Dart Harbour

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Dart Harbour Newsletter – Waiting List Analysis 2020

A waiting list review was undertaken in 2017 and since then we have been monitoring our waiting lists, so are now able to provide an update of the current lists and some trend information.

The 2017 waiting list review revealed that a diverse range of mooring types continued to be in demand (mud, trot, swinging, pontoon and walkashore) but pontoons and specifically walkashore moorings were increasing in popularity and these were the type of mooring most in demand. Trends also indicated that trot berth requests are declining as are requests for moorings in shallow remote areas. In some areas there were moorings available and no customers on waiting lists wanting to take up these berths

Customer feedback taken during the 2017 review provided information that could be used to help new and existing customers and those on the waiting list to understand how our lists work and a little more detail of how to optimise their applications to reduce disappointment. In the latest 2020 review we did not ask for desired mooring type making the assumption that demand would remain roughly the same with pontoon, swinging and walkashore berths being the most sought after.

Considerations when applying for a mooring

Probably the clearest advice for those considering applying for a mooring is that you will not be offered a mooring from Dart Harbour if you are not on a waiting list. Having said this, Dart Harbour do have a relatively large number of boats that stay in the harbour on our moorings but without a residential mooring allocation. Some stay on visitor rates (that double after 14 days in peak period), others take up temporary annual or winter allocations (when the boat normally occupying a residential mooring is away for a prolonged period) and some stay for long periods moving around the facilities depending upon the availability of moorings. Our Moorings' Policy (available through a search on the website) explains the conditions of our licences and mooring allocations. Some customers often have their boats in the river for prolonged periods (sometimes years) before being allocated their desired mooring. In any event, it is well worth reading this analysis as it can help you to navigate the system and should ensure you are not paying excessive fees for having a boat in the river.

The extent of how useful this advice will be will depend upon the reader's knowledge of the Dart and on their circumstances. Some will already own vessels and be looking for a very specific mooring area. Others may not own a vessel and have little knowledge of the facilities available on and around the river. For this later group it will be important to take time to try to narrow their berthing requirement. Please remember that consideration will need to be given to issues such as car parking, yacht taxi coverage, tender berthing etc. These factors can be critical to selection of the waiting list you want to be on. If you don't yet own a boat and are considering buying one this analysis can help you to cut down the waiting time significantly with a little flexibility on boat characteristics.

Once you have some idea of how you expect to use your vessel (including length, draft and beam) and how you will be accessing it (car parking, yacht taxi or own tender) it will be possible to begin to either choose the right waiting list or at the very least to exclude some of the lists as unsuitable for your requirements. Please note that our lists are used by new customers and by those who already have a mooring on the river and are looking for something that suits their requirement more closely. This means that there are lists with people who have been on the list for significant lengths of time and who have in many cases already rejected mooring offers.

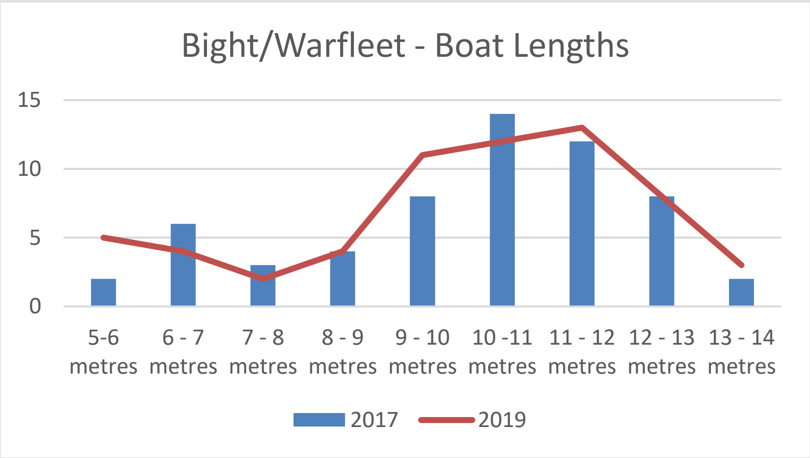
How to use this analysis

The analysis can be used to give the following information and to make some basic deductions as follows:

Choice of waiting list – For each area there are two graphs that will help to give some estimate of potential waiting time.

Date of joining a waiting list - The first graph shows the dates that customer who are on the waiting list made their applications. You will see in the example below that three customers appear to have been waiting for 15 years and have yet to get a mooring. This is because they have been offered one and did not wish to take up one of their 3 mooring offers. Where the numbers of people remaining on the list increases it is possible to assess normal waiting times for those with average boat lengths. In the example below moorings have begun being allocated for those who have been on the list for 4 years. But it is important to use the second graph to assess how your request compares for boat length in relation to mooring stock.

Boat Length – The second graph for each area shows the boat lengths that are contained in the waiting list requests and also shows the berth lengths of our current mooring stock. This information will help to give some idea of how your position on list relates to the potential waiting time. There are some obvious aspects to these graphs. Namely there is little point being on a list with no mooring stock to suit your vessel. If you are at the larger end of the boat length graph you could be waiting for considerably longer and the office will be able to give you an idea of the numbers ahead of you on the list waiting for large berths.



Boat Characteristics for potential purchasers. Some of our customer wait until they are allocated a mooring and then begin to look into boat purchase. But for many they have an idea of the vessel they are hoping to buy and enjoy. For those customers in the latter group (considering purchasing before being allocated a berth) the lists and discussion with the office staff over mooring availability can help to cut down waiting times significantly. Some of our non pontoon moorings are categorised by the depth of water available at low water springs (for Dartmouth this is when the height of tide is 0.6m). The mooring categories are as follows:

Cat A - deep berth with 3m or more at MLWS
Cat B - shallow berth – 1-3m at MLWS
Cat C - very shallow berth less than 1m at MLWS

By taking into account boat length and draft it is possible to reduce waiting times significantly. For some locations it is possible to purchase relatively large vessels (around 10m) and get a mooring immediately so long as the draft is shallow. This means that a yacht with a lifting keel or shallow draft vessels will tend to gain an allocation significantly earlier.

Changes that affect waiting times and allocation

As you will see when you read this analysis, our waiting lists and mooring allocation processes are pretty complex owing to the spread of moorings and boat characteristics. You should also be aware that the Moorings' Policy is reviewed every 5 years and can change some of the priorities and allocation routines. Our moorings are mostly let on an annual licence and waiting lists and allocation is done in accordance with extant policy however long customers have been waiting. **The key to success here is to take account of the information below and then once the requirement is narrowed to talk to staff.**

