

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS LOWESTOFT

INFORMATION FOR SMALL CRAFT AND YACHTS USING LOWESTOFT HARBOUR AND THE SEAWARD APPROACHES TO MUTFORD LOCK:

1. **ALL** vessels must enter, leave and navigate in the harbour in accordance with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea.
- 1(A) Small craft and yachts should give particular attention to "Narrow Channels" Rule No 9(b) "a vessel of less than 20 metres in length or a sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway". For clarity this notice applies to vessels as defined in Rule 9(b).
2. All vessels moving with the Port and its approaches must make every reasonable effort to establish and maintain contact with the Lowestoft Harbour Control on **VHF Channel 14**. If at all possible advise Port Control of the communication problems and intended passage plan by calling by telephone on +441502 572286 (3)
- 2(A) **ANY** vessel without radio contact must give particular attention to the harbour control lights and navigate with extreme caution in the vicinity of structures, which may mask their presence. They must also navigate with caution and give due regard to other vessels or small craft that may be unaware of their intentions.
3. **ALL** vessels must observe the international port traffic signals located on the South Pier, and in the Yacht Basin.
 - **Three vertical red lights** - vessels shall not proceed.
 - **Green, white, green vertical lights** - a vessel should* only proceed if it has received specific orders to do so.
- 3(A) *Small craft and yachts without VHF communication observing the green, white, green signal may proceed with **extreme caution**, those vessels in the Yacht Basin must contact the Port Control before departure.
- 3(B) Mariners should note that Port Control (located at the Bascule bridge) and departing vessels within the Outer Harbour basin, have extremely limited vision to the north of the entrance piers and should conduct their navigation accordingly.
4. The Lowestoft Bascule Bridge (between the Outer and Inner Harbours) will only be opened on demand for commercial shipping over 50 gross tonnes. A minimum of 30 minutes notice is required to facilitate a commercial Bridge lift.
- 4(A) Commercial shipping is discouraged from passage: **0815 - 0900** hours Mon to Sat, **1230 - 1300** hours and **1700 - 1745** hours Mon to Fri.
- 4(B) Small craft and yachts may use a bridge opening for commercial shipping provided that prior arrangement has been made with Lowestoft Harbour Control - VHF Channel 14, telephone +441502 572286(3), subject to vessels proceeding in the same direction as the commercial vessel. Other vessels wishing to pass through the bridge from the opposite direction will have to wait for the next advertised small craft opening time.
- 4(C) In addition to 4(B) and subject to prior notification of at least 30 minutes, small craft and yachts may be given a bridge opening at the following times, please note these times may differ +/- 15 minutes to accommodate vessels wishing to transit through both Bascule Bridge and Gull Wing Bridge. Vessels should arrive in good time and seek advice from the Bridge Operator on the sequence of the lifts.
Monday – Friday: - 0300, 0500, 0700, 0945, 1115, 1430, 1600, 1900, 2100, 2400.
Sat. Sun. Bank Holidays: - 0300, 0500, 0700, 0945, 1115, 1430, 1600, 1800, 1900, 2100, 2400.
- 4(D) A waiting pontoon for small craft and yachts is available in the east end of the Trawl Dock for vessels waiting a bridge lift. All vessels **must** maintain a listening watch on **VHF14** and follow instructions from Port Control. Failure to maintain a close listening watch may mean missing the advertised lift. **If late for a bridge lift inform the Bridge operator, as soon as possible.**
- 4(E) Navigation in the bascule bridge channel is controlled by VHF advice with additional red and green traffic control signals when the bridge is operated. Vessels must not proceed through the bridge until the leaves are fully raised **AND** the green traffic lights are exhibited on the North side of the Bridge Channel
5. The Gull Wing bridge within the (inner harbour) will only be opened on demand for commercial shipping over 50 gross tonnes. A minimum of 30 minutes notice is required.
- 5(A) Commercial shipping is discouraged from passage: **0800 - 0900** hours and **1700 - 1800** hours Mon to Fri.
- 5(B) Small craft and yachts may use a bridge opening for commercial shipping provided that prior arrangement has been made with Lowestoft Harbour Control - VHF Channel 14, telephone +441502 572286 (option 3), subject

to vessels proceeding in the same direction as the commercial vessel. Other vessels wishing to pass through the bridge from the opposite direction will have to wait for the next advertised small craft opening time.

