

GBA PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2025.

The 2025 boating season has been blessed with much better weather than last year and this has provided us with more opportunities to use our vessels.

Those of us venturing outside of the Bailiwick, especially to French ports, have made good use of the Passport L'Escales offers and this has proved to be extremely popular amongst local boat owners.

Thanks should go to Guernsey Ports for setting this up for us. Kieran Higgs and his staff have worked hard to ensure that this service has been widely published and has promoted Guernsey both to our French colleagues and to our Jersey friends.

We should also thank GBA member Colin le Conte from Digimap for his very informative and up-to-date website which provides us with all the latest information we need to cruise around the French coast and to comply with their customs regulations.

Mooring fees have been a concern of mine and yourselves over the past 3 years and I am fully aware that some of you have either placed your boats up for sale or are seriously considering the viability of continuing boating. Other marine costs have also risen substantially since Covid with high inflation worldwide adding to the dilemma.

However, after lengthy talks with our local authorities coupled with our successful petition we raised last December (which in fact was published in the Practical Boat Owner magazine twice), I am very pleased to report that Guernsey Ports and the States Trading Supervisory Board (STSB) have at last listened to our concerns and various arguments.

We have jointly agreed, in association with representatives from the Guernsey Marine Traders Association (GMRA), the Royal Channel Islands Yacht Club (RCIYC), and the Guernsey Yacht Club (GYC), to a new 4- year plan for mooring fees, geared to the Guernsey Retail Price Index (GRPI).-

This plan is similar to the mooring fee plan operating in Jersey which I discovered last year during conversations with our counterparts in the Jersey Boat Owners Association. We suggested this scheme when we met with Gsy. Ports earlier in the year.

This will hopefully go some way to calming down your growing concerns and enable you to decide whether you can afford to continue enjoying leisure boating.

Although we didn't agree to any rise above GRPI, bearing in mind the high increases already seen for 2024 and 2025, 2026 will see a rise of 8.9% (5% + GRPI of 3.9%), thereafter for 2027, 2028 and 2029 there will be a rise of only GRPI + 1.5% p.a., and from 2030, any increases in mooring fees will be geared to local inflation rates.

Remember, the 8.9% is considerably less than the original plan for 2026 which was for a rise of between 11.9-35.7% plus GRPI!

Of course, if the States agree to introduce GST (general sales tax) over this period, this will be on top of our agreed rises. And that would be disastrous for all concerned.

In February we were given a presentation by the Guernsey Development Agency (GDA) of their plans for St. Sampsons harbour and the surrounding area but nothing further has been received since then. We await their proposals for St. Peter Port harbour with anticipation.

At our last AGM I stressed that we would be running a campaign to encourage more boat owners to join our Association. We have produced and distributed flyers around the harbours, marinas and in selected chandleries/outlets advertising the advantages of being a member of the GBA. This has resulted in over 90 new membership applications which proves we must be doing something right.

For £30 p.a., our members certainly get value for money!

It was my intention to retire as your President at this AGM after 10 years at the helm but to date I have been unable to find anyone keen enough or available to succeed me.

So, I have decided to stand for re-election once more for one final year only during which time someone has to come forward to fill my role.

Several of my Committee colleagues are also wishing to retire at the end of 2026 to make way for younger members to take over the reins from us old codgers. We need new blood, new enthusiasm and energy if we are to survive.

This is a wake-up call, my friends!

If none of you are interested in carrying on representing your local boating interests or raising your concerns with the authorities, the GBA will cease to function.

Sadly, that's after over 100 years of fighting your corner. Just take a minute to look at our history page on our GBA website and remind yourselves of our past successes.

Meanwhile, my thanks go to the GBA Committee and especially to Bob Benstead who is retiring this year after 40+ years service for the GBA.

Any of course my thanks to all of you for your continued support. Here's to fair winds and plain sailing in 2026.

Nick Guillemette.

President of the GBA.