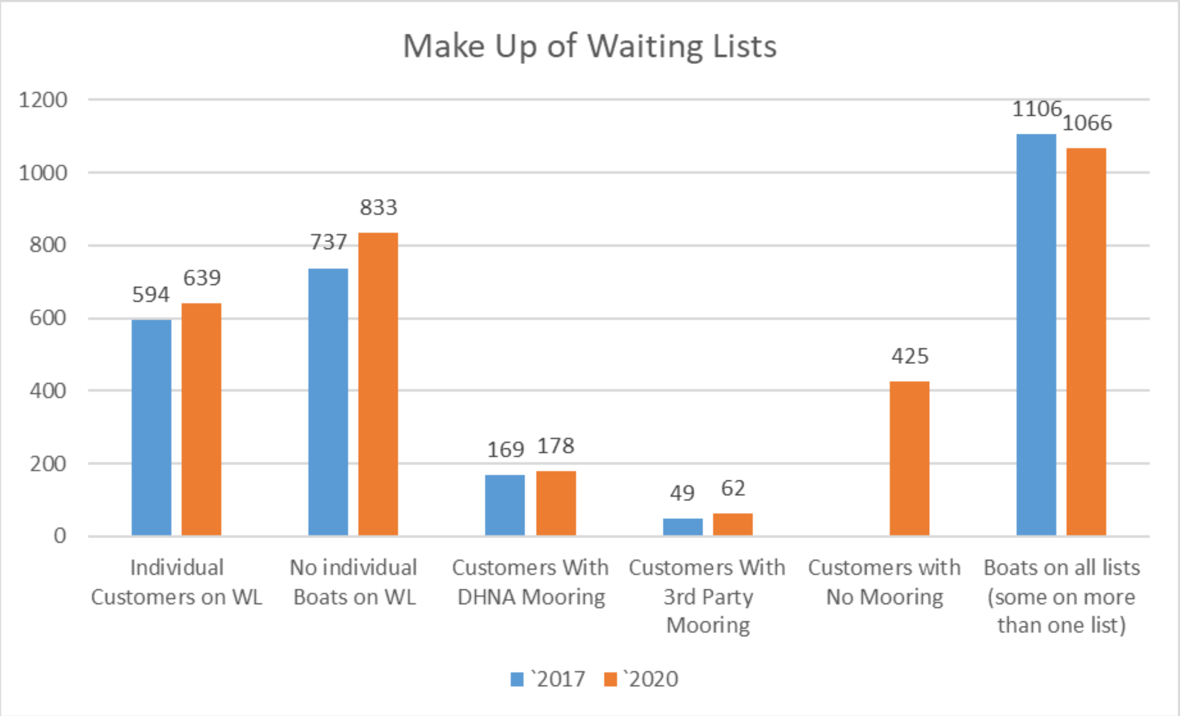
The executive and board have recognised the need to alter the mooring configuration in an attempt to keep lists moving evenly. In 2017, the Authority began a process of mooring optimisation and this is expected to continue indefinitely as our stakeholders' demands change. The first part of the optimisation work was to move moorings that were unlet to increase mooring stock in areas of higher demand. The second aspect was to change visitor berths with little occupation over to residential berths. The third phase has been to continue to review the mooring stock against demand based on boat length and alter berth lengths to allow a smoother flow of allocations and avoid exceptionally long waiting times for customers with larger vessels. Phase one and two were done relatively quickly but the third stage is a slow process of waiting for berths to become free allowing us to adjust our mooring stock. Please note that often there will be a small number of berths that are not allocated on a full annual basis whilst we adjust berth sizes.

Mooring Statistics

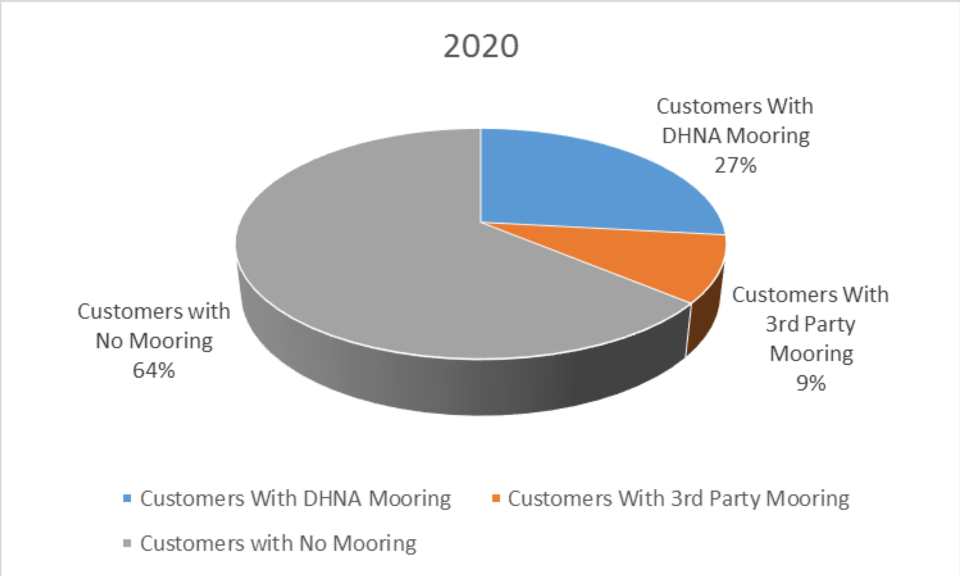
Item	*2017*	*2020*
Total Number of Dart Harbour berth holders	1355	*1341*
Percentage of Dart Harbour berth holders on waiting lists	12% (162)	*12.4% (167)*
Total Number of people on waiting lists	594	*639*
Average person who pays the waiting list deposit is on	2.9 lists	1.6 lists
Total responded to request for information	(448) (104 come off list, 8 unable to contact, 335 stay on, 167 not responded, 291 stated preferred location	*N/A – research not carried out in 2020*

Make up of Waiting List Customers

The graph below shows how the customers on the waiting list are made up, with a comparison between 2017 and 2020. You can see that while there are only 639 (594 in 2017) individuals on the waiting lists, there are 1066 (1106 in 2017) boats on all lists, this demonstrates that the average waiting list customer is on more than one waiting list and some for more than one boat for example a main boat and tender, and/or for more than one mooring location.

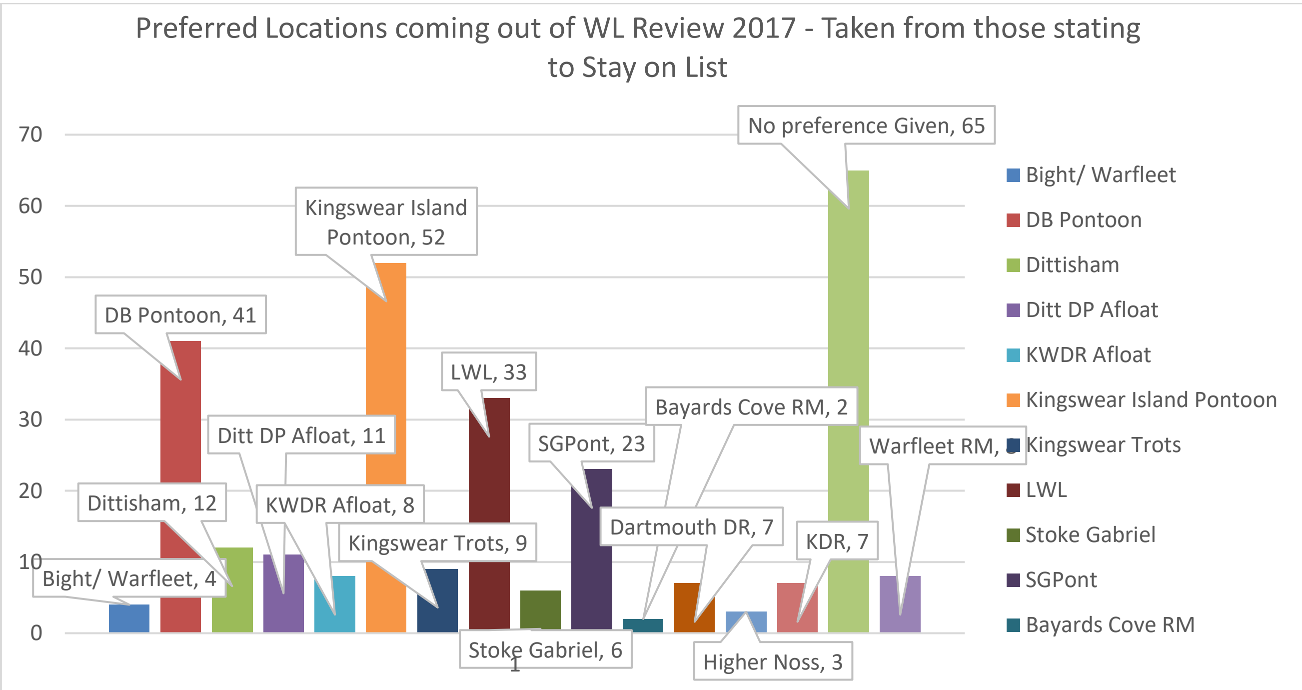


The following graph shows that only 27% (29% 2017) of waiting list customers already has a mooring with Dart Harbour and are waiting for an alternative location, with 64% (63% 2017) being new customers. The data has changed only very slightly since 2017.



