees, Heather McGuire, reported that 2024 continued to be busy, mainly due to the completion of the three-yearly actuarial valuation and the review of investment strategy, the Guaranteed Minimum Pension Equalisation exercise, as well as working to ensure the Fund is well governed and members are provided with excellent services.

Trustees worked with their professional covenant advisors, PwC, and commenced its annual covenant monitoring review. The covenant review showed that the covenant remains "Strong." This rating was informed by PwC's review of historical financial information for the Participating Bodies included in its review.

Members can find an updated version of the Statement of Investment Principles on the BPA website.

We are grateful to Heath McGuire, the Chair of Trustees of the PNPf, and her colleagues for their continued support. In addition, we want to thank the Association's Chair, Richard Everitt, for his efforts and Peter Swift of Peel Ports, who acts as Treasurer.







# 7. Port Skills and Safety

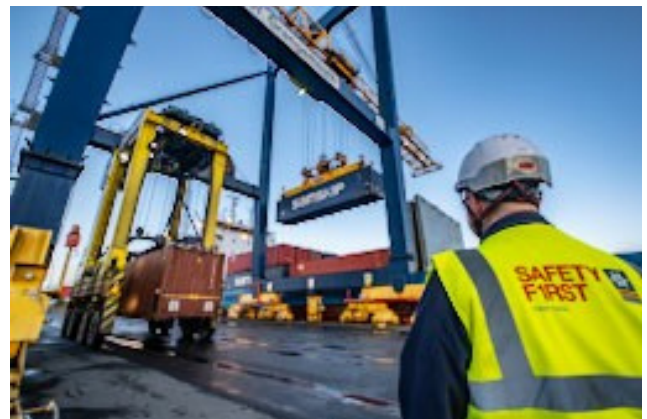


Ports Skills and Safety is the professional safety and skills membership organisation for ports which the BPA and UKMPG act as joint quasi-shareholders.

Since the last BPA annual report PSS has welcomed four new board members including Mike Sellers from Portsmouth International Port and Ashley Nicholson from Port of Tyne, who help to ensure that the BPA are fully represented at board level.

Among the initiatives that have taken place in the last 12 months, we have continued to refresh and update our Safety in Ports guidance, released a guide to port apprenticeships, launched a competency framework, and introduced three new training courses. We have also continued to improve our incident data reporting with a new dashboard and work towards incorporating AI analysis.

In October we held a Lithium-ion batteries safety campaign which culminated in an Electric Vehicle Maritime Safety conference. The conference brought together experts from academia, the automotive and maritime industries, to discuss the risks and mitigations arising from the increased use of electric vehicles in ports and their transportation on ferries and car carriers. This event helped to increase the general aware of lithium ion fires in the sector.



For 2025, PSS has an ongoing focus on A Safer Tomorrow, as well as being the theme for our members conference due to take place in July, we are running a series of thought leadership pieces looking at what a safe port look like in the future, what skills it will need and how we get there. We recommend all BPA members consider joining PSS as the main body working towards safer ports and achieving a highly skilled work force.





## 8. Maritime UK

The BPA is a member of the umbrella body Maritime UK and sits on its National Council and various working groups and networks. MUK continued to champion the overall sector but following changes to government and spending priorities, it meant there would be no more public grants to support working activities resulting in a member's review of MUK's finances and arrangements in 2024.

**Also, the BPA's Mark Simmonds continued to Chair the MUK Policy Working Group and Shenaz Bussawon became Chair of their Ethnicity in Maritime Network.**





# 9. BPA Conference

Portsmouth International Port hosted the BPA 2024 conference, converting their new terminal building into a state-of-the-art conference venue. It was another year of record attendees and exhibitors, and this year featured three sponsored 'Insight Hub' sessions, fostering deeper discussions on industry trends, sustainability, and innovation. A partnership with the Marie Management Organisation (MMO) delivered an 'MMO surgery' on site, offering free licensing consultations for delegates.

Guest speakers included:

- Mike Kane MP, UK Maritime Minister
- Renowned travel journalist, Simon Calder
- Record-setting endurance swimmer, Anna Wardley
- A number of port professionals and members
- Officials from the Department for Transport, Business and Trade, the MMO and the Maritime Coastguard Agency.

The Wednesday evening reception was held on the iconic HMS Warrior, showcasing the history of Portsmouth, and the conference ended with a Gala dinner held in Boathouse Seven at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.







