

# CITY DOCKS MOORING POLICY



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*Underfall Yard*



*Amphitheatre moorings during events*

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is a policy for managing the mooring of the different vessels in the Floating Harbour, which runs from Cumberland Basin in the west to Netham Lock in the east.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Reflecting a national trend, there has been increasing demand for mooring space in the Floating Harbour, with more and more vessels wishing to be used for leisure, commercial purposes and as living accommodation. Existing mooring opportunities are at capacity and further demand is anticipated. The city has promoted development around and on the harbour, which has placed an even greater premium on mooring space whilst at the same time providing new opportunities for moorings.

## 3 Objectives of the Mooring Policy

- 3.1 The main objectives of the mooring policy are as follows:
  - (i) To clearly define criteria for the operation, management and planning requirements of Harbour moorings and related quayside uses, having due regard to local needs and desires but taking into account the established policy of encouraging public use and enjoyment of the City Docks.
  - (ii) To continue to pursue the general policy of promoting the Floating Harbour as the region's main location for water-based recreation and leisure, taking into account the need for safe and easy access for all citizens and visitors, with particular regard to those with mobility problems.
  - (iii) To secure the maintenance of and improvements to water quality in the City Docks.



*Sailing at Baltic Wharf*

- 3.2 It is intended to achieve the above through a mooring policy which clearly sets down a role for particular stretches of the Floating Harbour and a set of guidelines for the types of moorings to be permitted within them. The mooring policy will be principally administered by the Director of Culture and Leisure Services, through the City Docks Section, but will also have a wider corporate role in guiding and co-ordinating the work of the Property Services and of Planning, Transport and Development Services.

## 4 Functions of the Floating Harbour

- 4.1 The following paragraphs confirm the complex range of roles which the Harbour performs and underlines the need for a clear mooring policy as a foundation for its proper management.

### (a) Commercial Port and Haven

- 4.2 The only port-related commercial operations remaining in the Harbour are ferry companies running scheduled services, charter companies who run tours around the waterway, and a number of boat building and maintenance organisations dealing with repair and restoration. Any other commercial activities do not involve the regular movement of vessels.
- 4.3 The city council, as Harbour Authority, is still legally obliged to maintain the Harbour as navigable water. This requirement can only be changed by an Act of Parliament. The retention of navigation rights enables courtesy visits including large seagoing vessels for recreational and promotional events, consistent with the leisure role of the docks being promoted by the council.

### (b) Water Sports

- 4.4 The use of the Harbour for water sports recreation has increased, in particular windsurfing and dinghy sailing, canoeing, rowing, water skiing, and angling. Such



*Cabot Cruising Club moorings, Bathurst Basin*



activities do not demand mooring space but do constrain the positioning of moorings and other activities in the water. Slipways and facilities for water activities are located at Baltic Wharf, Albion Dockyard and Mardyke Wharf.

### **(c) Inland Waterway Terminus and Marinas**

4.5 The Floating Harbour has long been used by inland waterway cruisers, and the number of such vessels has increased with the completed restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal, providing a potential link to the Thames because of the growth of marinas and leisure boating in the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary. There is also a demand for moorings for sea-going leisure craft. This has led to the establishment of managed serviced marinas at the Albion Dockyard, Avon Quay (primarily a yacht brokerage) and marina style moorings on St Augustine's Reach, The Grove, Bathurst Basin and Redcliffe Backs. Further moorings are being provided as part of other major developments at Harbourside, Welsh Back, Temple Quay and Redcliffe Wharf.

### **(d) Events Arena**

4.6 The city council promotes the use of the Floating Harbour for a number of prestigious national and local waterborne events, some of which may require the removal of virtually all moored vessels in the Harbour west of Redcliffe Bridge. Clearly such a fundamental requirement, incorporating as it does the need to provide alternative serviced berths elsewhere in the docks for some categories of user, has a significant effect on mooring policy.

### **(e) Visitor Attraction**

4.7 In addition to prestigious water-based events, the Harbour area makes a considerable contribution to the city's tourist economy as well as being a valuable recreational resource for local people. The city council has for several

years been developing and promoting the "Historical Harbour" through a range of visitor facilities with a maritime heritage theme. As part of this promotion, the mooring of vessels of historic interest will continue to be encouraged.