2017 Preferred Locations

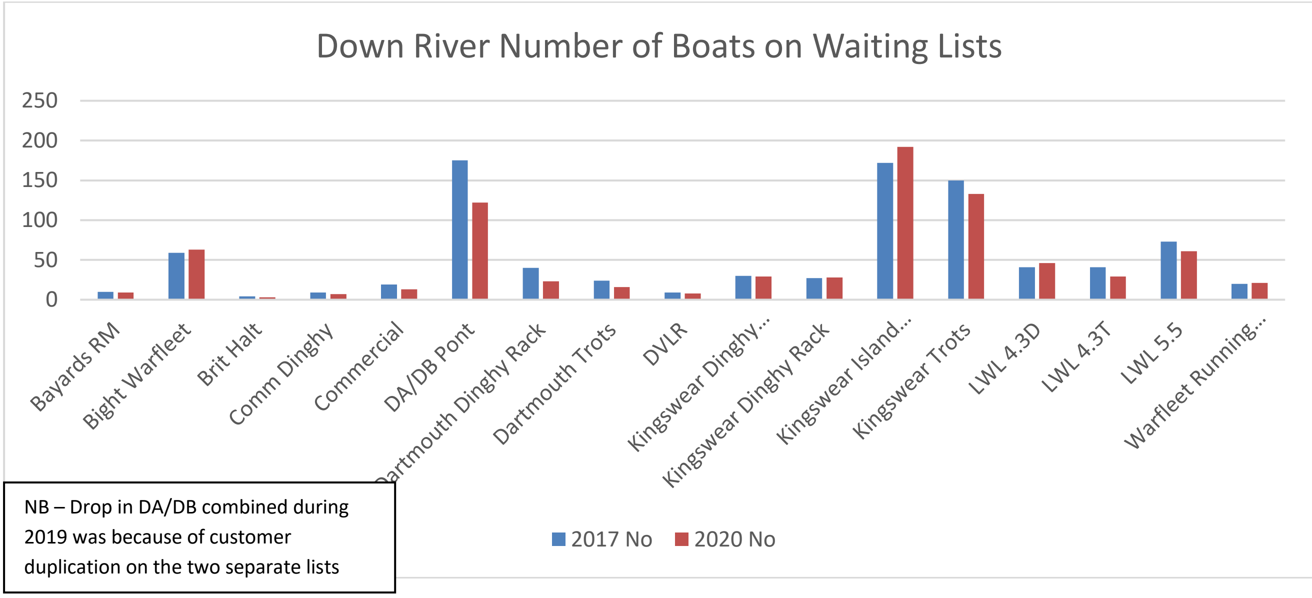
During 2017 waiting list customers were asked to identify their preferred locations of the lists they were registered on. This showed that the Kingswear Island Pontoon and DB Pontoon are the most popular, which led us to the conclusion that walkashore or pontoon demand is highest. In response to this data (in 2018) the DA and DB pontoons were joined to provide more accessible walkashore berthing in Dartmouth and the two separate waiting lists (DA and DB) were combined, which eliminated some duplicate applications. This data has not been collected since 2017.



Mooring Location Trends

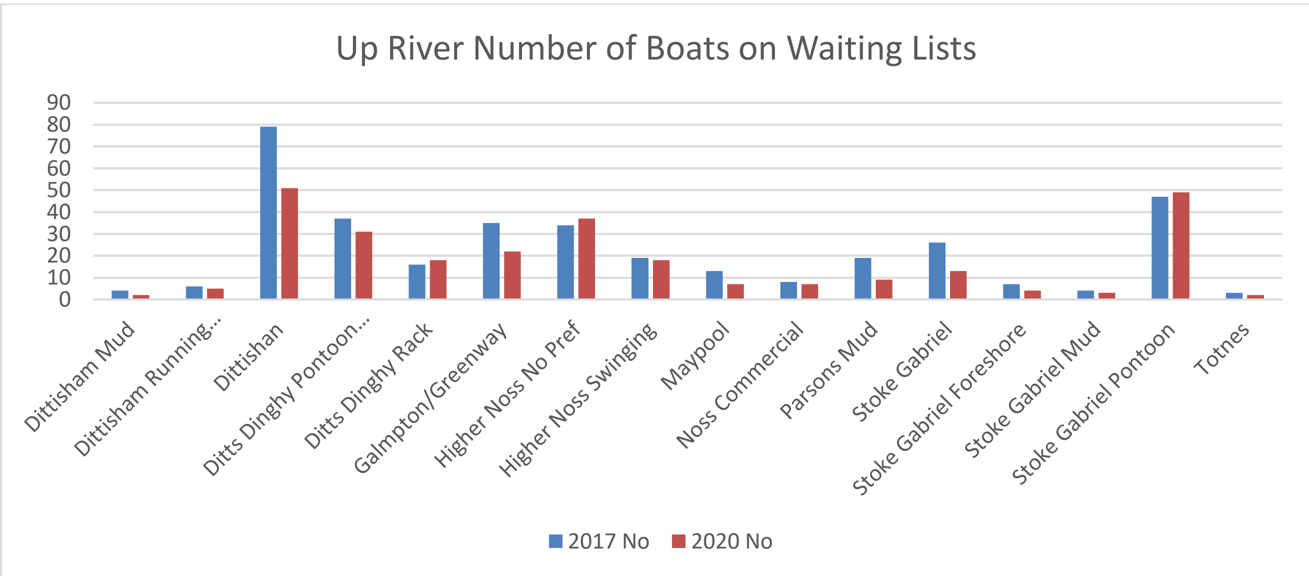
Down River

The difference in waiting lists for different locations or mooring types is broadly minimal with some more significant increases or decreases. These broadly suggests the continued trend towards pontoons that are either serviced or walk ashore over trot moorings. It should be noted that the drop showing against DA/DB pontoon does not signify a reduction in preference, but the fact that during 2019 the separate lists of DA and DB were combined and customer duplications removed for those on both lists.