The BPA Awards once again featured at the Gala Dinner with winners being:

- **Inclusive Workplace Award**  
Winner: Shoreham Port
- **BPA Industry Award**  
Winner: Arch Henderson
- **Port Development Award**  
Winner: Stornoway Port
- **SME Port of the Year Award**  
Winner: Montrose Port Authority
- **Port Sustainability Award**  
Winner: PD Ports

**We extend our sincere thanks to the team at Portsmouth International Port for their outstanding efforts and collaboration, which played a key role in making this event a resounding success.**







# 10. BPA Events

British Ports Association events bring together industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss key developments, challenges, and innovations shaping the future of the UK ports and maritime sector.

This year's annual lunch moved to a new location, The Grand Connaught Rooms, with an attendance of 450 guests, making it the biggest Annual Lunch to date. Guest speakers this year included Rain Newton Smith, CEO of CBI, along with Lord Davies of Gower and Mike Kane MP.

The BPA also hosted two 'Introduction to UK Ports' courses. These were well attended by a mixture of industry and government officials and provided an initial introduction to the sector. They were delivered by our colleagues at Port Centric Logistics and we shall be holding further courses in 2025.

We also jointly hosted two Women in Ports meetings alongside Port Skills and Safety and UK Major Ports Group. The first meeting was held to commemorate International Women's Day in March and had over 100 attendees. This was followed by a second meeting in the autumn with guest speakers Margret Llewellyn from Seaport Development and Gabriella Ham from Peel Ports.







The BPA also delivered an array of webinars throughout the year which were all well attended. The webinars varied in topics and included:

- Port Marine Safety Code – ABPmer
- Introduction to the Procurement Act 2023 – Cabinet Office by Single Points of Contact
- BPA & Burness Pauk Mock Trail Workshop – Burness Paul LLP
- Breaking the Power Deadlock for Ports – NatPower Marine & UK Power Network Services
- What a Labour Government will mean for Ports – British Ports Association
- Cyber Security and defence against evolving threats – Lloyds Banking Group & AJ Gallagher
- Introduction to Continuous Property Issues in England, Wales, and Scotland – Eversheds Sutherland
- BPA/Optimise AI: Digital Twins & AI Decarbonising Ports – British Ports Association and Optimise AI
- Port Industry Trends – 2024 Review and 2025 Outlook – British Ports Association and Port Centric Logistics Partners





# 11. BPA Working Groups

## **Scottish Ports Group:**

*Chaired by Sinclair Browne, Port of Inverness*

The Scottish Ports Group represents all the major ports in Scotland as well as numerous smaller ports and harbours and is the only industry-led forum in Scotland representing the views of the sector. In 2024 meetings took place in Port Glasgow, Inverness and Glasgow, with port tours around these meetings including CMAL's ferry operations between Wemyss Bay and Rosyth and an extended visit taking in several ports including Ardersier, Nigg, Invergordon, Deephaven and Inverness. Topics this year included the industry's response to the Scottish Government's plans for a Cruise Levy, and the £500m funding for Scottish offshore wind ports.



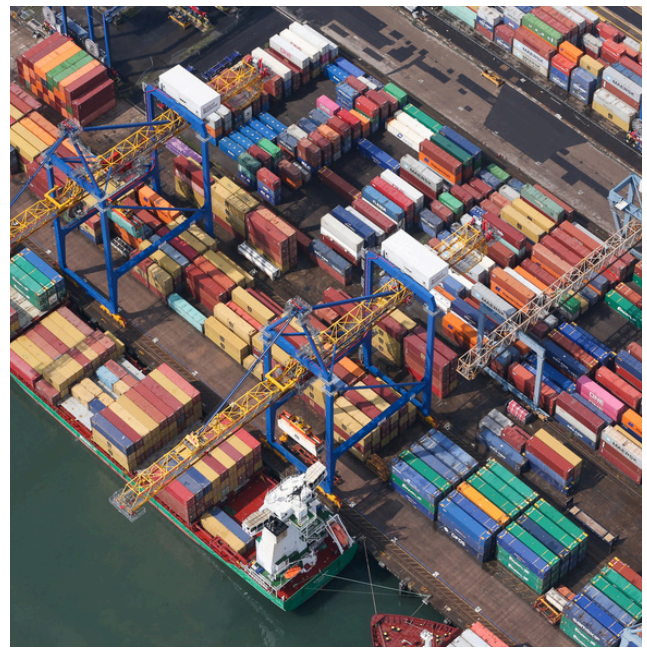
## Welsh Ports Group:

*Chaired by Tom Sawyer, Port of Milford Haven*

We run this as an all-industry group to which non-Welsh port BPA members and the UKMPG have standing invite. This met twice in 2024, including with the Secretary of State for Wales, and continued to engage with the Welsh Government on ports strategy, governance and wider energy, marine and transport policy.