### **(f) A Residential Resource**

4.8 There has been a growing demand from people for moorings for residential craft. At the present time, demand continues to exceed the supply of adequately serviced berths. Vessels of this type can contribute to the vitality and interest of the harbour. However, these limited opportunities for residential vessels have to be managed carefully and sensitively.

## **5 The Four Reaches of the Harbour**

5.1 The Floating Harbour can be divided into distinct areas, each with a particular character and function. These are identified within this document. They are:

### **(a) Cumberland Basin**

5.2 At the western end of the dock complex is Cumberland Basin which is part of the entrance system. It is kept clear of all moored craft for operational reasons. It is periodically scoured at low tide to remove silt.

### **(b) Water Activity Harbour**

5.3 This area stretches from the Underfall Yard to the Graving Dock (Albion Dockyard). It is intended that this part of the Harbour continues to be used for water sports and active recreation. To minimise hazards to users and to maximise free areas of water, only very limited mooring will be allowed here.

### **(c) The Harbour Arena**

5.4 The Harbour Arena stretches from the ss Great Britain to Redcliffe Bridge, including St Augustine's Reach. Its role as the hub of activity and interest in the the Harbour will be consolidated. Most major public events



*Marina style moorings at St Augustine's Reach*



*Vessels of historical interest*

continue to be centred here. Consequently any vessels moored in this area may be liable to occasional relocation. There can be no guarantee of relocation to a serviced berth for the duration of the event. Similar constraints can apply to vessels moored immediately to the east of Prince Street Bridge.

#### (d) The Upper Reaches

- 5.5 This area of the Harbour stretches from Redcliffe Bridge to the Netham Lock and accommodates a mix of leisure, residential and commercial moorings. Commercial moorings are generally located between Prince Street and Bristol Bridge, although commercial moorings can be accommodated above Bristol Bridge subject to navigational restrictions imposed by the height of its central arch.

## 6 The Types of Moorings

- 6.1 The classification for moorings in the Floating Harbour are as follows:

- (a) Leisure moorings
- (b) Residential moorings
- (c) Commercial moorings
- (d) Courtesy and historic craft
- (e) Operational moorings

Each one is discussed in detail below. The distribution of moorings in the Harbour is shown on the plan on pages 9 and 10.

#### (a) Leisure Moorings

- 6.2 The provision of mooring for leisure craft (mostly smaller craft used by private individuals for their own recreation) is a vital part of the recreational use of the Floating Harbour. Leisure moorings are provided in a variety of locations in order to allow operational and managerial flexibility. This allows the ability to cater for varying demand for such moorings during the year.



*Residential moorings at Welsh Back*

- 6.3 Bristol Marina is privately operated, located in the Harbour at Albion Dockyard. Major grouped moorings are also located at Bathurst Basin, Old Junction Lock, Redcliffe Backs, the Grove and St Augustine's Reach. As stated earlier, new marina style moorings will be provided as part of developments at Harbourside, Redcliffe Wharf, Temple Back and Temple Quay. Licences are granted to individual leisure craft for different lengths of stay as follows:

#### (i) Short-Term Licences

It is anticipated that this form of licence will accommodate the majority of leisure craft which visit the Harbour. Craft will be licensed to stay for periods of up to 30 days. As it is now possible for craft to reach the City Docks from any part of the Kennet and Avon Canal, the Floating Harbour is promoted as an attractive destination for inland waterway vessels, therefore moorings and other facilities for Inland Waterway Craft are provided. Short stay/overnight moorings are provided at the Arnolfini Pontoons and Lloyds Amphitheatre. Additional services such as waste pump-out are provided.

#### (ii) Long-Term Licences

These are licenced moorings for periods of stay greater than 30 days. Long-term does not imply that these moorings are permanent or tied to a particular location. This type of mooring is used by local owners of leisure craft who wish to moor them in the Harbour for long periods based on an annual licence.

The number of service points (water, electricity, etc) for leisure craft has been expanded. A self-operated pump-out system is provided at Bristol Marina, allowing boaters to empty their holding tanks. This facility must be used by all craft, and is essential to deter the unauthorised release of effluent. As the city council actively promotes the Harbour for use by leisure craft, the provision of



*Cumberland Basin operations*

additional service facilities continues to be a priority. These may be provided by the council, by developers of adjacent quaysides or in partnership with each other.