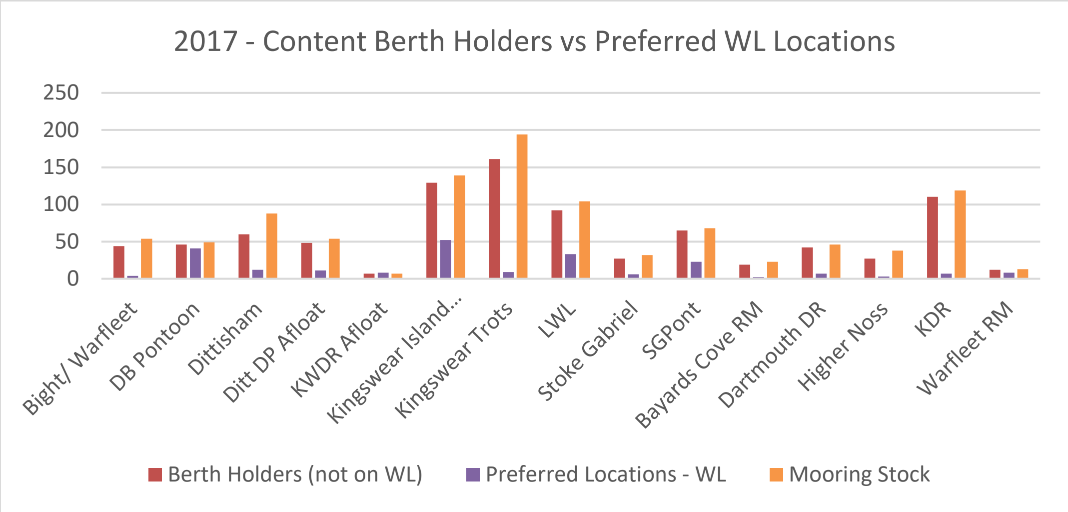


Up River

The lists are showing a reduction in numbers since 2017, with the exception of Higher Noss (deep water berths) and Stoke Gabriel Pontoon (always very popular and slow moving). This reduction reinforces the view that depth of water and more immediately accessible berths are preferable to remote shallow moorings.



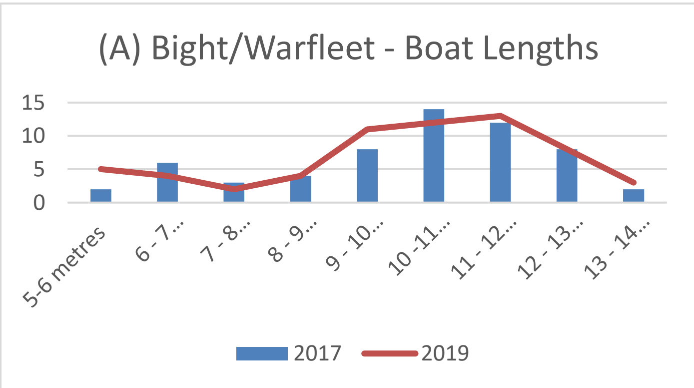
The graph below gives the responses from waiting list customers in 2017 to identify their preferred mooring location. This information was not collected in 2020, but the small changes in waiting list numbers between 2017 and 2020 seems to indicate that this trend is unchanged.

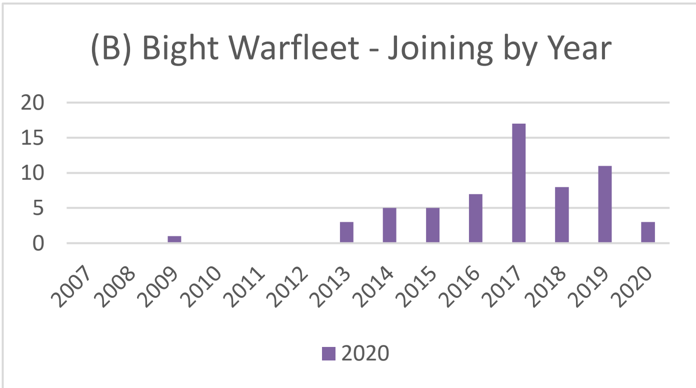


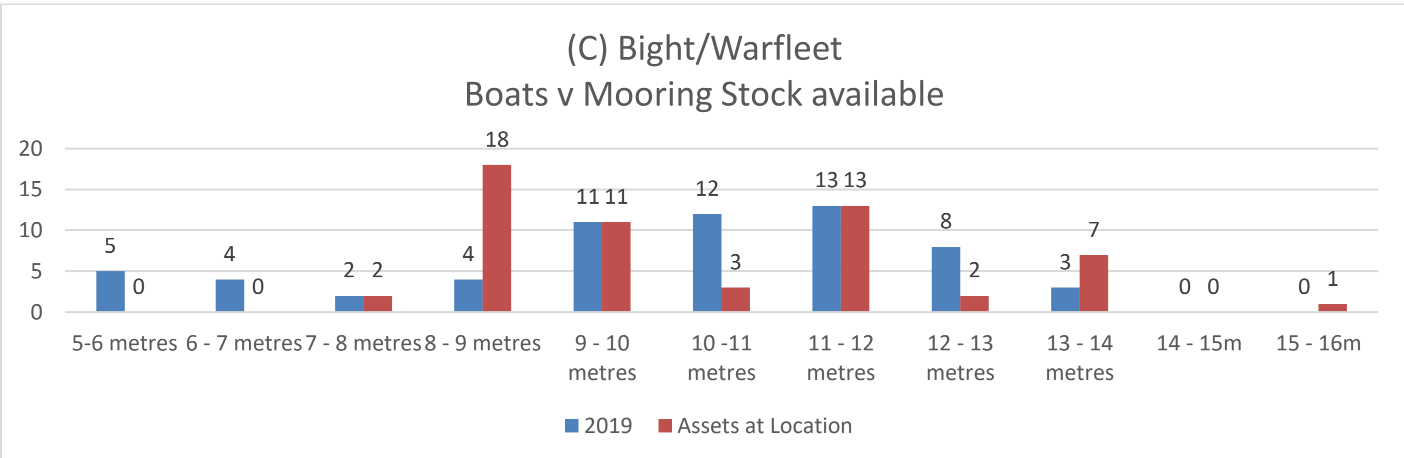
Boat Lengths, Waiting Times and Assets (berths) Available

The graphs below show the registered boat lengths on the main waiting lists and the waiting times for these locations plus a graph showing the Dart Harbour mooring stock of different lengths at that location. In regard to waiting times, some customers are on waiting lists for a future date and may have indicated that they do not require a berth for some years, for example to tie in with retirement plans or they may be waiting for a transfer within that area (eg moving to a deeper, larger/smaller or more convenient mooring).