## Northern Irish Ports Committee:

The Northern Irish Ports Committee includes all ports in Northern Ireland and meets twice per year. The BPA worked closely with the committee to respond to the NI Department for Infrastructure's Review of Trust Ports consultation.



## Communications Network:

*Chaired by Richard Christian, Port of Dover*

The Communications Network is for port PR and communications professionals to share good practice and discuss individual and industry-wide campaigns and issues. From 2025 it will have a tighter focus on public affairs and policy and support BPA strategy and messaging, which is agreed by Council. In 2024 it met ahead of the election to discuss industry messaging and approaches to engaging with MPs and parliamentary candidates. After the election, the Association organised briefings for all members, but particularly this network, on fast moving policy developments as the new government sought to act quickly on some priorities that were of interest to us, such as establishing the National Wealth Fund.





## **Environment Policy & Sustainable Affairs Group:**

*Chaired by Alan Tinline, Associated British Ports, and organised jointly with the UKMPG*

Climate change and the environment are areas with large regulatory burdens attached, so this generates a lot of work for us, and we expect it to do so for the foreseeable future. The group is always well attended by a broad range of ports which helps inform our continued engagement with Government on domestic and international issues. The group aims to meet two or three times a year, alternating between online and in-person meetings.

The group has shaped the Association's position on a number of important issues including the expansion of the UK and UE Emissions Trading Schemes, the implementation of biodiversity net gain in England, terrestrial and marine planning, marine licensing and the electrification of ports and associated energy connectivity. Adaptation and resilience have been another big focus, and the group supported the Association's work on developing an industry wide response to adaptation reporting.

Given the large number of complex topics in this area, the Group has several subgroups that have been established to consider particular topics.



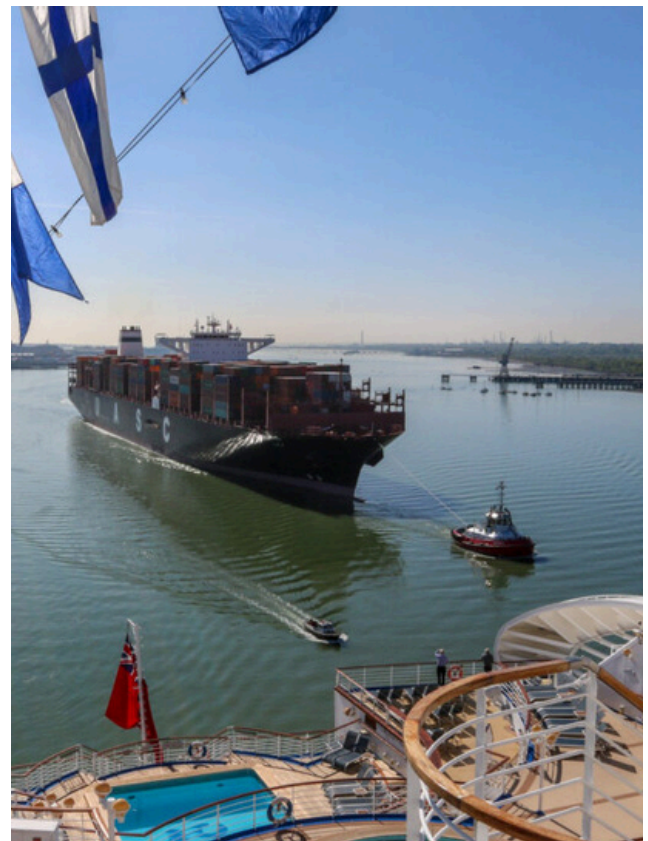


### **Dredging Sub-Group** *(Chaired by Andrew Ridley, PD Ports)*

The dredging sub-group is a standing group that was established following ill-informed commentary and debate around the nature of dredging and its impacts. A planned campaign for 2024 on dredging was postponed because of the general election and a slight improvement in sentiment and discourse around dredging but is planned for 2025. The group still met twice and has received presentations on innovative practice as well as discussed common areas of concern, particularly emerging licensing practices. The group is increasing supporting joint industry and government efforts to improve processes that support beneficial reuse of dredged material.

### **Open Loop Scrubbers Sub-Group** *(no industry chair, managed by George Finch)*

The open loop scrubbers subgroup was established to monitor developments and impacts of open-loop exhaust gas cleaning systems that were widely adopted by shipping in the wake of the IMO 2020 sulphur regulations. Meetings have been reduced to once a year as the debate around their impact fails to make any real progress on areas of concern for ports, with few viable options open to us at an industry level. Most individual ports have decided on their approach based on their circumstances and we will continue to support ports in whatever way they choose to manage (or not manage) the use of these systems.