### **(b) Residential Moorings**

- 6.4 The use of vessels for residential purposes in the Harbour has increased as it is attractive and central to the city and a lower cost option to expensive residential property in the central area. The City Centre Local Plan acknowledges that residential craft can provide a legitimate and useful source of housing in the city centre, but on a limited scale. However, if the council is to accept residential craft in the Harbour it will be necessary to ensure that moorings are properly managed and subject to planning control. This will ensure that any potential conflict between residential craft, water-based activities, and quayside land use can be kept to a minimum; also that standards of individual craft and their impact on the environment can be regulated.
- 6.5 Moorings are located to minimise any potential conflicts with other Harbour users. A dispersed pattern of residential mooring areas allow a form of “neighbourhood watch” role to be fulfilled throughout the Harbour whilst at the same time avoiding the environmental impact and other problems associated with a large concentration of residential craft. The optimum number of berths within a residential mooring area depends on satisfaction of the above criteria and the size of craft occupying the area.
- 6.6 Two categories of residential craft have been recognised. The first, commonly termed “houseboat”, is merely a floating structure for living in. It will not be capable of moving under its own power and generally will not be designed to be moved at all once in position. The second category referred to here as a “residential vessel” is a boat capable of being

moved or of moving under its own power, which has purpose-built living accommodation aboard. Such craft may not be at their berth at all times. The land use planning and management implications of both types of residential craft are virtually indistinguishable, therefore the same considerations will apply in the management and control of their moorings.

- 6.7 The following criteria will be applied when dealing with applications for residential moorings:
- (i) Each residential mooring area will require planning consent and individual moorings will also be licensed. Subsequent major alterations to the profile or appearance of the vessel may require an individual planning consent, and will also have to conform to local standards. Whilst the Director of Planning and Development will be concerned that the initial appearance of residential craft is of an acceptable standard and that dedicated services will be provided for each berth, it will be the responsibility of City Docks Management to ensure that these standards and services are maintained.
  - (ii) The allocation and renewal of residential craft licences will be the subject of policy statements currently in place.
  - (iii) Waste can be removed from sewage holding tanks by pump-out facilities. These are presently provided at the Mud Dock and Bristol Marina. A mobile pump-out service is also available by arrangement with the Harbour Office. Further pump-out facilities are due to be installed in line with the harbour’s ongoing development.
  - (iv) All residential vessels moored in the Harbour Arena must be able to be moved to allow space to be created for events in the Harbour. Suitable serviced short stay berths are made available for these occasions.



*The Harbour Arena, St Augustine’s Reach, during Harbour Festival*



*Bristol Marina moorings*



- (v) No car parking spaces will be allocated on the quayside for any residential mooring. Car parking spaces may be available elsewhere in the Harbour Area, but away from the quayside. Occasional vehicle access for servicing vessels is possible in most locations but this will be by arrangement with City Docks Management and subject to strict time control. The reason for this is to prevent abuse of the system and an uncontrolled proliferation of vehicles parked permanently on the quayside, as such a situation is directly contrary to the city council's objective of removing all unnecessary vehicle intrusion from public quayside areas.
- (vi) Residential Mooring Agreements currently have a term of up to 25 years with break clauses and review provisions every five years, and an appropriate charging regime to reflect the facilities enjoyed and services provided. Some craft are recognised as being used for residential purposes but have annual licences.

### (c) Commercial Mooring

- 6.8 It is recognised that there is a demand in the Floating Harbour for permanent, dedicated commercial moorings connected to the quayside to main services.  
At the present time, commercial vessels have dedicated moorings. Commercial mooring continues to be managed by the Harbour Office. Capacity is currently met but further moorings will be provided as part of development opportunities.  
There is again an extensive "waiting list" in operation.
- 6.9 Commercial moorings are subject to the following controls:
- (i) All vessels seeking dedicated commercial mooring require planning consent together

with a mooring agreement drawn up by the Property Section. Planning consent provides control over the appearance of vessels and their arrangements for servicing and disposal of effluent, as well as ensuring that their use is compatible with existing or proposed requirements.

- (ii) Any commercial vessel trading in strategic locations of the Harbour affected by events will need to be able to move to allow for occasional relocation.
- (iii) Commercial moorings can be categorised as follows:

#### ■ Pub, Restaurant and Entertainment Vessels

These types of uses are encouraged in appropriate locations to provide the Floating Harbour area with facilities to complement the council's leisure policy for the area. Care must be taken in selecting locations for such uses to ensure that the amenity of nearby residential properties is not detrimentally affected. This must include not only noise and smells emanating from the use itself but also disturbance generated from traffic and parking. Such uses of vessels are subject to the usual public entertainment/alcohol licensing requirements.