Bight/Warfleet





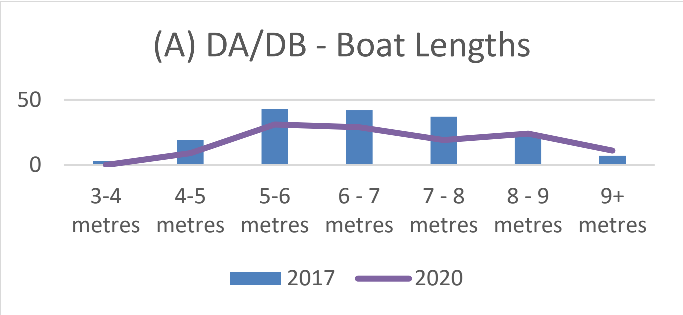


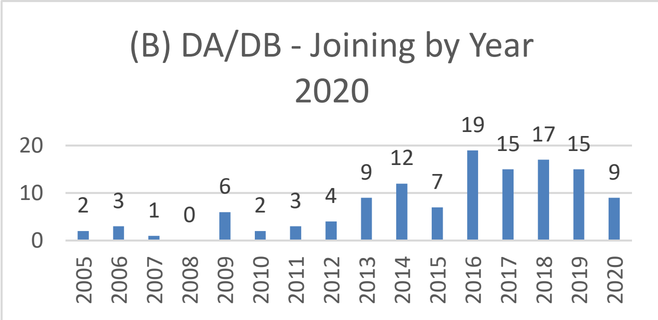
Conclusions

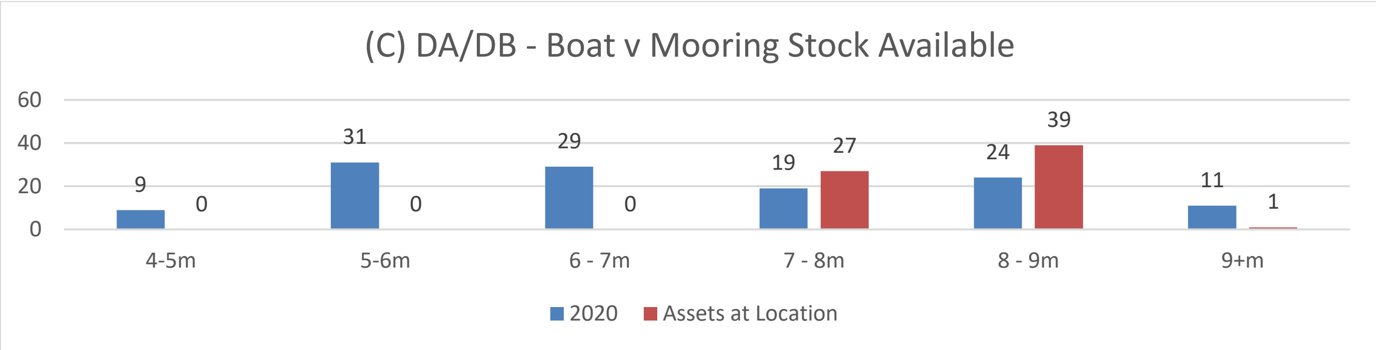
A. The trend between 2017 and 2019 on boat lengths demonstrates the trend of a preference for larger boats.
B. In 2019 allocations were being made for those who joined the list in 2014 (for those with optimum boat length)

DA/DB Pontoon

Graphs show both pre and post the waiting list review of 2017 and the adjustments to this area helped to tackle the high demand for more walkashore small boat pontoons.



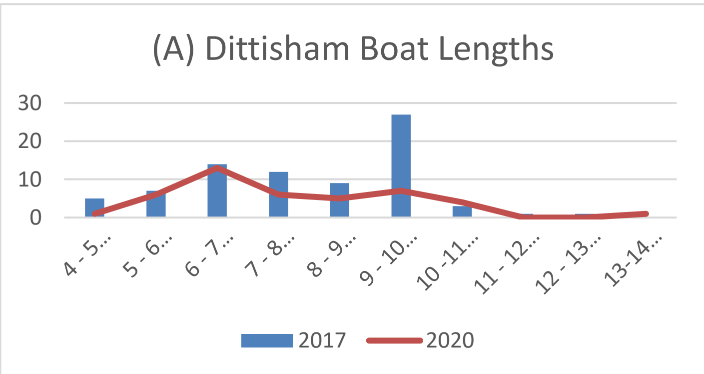


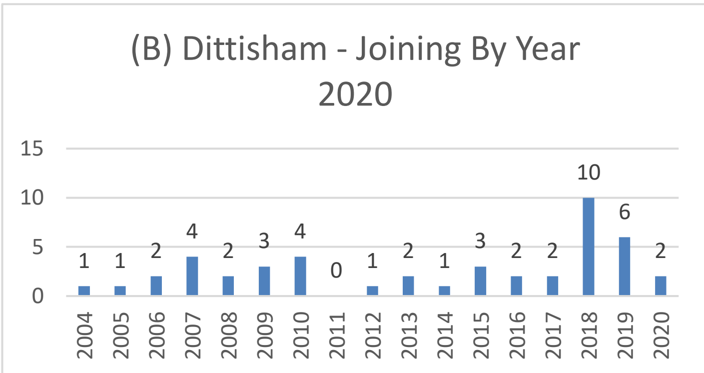


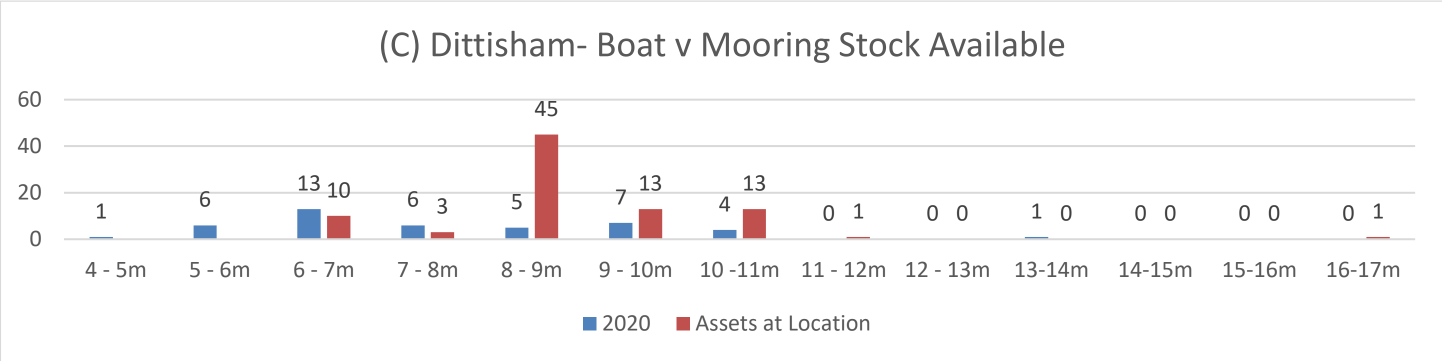
Conclusions

A. The reduction in waiting list customers between 2017 and 2020 is as a result of the combining of two separate lists (DA and DB) into one, which removed some duplicated customers who were on both lists.
B. In 2019 allocations were being made for those who joined the list in 2013 (for those with optimum boat length)

