

MALDON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS

MALDON HARBOUR DUES (NON-COMMERCIAL) ORDER 2024

MALDON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS (“MHIC”)

HARBOUR DUES FOR CRAFT NOT PAYING COMMERCIAL DUES

The General Pier and Harbour Order 1861

The Maldon Harbour Order 1865

The Pier and Harbour Orders Confirmation Act 1865

The Harbours Act 1964

1. Except as stated below, Harbour Dues of £20 per year shall be payable by all vessels of 18 foot (5.5 metres) or more in length (measured on deck from stem to stern, including any water level protrusions beyond that length) afloat on the River Chelmer and Blackwater (including basins, creeks, mud berths, saltings, private foreshore and marinas) within the area between the Fullbridge, Maldon and a line immediately up-river of the lock gate, Heybridge Basin (the “Port”) at any time during the annual period 1 January to 31 December.
2. Any vessel berthed, moored or stored in or on a berth or a mooring managed or let by a Participating Organisation shall not be required to pay the Dues to MHIC. The owner or controller of such vessel shall instead be obliged to reimburse its Participating Organisation for the amount of the Harbour Dues on demand. This shall be without prejudice to MHIC’s right to recover payment (and penalties) directly if the vessel-owner/controller fails to reimburse the Participating Organisation.
3. A “Participating Organisation” is a business, club or organisation which manages or lets moorings or berths and has agreed with the MHIC to pay or collect the Harbour Dues in respect of the vessels berthed or moored by them.
4. The following vessels shall be exempt from paying Harbour Dues under this Order:
 - (a) Commercial Vessels which, during the annual period, pay commercial Harbour Dues (on a per passenger or tonnage basis) to MHIC.
 - (b) Any vessel registered with Maldon District Council (“MDC”) as a houseboat which pays council tax to MDC during the annual period and does not move from its berth/mooring in the annual period.
5. Any owner or controller of a vessel who fails to pay after written demand (which may be left on the vessel) shall be liable to pay three times the amount due, in addition to any other costs, fees or expenses incurred by or awarded to MHIC for seeking to recover the amount due.
6. MHIC shall have discretion to allow discounts or deductions, provided that the basis of such discounts is offered fairly to all payers or, as the case may be, all payers in the same category.
7. Non-commercial vessels afloat in the Port for a visit of less than 14 days shall not be required to pay Harbour Dues.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Commencing in 2024, Harbour Dues of £20 per vessel per year will be charged on all vessels of 18 ft/5.5 metres (or more) in the Chelmer and Blackwater Rivers between the Fullbridge and Heybridge Lock. Harbour Dues cover the costs of the Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners (“MHIC”) in maintaining the buoys, managing the dredging of the channel and administering the port generally, including serving as the reporting body and point of contact with the many government and non-government organisations which have marine powers or interests. The Commissioners are themselves unpaid and provide their services on a voluntary basis.

This will share the Harbour Dues equitably between those who benefit from the port, in place of the prevailing system which has seen them borne solely by the commercial vessels and in particular the sailing barges.

In setting up this arrangement, MHIC has worked hard to avoid creating a scheme in which the cost of collection will increase the amount of Harbour Dues required. Larger harbour authorities spend considerable sums on collection and enforcement. After consultation, all of the local boatyards and mooring owners have agreed that substantial cost can be avoided if the Dues of their customers are collected through them. They have therefore all agreed to participate in the process, in the interests of the port. This will result in the payment of over 95% of the fees due.

The passenger vessels, barges and other commercial vessels will continue to pay at a higher rate, charged per voyage, and are not dealt with in this Order.

Houseboats which pay council tax and do not move will also be exempt.

The effect of the proposals:

Vessels

All craft of 18 ft/5.5 metres or longer, other than those paying commercial Harbour Dues to MHIC and council-tax paying immobile houseboats, are charged on an annual basis at the rate of £20 per vessel per year. However, if they are berthed in or moored on moorings for which a boatyard, business, club or other organisation pays agreed Dues or has agreed to collect the Dues (a “Participating Organisation”) they pay their Dues to the Participating Organisation, rather than to MHIC. Visiting yachts which are in port for not more than 14 days are exempt, as are dinghies and tenders.

Participating Organisations are Chandlers Quay Moorings Ltd, Downs Road Boatyard, Knox Maritime Ltd, Landbreach Ltd, Maldon District Council and Marinestore Chandlery.

Other businesses and organisations

MHIC will be asking other clubs, businesses and organisations who are not liable to pay on the above basis but who benefit from the port to contribute to the fees.