#### ■ Light Industrial

Certain light industrial uses are acceptable in specified locations. Such uses – craft workshops for example – can complement the Maritime Heritage theme of the Harbour and provide working examples of traditional skills for visitors to enjoy. The use of vessels for offices (as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) order 1987, class B1 (a)) will not be permitted. Noise may be a factor in the proposed use of the vessel, therefore again locations must



Historic vessel: tug "John King"



Welsh Back commercial mooring

not detrimentally affect any nearby residential amenity.

#### **Hotels**

Opportunities for floating hotels on a relatively small scale exist in the Floating Harbour but they are very few. Constraints which limit hotel opportunities include the need for the vessel to be of suitable appearance and for there to be satisfactory vehicle access and associated car parking. Car parking will not be permitted alongside the vessel on the quayside.

#### **Ferries, Water Taxis, Charter Boats etc**

There are additional development opportunities for Water Passenger Transport services which may require “depot berths”. Therefore shore-based facilities may be required, which will be subject to planning and most likely landlord control.

- (iv) In considering proposals for commercial use of a vessel, the city council looks particularly for proposals involving vessels which have some intrinsic interest in terms of their age, type or historical connections with the city, or conversion of a type sympathetic to its original form and function.
- (v) No car parking rights will be conferred with any commercial mooring, although access for servicing will normally be possible. If planning policy requires parking connected with the use of a vessel, it must be provided in an acceptable form and location, as part of the planning consent (including agreement with the city council whenever the council’s landholding is involved).
- (vi) All refuse and waste generated by the use will wherever possible be stored on board the vessel unless it is connected to a mains sewer. Bins must be kept aboard and stored in a satisfactory way so as not to prejudice

the appearance of the vessels. Vessels will be expected to comply with requirements of the Harbour Master in respect of refuse and waste disposal, which may vary from time to time depending on the disposal regime in operation.

#### **(d) Courtesy and Historic Craft**

- 6.10 The City Centre Local Plan recognises the value of courtesy and historic craft in adding to the variety and character of the harbour. Courtesy moorings will continue to be provided for Naval and other major sea going vessels visiting the city, wherever possible – normally for short term periods. Serviced areas within the Harbour Arena will be reserved for this purpose.
- 6.11 The following criteria will be applied in considering the provision of courtesy and historic mooring:
  - (i) Courtesy and historic vessels visiting the Harbour on a short term basis will be licensed in the normal manner and services will be provided.
  - (ii) Some historic vessels may be moored in the Harbour on a long-term basis, acting, for example, as floating museums or having a commercial function in their own right. Planning consent answered as a commercial mooring may not be required. Some services may be provided dependent on the type of vessel, and holding tanks will be required in appropriate cases. The Director of Culture and Leisure Services will be consulted regarding the historical value and authenticity of such vessels.
  - (iii) Limited operational car parking may be considered in cases for courtesy or historic mooring.



*Light industrial uses*



*Ferries, water taxis and charter boats*



### (e) Operational Moorings/Facilities

- 6.12 Operational moorings are those essential to the running and maintenance of the City Docks. Further quayside space in the Docks is reserved for operational purposes. Examples of those reservations are the Cumberland Basin itself, as it is required as a holding area for vessels entering and leaving the Docks; and Mardyke Wharf which is an emergency deep water berth, most often used by vessels awaiting entry to the Graving Dock. There are operational moorings at Underfall Yard.
- 6.13 A waiting list for leisure moorings is currently in operation due to demand for moorings greatly exceeding supply. There is also a long waiting list for residential moorings.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The development of the land in the Harbour has put pressures on the use of the water. The system is already close to capacity with major events becoming more and more difficult to accommodate. There are additional pressures for demand for short stay moorings with associated facilities. Discord between land and water uses has already occurred in some places and now conflicts between different users of the water emerge. Resolving these conflicts is difficult, requiring a sensitive and flexible response. Circumstances change in the Harbour often at a much faster rate than is the case with land based development. It is important therefore that a mooring policy is not “cast in tablets of stone”, but can be adapted to meet changing requirements and opportunities.
- 7.2 This policy must be seen as a broad guide to achieving the city council’s objectives for the Harbour as a place of quality and distinction, of variety and vitality and a place which all visitors can enjoy and be proud of and will wish to visit again.