Dittisham





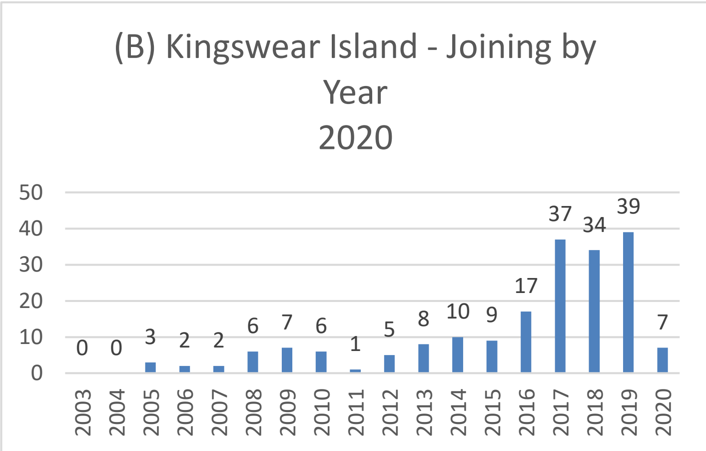


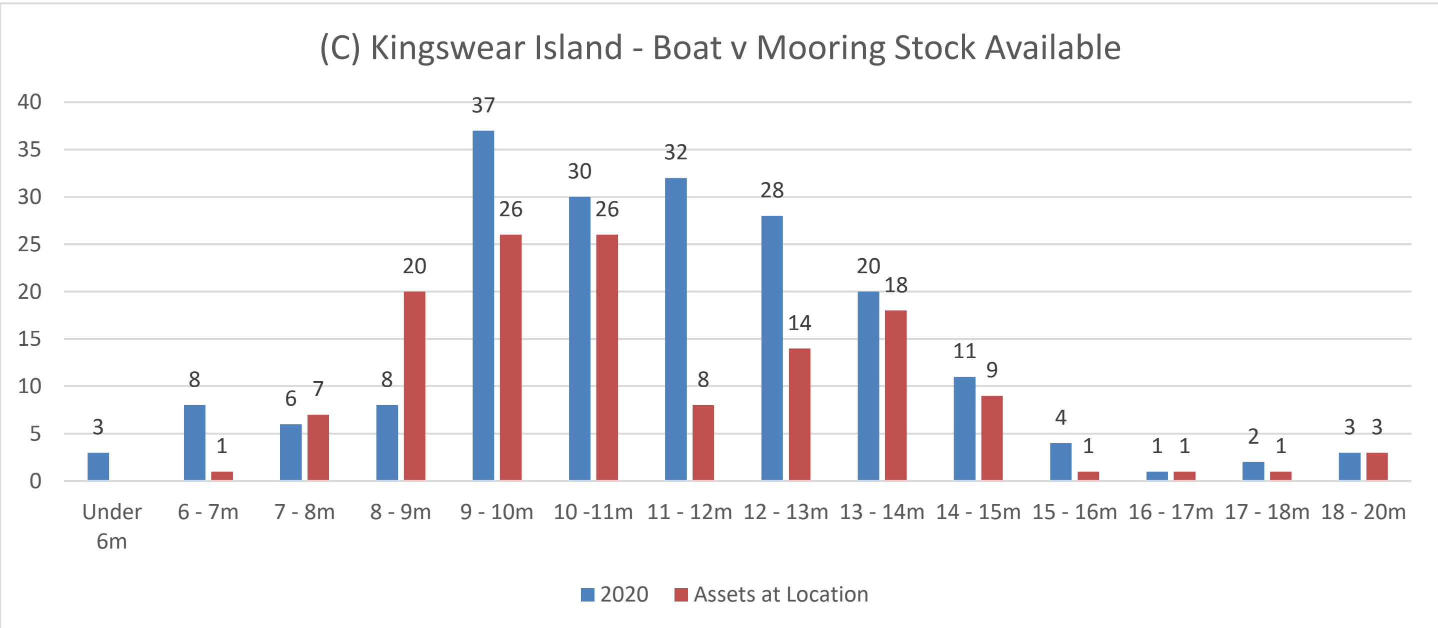
Conclusions

A. There has been a significant reduction in waiting list customers between 2017 and 2020 which seems to indicate that more remote moorings are less popular than previously.

B. In 2019 allocations were being made for those who joined the list in 2017 (for those with optimum boat length)

Kingswear Island Pontoons



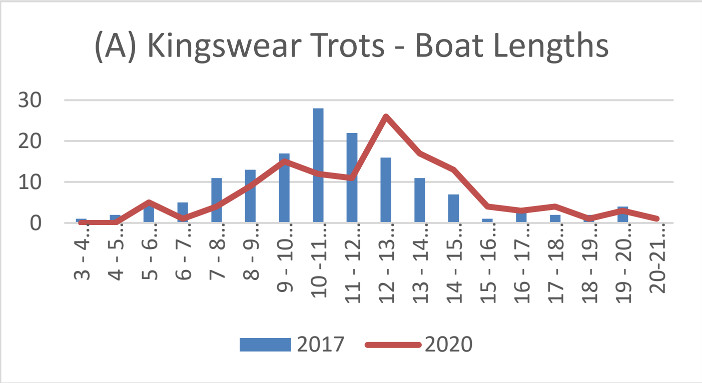


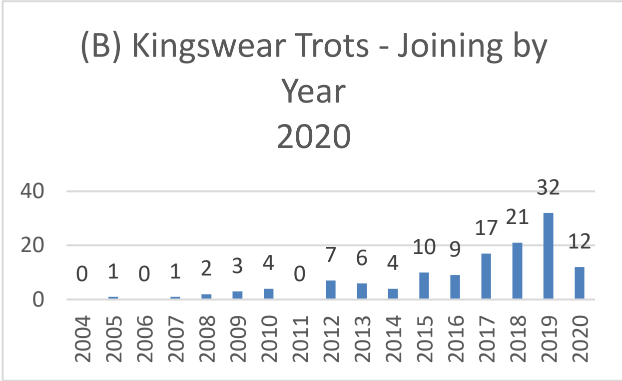
Conclusions

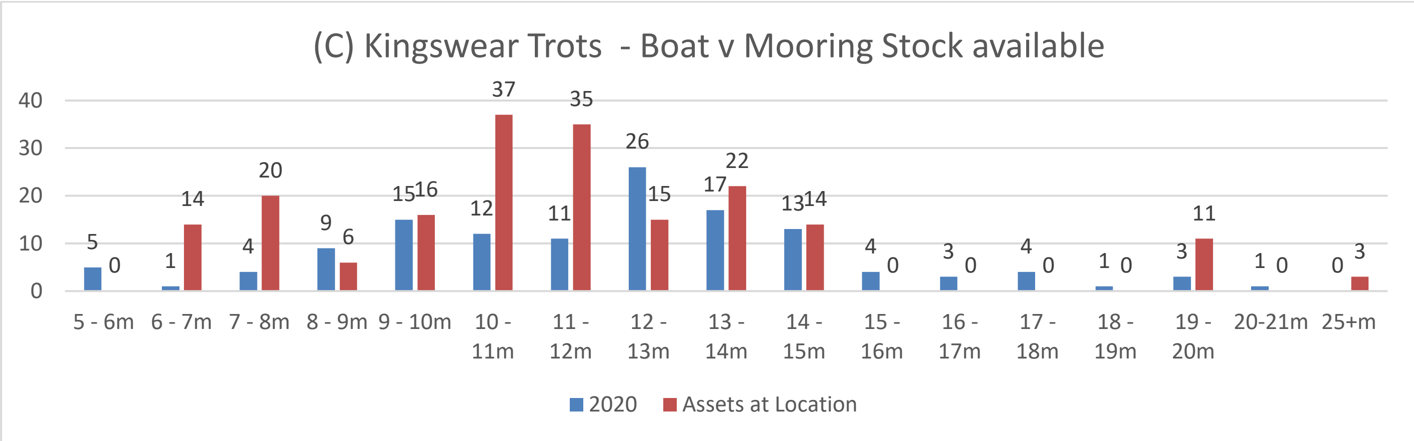
A. There has been an overall increase in the boat sizes joining this list with the majority of applications for boats between 9m and 14m.