## Scope 3 Emissions Group

The scope 3 sub-group was established as a forum for sharing views and agreeing a common approach to scope 3 emissions. The overwhelming majority (95%+) of emissions in most ports come from activity that is not directly from port operations. How ports approach and define scope 3 emissions is open to interpretation and this group has met three times to discuss in detail progress that individual ports have made as well as how other industries with similar characteristics are approaching the issue.

The BPA also supports work led by Harwich Haven Authority with input from a number of ports to develop a series of good practice guides and this work has been ongoing through 2024.





## **Ferry Ports Group:**

*Chaired by Emma Ward, Port of Dover*

This group focuses on border control issues for goods and passengers travelling via the UK's network of Ro-Ro ports. In 2024 the group met online and discussed a range of issues including border control posts, immigration controls, and passenger port security issues.

Some ports are preparing for the new EU Entry/Exit System (EES) in readiness for its introduction in 2025 and we held joint meetings with the UK Chamber of Shipping, who represent the ferry operators, on this, as well as on wider ferry and cruise issues.

## **Finance Managers Working Group:**

*Chaired by Stephen Lockwood, Port of London Authority*

The Finance Managers network provides a forum which brings together finance professionals from ports across the United Kingdom.

The aim is to create a collaborative environment where members can discuss emerging financial issues, share best practices, and exchange insights for improving efficiency. The group seeks to tackle common challenges, identify innovative solutions, and enhance the financial management capabilities within the port sector. The group met twice this year, both in-person and online.

Discussions this year included volume of trade, ERP systems, conservancy rates, pay negotiations, green vessel incentives, port performance and challenges and weather-related insurance issues.

Presentations were provided by Scape, UKIB, CCLA and Think 360.





## Fishing Ports Group:

*Chaired by Martyn Boyers, Grimsby Fish Dock*

The fishing ports and harbours that we represent are sat fairly between catchers and processors, providing an essential part of the supply chain. The group tends to meet at a different port and in 2024 gathered in Kilkeel, Northern Ireland. The group continues to monitor policy developments around infrastructure funding, safety, and access to markets. The group has two visits and meetings planned for 2025.



## HR & Employment Network:

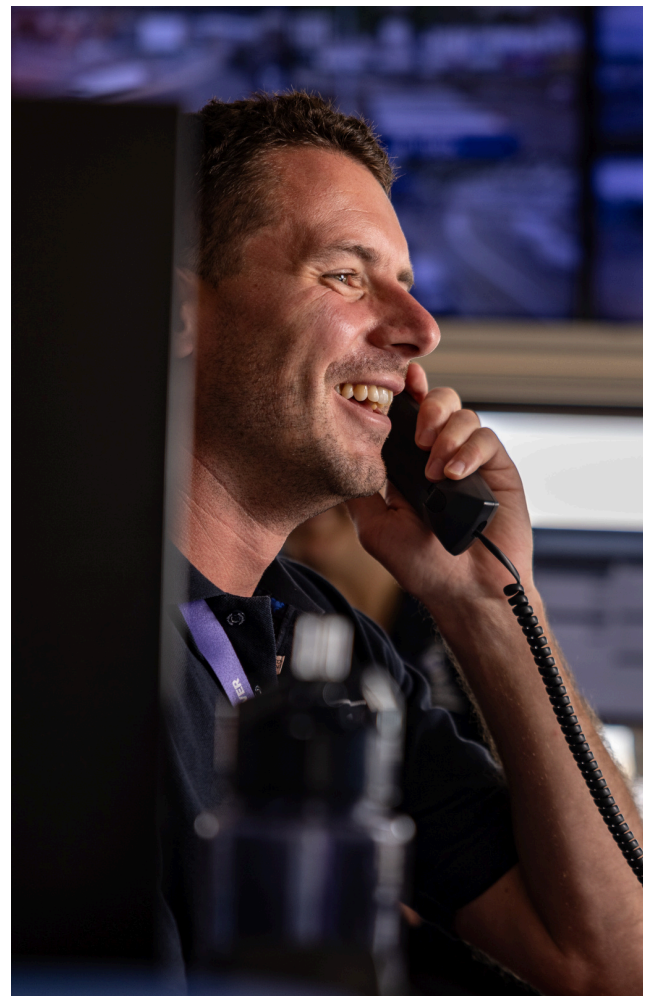
*Chair Stuart Balmer-Howieson, Port of Blyth*

Consisting of HR professionals from ports across our membership, the group meets twice yearly.

They aim to discuss common issues with a view to taking a collective approach, share ideas, and develop an effective network of HR professionals. Members also have input into the BPA's annual salary benchmarking report.