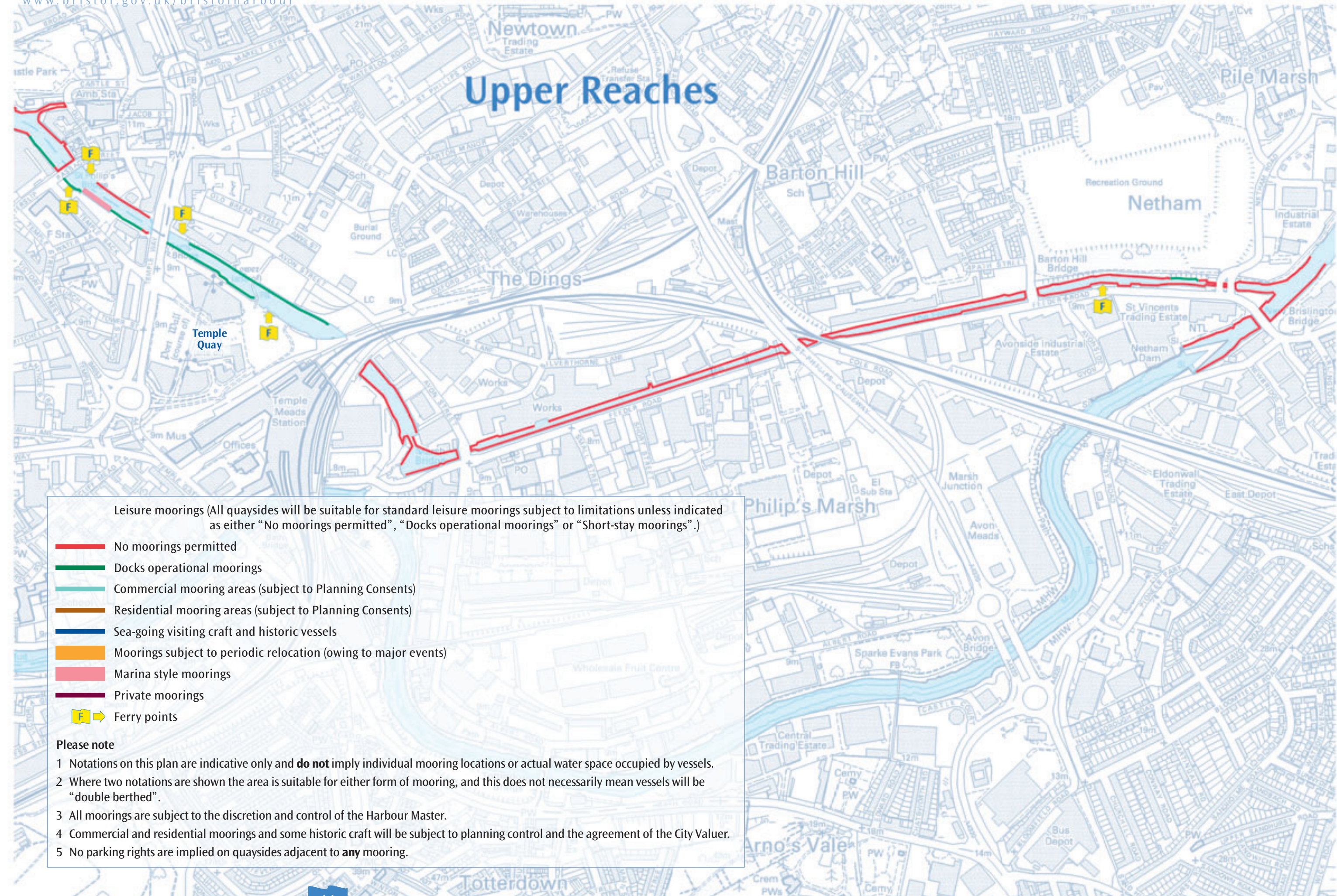
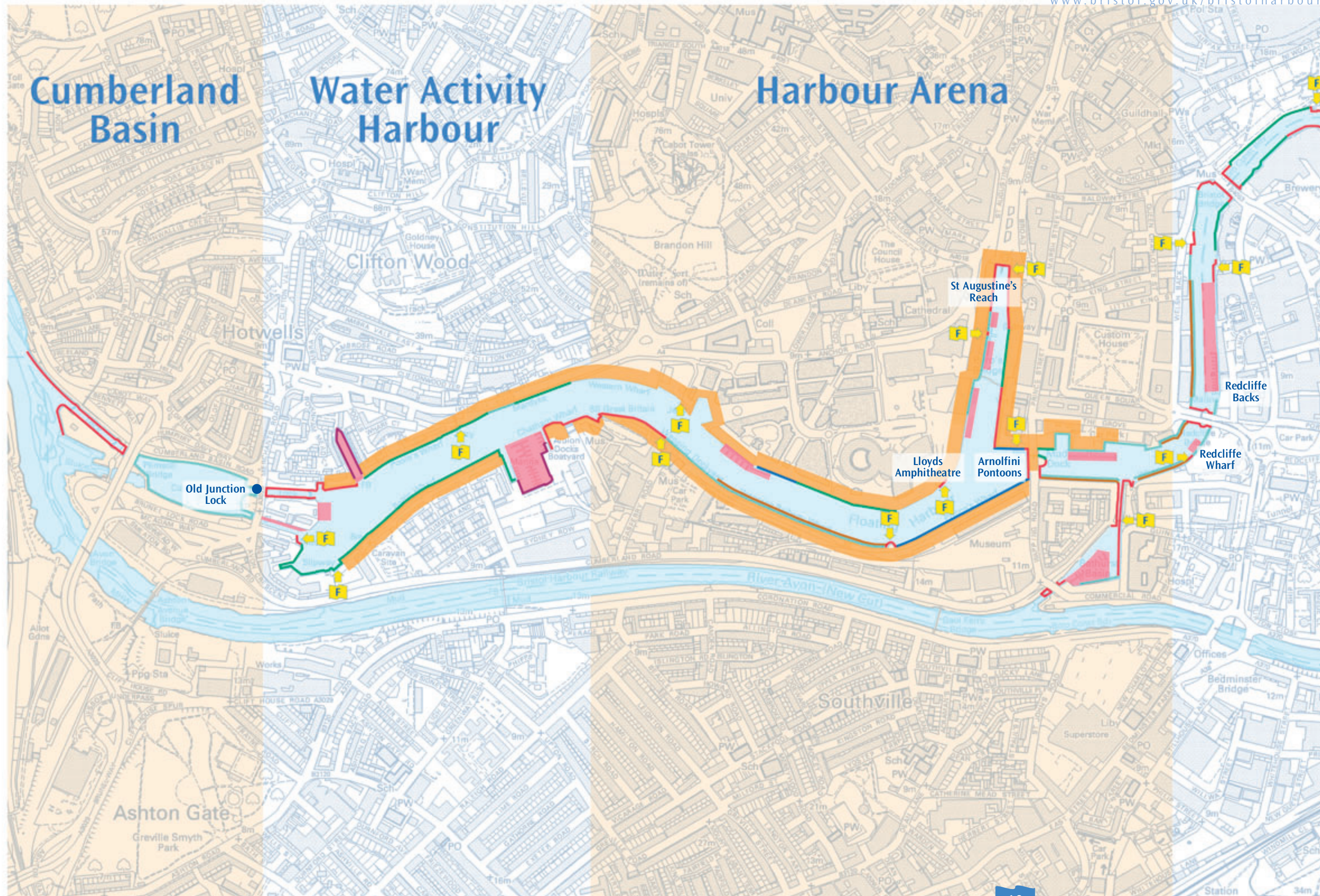


*Courtesy and historic craft*



*The Floating Harbour from Cumberland Basin to St Mary Redcliffe*





Leisure moorings (All quaysides will be suitable for standard leisure moorings subject to limitations unless indicated as either “No moorings permitted”, “Docks operational moorings” or “Short-stay moorings”).

- No moorings permitted
- Docks operational moorings
- Commercial mooring areas (subject to Planning Consents)
- Residential mooring areas (subject to Planning Consents)
- Sea-going visiting craft and historic vessels
- Moorings subject to periodic relocation (owing to major events)
- Marina style moorings
- Private moorings
- Ferry points

**Please note**

- Notations on this plan are indicative only and **do not** imply individual mooring locations or actual water space occupied by vessels.
- Where two notations are shown the area is suitable for either form of mooring, and this does not necessarily mean vessels will be “double berthed”.
- All moorings are subject to the discretion and control of the Harbour Master.
- Commercial and residential moorings and some historic craft will be subject to planning control and the agreement of the City Valuer.
- No parking rights are implied on quaysides adjacent to **any** mooring.