B. In 2019 allocations were being made for those who joined the list in 2015 (for those with optimum boat length)

Kingswear Trots





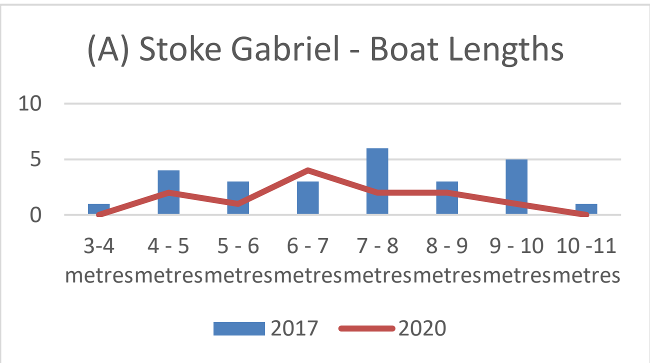


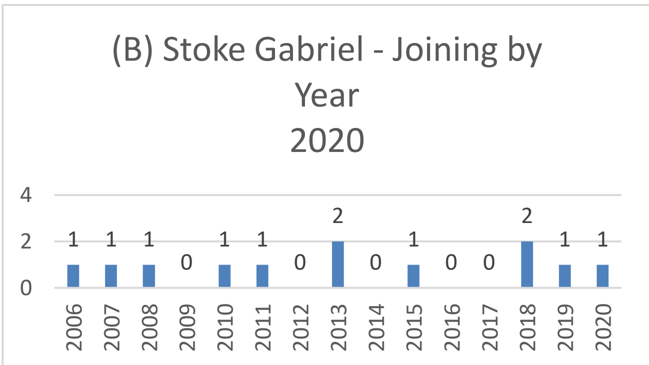
Conclusions

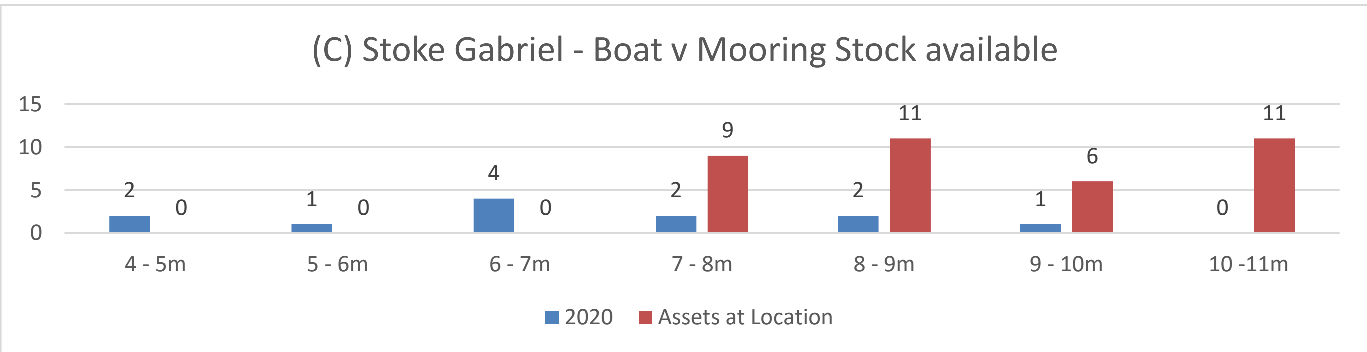
A. There has been an overall increase in the boat sizes joining this list with the majority of applications for boats between 7m and 14m.

B. In 2019 allocations were being made for those who joined the list in 2016 (for those with optimum boat length)

Stoke Gabriel





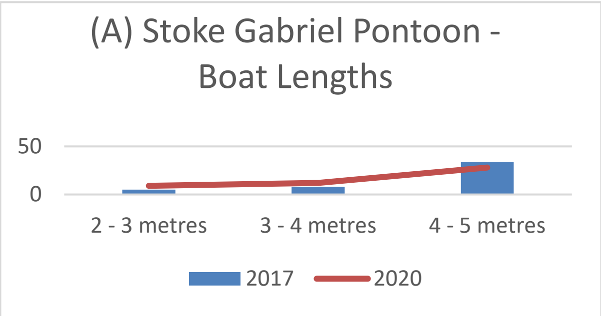


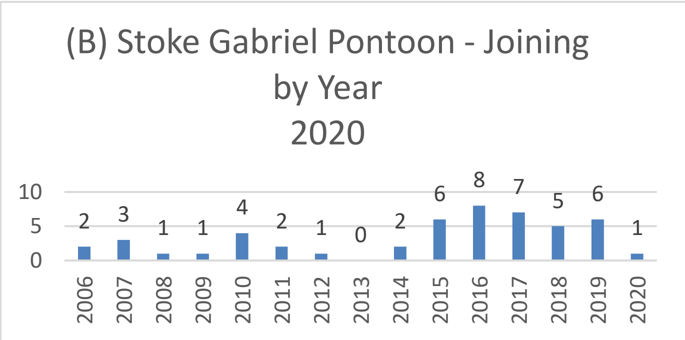
Conclusions

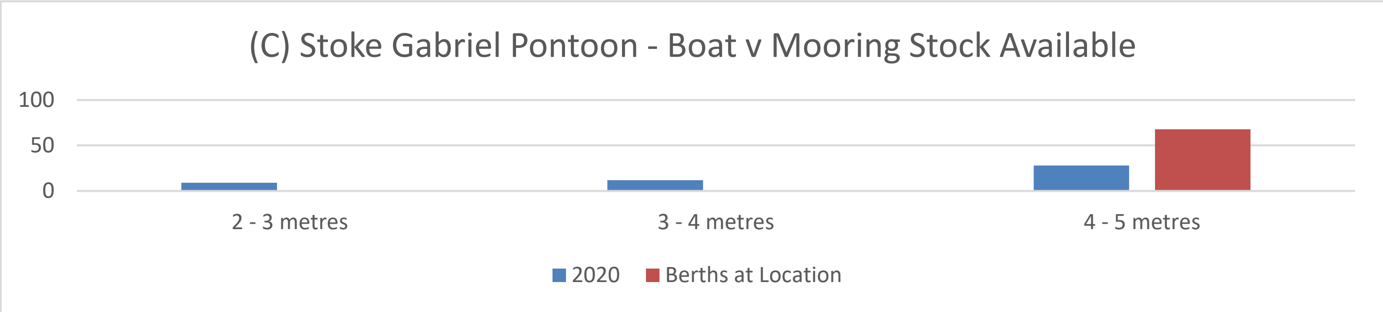
A. There has been an overall reduction in the boat sizes joining this list with the majority of applications in 2020 for boats between 6m and 7m.
B. There are currently only approximately 12 customers on this waiting list.
C. There are vessels on the list that are too small for the mooring stock, or if allocated berth holders would need to pay a minimum charge of 5m for smaller vessels using a larger mooring.

Stoke Gabriel Pontoon

It should be noted that allocations are made to "tender" or "dinghy" applications. A ratio of 75% tenders to 25% dinghies is applicable at this location. This is so that our main berth holders can gain access to remote mooring locations in the Stoke Gabriel/Cornworthy areas. The distinction between a tender and a dinghy is that a tender is a small boat needed to access a main vessel on another mooring. Tender moorings must be given up at the same time as the main mooring so that the dinghy pontoon berth may be allocated to another tender.