Discussions this year have included diversity and inclusion, menopause in the workplace, national minimum wage increase, absence reporting procedures, sick pay policies, ERP systems and employee perks.

Presentations were provided by Shape Associates and Brodies LLP.





## **Marine Pilotage Group:**

*Chaired by Gary Doyle, Peel Ports*

This group is held jointly with UKMPG and aims to provide advice and comment on marine and navigational issues, participate in policy formation on behalf of the association, and act as a forum for the exchange of best practice. It also takes the lead in responding to MAIB reports.

Regular contributors to the meetings include representatives from the Maritime Coastguard Agency, Marine Accident Investigation Branch, Port Skills and Safety, and UK Maritime Pilots' Association. They each provide regular updates and discuss issues of mutual interest and concern.

Priority issues continue to be the PMSC and Guide to Good Practice reviews. Ongoing concerns include Hadrian rails & clipping arrangements, dangerously weighted heaving lines, and ladder compliance. The group also received a presentation from the Department for Transport on the Seafarers Wages Act.

Following requests from some members, a Pilot Safety Guidance subgroup has been set up to review safety issues, and in particular the Boarding and Landing Code. This meets immediately after the Marine Pilotage group and is attended by the BPA, UKMPG, UKHMA & PSS.





## Port Infrastructure Group:

Chaired by Brian Rousell, Shoreham Port

This Group is an all industry, non-policy grouping of senior engineers and managers which includes ports outside the BPA umbrella, such as those in the Republic of Ireland. It meets at port locations with a strong emphasis on site visits, infrastructure, planning rules, and port design. Specialist speakers are also invited to every meeting to look at engineering and maintenance challenges.

In 2024 the Group visited London Gateway, where work on the fourth berth was well underway. DP World presented in detail on the engineering involved.

Later in the year the group also visited the Port of Barcelona to see newly commissioned shore power for container ships at Hutchison BEST. There were presentations from the terminal operator as well as the port authority on their wider plans for the port, with a particular focus on the technical and infrastructure challenges.



## Procurement Subgroup

Chaired by Richard Hopperton, Port of London Authority

The group meets twice a year to share experiences, discuss best practices, and learn from one another. It reports annually to the Finance Managers Group.

This year, the group held two hybrid meetings. The first was hosted by the Port of Dover, and the second by DP World at London Gateway. Both meetings included detailed updates on major ongoing projects at each port, followed by a guided tour for in-person attendees.

Key discussion topics included the new Procurement Act, supply chain logistics, renewable transport fuel obligations, captive insurance, utilities frameworks, tendering processes, and ERP systems.

Presentations were provided by Omnea Data Management and Pam Brown (UVDB Chair & SPOC Utilities).



## Property Network

*Chaired by Glen Smith, Port of Aberdeen*

This group was formed to address the diverse challenges of port property management. It provides a platform to share experiences, make recommendations, and exchange regular updates on port priorities and ongoing projects.

The group meets twice a year, currently via Microsoft Teams. Recent discussions have covered updates on individual port developments, recommended property agents, business rates, liability issues, and progress toward net zero goals.

Presentations were provided by the Marine Management Organisation and Mott Macdonald.

## Regional Ports Group:

*Chaired by Richard Allan, Cattewater Harbour Commissioners*

The Regional Ports Group is comprised of English and Welsh ports with an annual throughput of fewer than 1 million tonnes and/or with a strong marine leisure focus.

The group ordinarily meets twice a year and holds seminars with speakers on key topics. Policy matters for regional ports discussed this year included abandoned vessels, recreational boat user safety, and how small ports can access public grants.

In 2024 it met twice, including an in-person meeting in Plymouth hosted by the Chair, where the group discussed marine operations and safety, port governance and funding, and environmental matters as well as hearing from DfT about port connectivity work and from the National Marine Park about their plans for Plymouth.







## Security & Resilience Group:

Chaired by Andy Billings,  
Associated British Ports

This group disseminates updates and forms industry-wide positions on security and resilience policy. The group meets twice a year and has good engagement from across HMG including DfT, NACTSO, and Police Forces. In 2024, amongst other things, the group lobbied DfT and the CAA to improve the process for ports seeking to restrict drone access to their estates. The Group supported the development of the BPA Anti-Slavery and Smuggling Guide, which was produced by Lisa Lewis and launched in Parliament.





# Notes





## **BRITISH PORTS** ASSOCIATION

### **British Ports Association**

30 Park Street,  
Ground Floor,  
London,  
SE1 9EQ



+44 (0)20 7260 1780



info@britishports.org.uk



britishports.org.uk



(Twitter) @britishports



britishports



British Ports Association