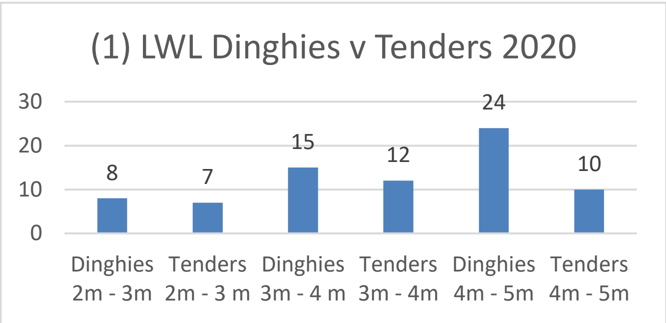


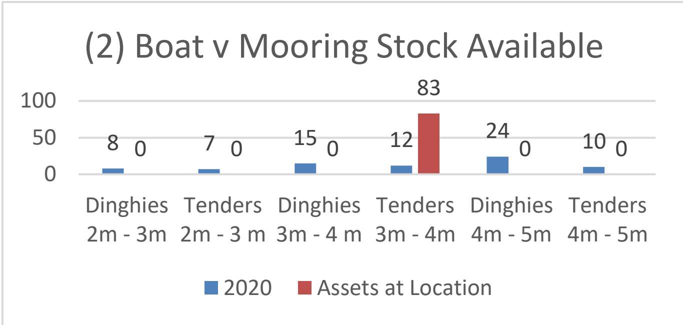
Conclusions

A. There has been a slight increase in boat sizes since 2017, but the maximum length of boat allowed on this pontoon is 4.3m
B. As a general guide the customers on the list between 2006 and 2012 are likely to be waiting for dinghy berths and the applications between 2014 and 2020 are a mixture of both tender and dinghy applications. The distinction between a tender and a dinghy is that a tender is a small boat needed to access a main vessel on another mooring.
C. All the berths at this location are the same size, but the boat sizes may vary up to a maximum of 4.3m LOA.

Low Water Landing

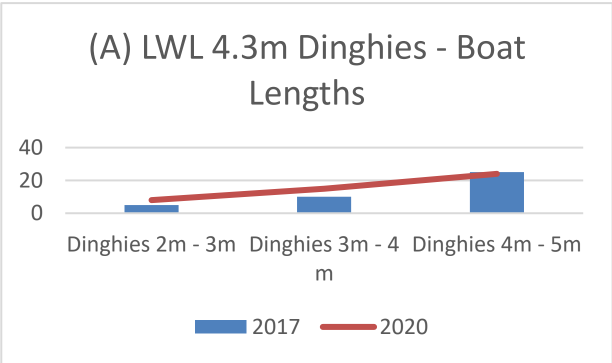
There are two mooring areas at the Low Water Landing for boats of up to 4.3m and for boats up to 5.5 m. The waiting list for 4.3m berths is divided into those waiting for tenders and those waiting for a dinghy place. The distinction between a tender and a dinghy is that a tender is a small boat needed to access a main vessel on another mooring. Tender moorings must be given up at the same time as the main mooring so that the berth may be allocated to another tender. A ratio of 75% tenders to 25% dinghies is applicable at this location. The graph (1) shows the difference in number between dinghy and tender boats on the waiting list, and demonstrates that the wait for a dinghy berth is longer than for a tender berth.



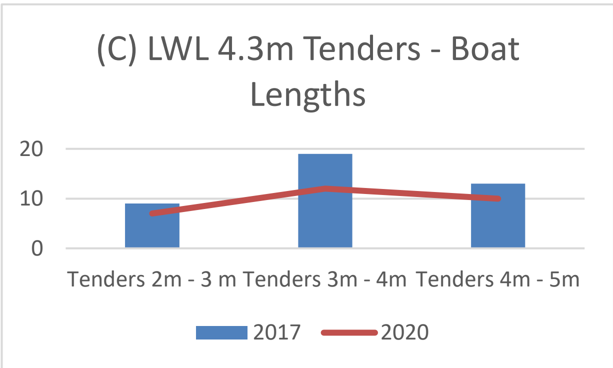


Graph (2) shows both dinghy and tender boats against the number of berths at that location. All berths are the same length.

LWL 4.3m (Dinghies)

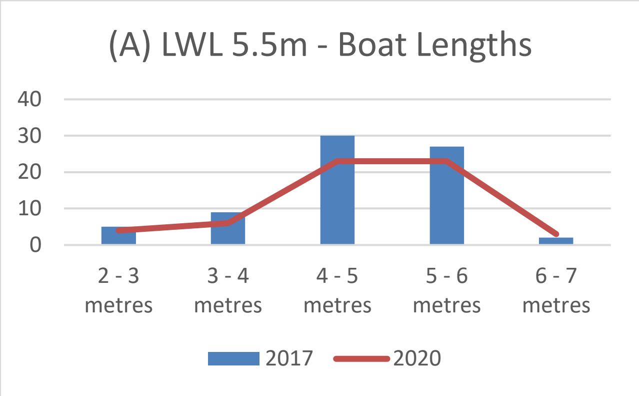


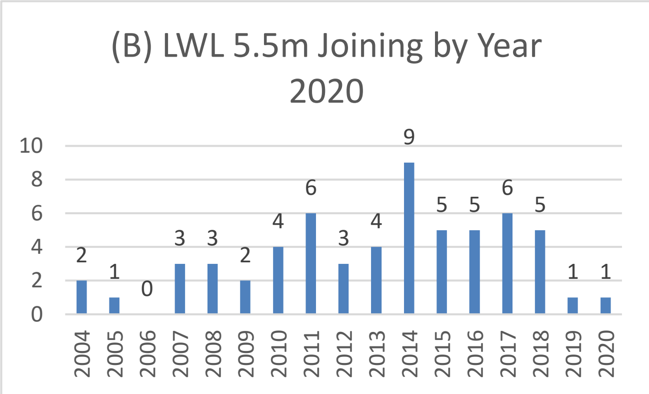
LWL 4.3m (Tenders)

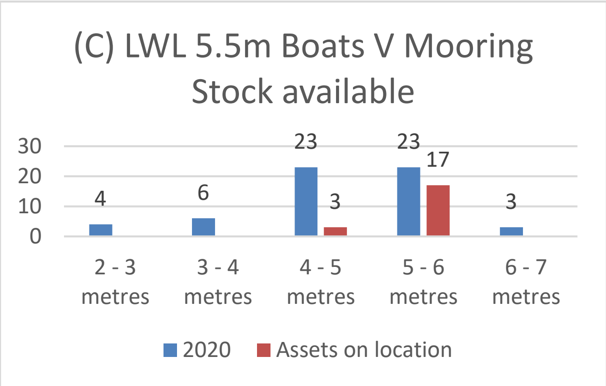


A. There has been a slight increase in boat sizes since 2017, but the maximum length of boat allowed on this pontoon is 4.3m
B. The wait for a dinghy berth is longer than for a tender mooring.
C. All the berths at this location are the same size, but the boat sizes may vary up to a maximum of 4.3m LOA.
D. It should be noted that as tender berths are not needed until a main boat mooring has been allocated, some customers remain on this list, until a main berth becomes available which may explain the length of wait before 2014.

LWL 5.5 m Berths







There is a difference in price point between the LWL 4.3 and the LWL 5.5m berths (2020 prices 4.3m £117.36, 5.5m 563.08) and less mooring stock of the 5.5m size.

A. There has been a slight reduction in boat sizes since 2017, but the maximum length of boat allowed on this pontoon is 5.5m
B. In 2019 allocations were being made for those who joined the list in 2012 (for those with optimum boat length)
C. All the berths at this location are the same size, but the boat sizes may vary up to a maximum of 5.5m LOA.

The Next Steps

Dart Harbour will be using the data collected as part of its mooring optimisation work, so that we can adjust the existing mooring stock to suit the demand on the waiting list. This can take some time to achieve, because it relies of a flow of moorings being available to be able to adjust berth sizes to suit the demand in any particular area. The Dart Harbour Moorings’ Policy also sets out the Authority’s policy on the number of moorings that may be installed in the harbour, so it is not just a matter of putting in more moorings to suit the demand and this document is taken into account when making decisions about the location of any new mooring stock and adjusting between less popular the areas in demand to enable this to happen.

Captain Mark Cooper
Harbour Master/CEO

August 2020

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