5(C) In addition to 5(B) and subject to prior notification of at least 30 minutes, small craft and yachts may be given a bridge opening at the following times, please note these times may differ +/- 15 minutes to accommodate vessels wishing to transit through both Bascule Bridge and Gull Wing Bridge. Vessels should arrive in good time and seek advice from the Bridge Operator on the sequence of the lifts.

Monday – Friday: - 0300, 0500, 0700, 0945, 1115, 1430, 1600, 1900, 2100, 2400.

Sat. Sun. Bank Holidays: - 0300, 0500, 0700, 0945, 1115, 1430, 1600, 1800, 1900, 2100, 2400.

5(D) A waiting pontoon for small craft and yachts is available in the east of the Gull Wing on the South side for vessels waiting a bridge lift. All vessels must maintain a listening watch on **VHF14** and follow instructions from Port Control/Gullwing. Failure to maintain a close listening watch may mean missing the advertised lift. **If late for a bridge lift inform the Bridge operator, as soon as possible.**

5(E) Navigation in the Gull Wing channel is controlled by VHF advice with additional of 3 x red and green/white/green vertical traffic control signals when the bridge is operated. Vessels must not proceed through the bridge until the leaves are fully raised **AND** the green traffic lights are exhibited on the piers.

6. For both bridges - small craft and yachts in a flotilla situation should make every effort to co-ordinate their movements with Lowestoft Harbour Control, 'close up' and ensure that the time taken to transit the bridge channel is reasonable, safe and kept to the minimum. Once the bridge has been lifted the traffic lights will be changed, allowing inwards and outwards movements at the same time. Should traffic lights remain red, a vessel must not proceed until instructed by the bridge operator, keeping clear of vessels using the main channel.

NOTE: Long bridge openings make it difficult to preserve the facility from pressures of road traffic and in consequence bridge operators are instructed not to wait for stragglers, subject to not impeding safety of navigation.

7.(A) Bascule Bridge - Small craft passing under the bridge have a clearance of 2.2 metres at mean high water springs (approximately 2.4 metres on the tide gauge) with a reduction of 0.5 metres for the arch sides. Vessels able to drop masts and aerials and which can pass under the bridge, must do so. Transit beneath the Bascule Bridge is only permitted if authorised by Port Control (via VHF 14).

7. (B) Gull Wing Bridge – Small craft or small commercial vessels are permitted to pass beneath the Bridge while it is in the closed position, providing they can confirm that they have a minimum of 1.0m air draft clearance beneath the Bridge. The Bridge has an air draft of 12.0m at HAT. There are air draft boards situated on the NE and NW dolphins. Permission to pass beneath the bridge must be obtained from the Gull Wing Bridge Operator (via VHF Ch14).

8. **The maximum permitted speed in the harbour is 4 knots.**

9. General port details may be obtained from Admiralty Chart No 1535, which is generally re-issued annually

10. Visitor Moorings: Lowestoft Beacon Marina – School Road +441502 580300, Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club – +441502 566726, Lowestoft Cruising Club (occasional) - +447900 446909, Oulton Broad Yacht Station – +441502 574946.

11. Vessels approaching from the sea must contact Lowestoft Port Control on **VHF 14** prior to entry into the Harbour. This should be done 2 cables from the harbour entrance. A vessel requiring a bridge lift may be directed to wait in the bridge channel or on the waiting pontoon in the east end of the Trawl Dock. **VHF 14** must be monitored at all times when waiting for a bridge or when on passage in the harbour.

12. When out bound or transiting Lake Lothing from the West, vessels are requested to contact Lowestoft Port Control on VHF 14 so that vessel traffic information can be advised. Gull Wing Bridge must also be contacted for either transits underneath the Bridge or for Gull Wing Bridge lift requirements.

13. **Lowestoft Beacon Marina (LBM)** is situated on the south side of Lake Lothing 400 metres from Mutford Lock. Vessels requiring a berth must call Lowestoft Beacon Marina which maintains a listening watch on **VHF 80 and 37**. Before leaving Lowestoft Beacon Marina on passage to sea, contact the Port Control on **VHF 14** for details of vessel movements and remain on this channel until clear of the Harbour entrance. Keep to the 4 Knot speed limit. Allow approx.15 minutes passage time from the LBM to the Gull Wing Bridge. Allow approx. 10mins transit time between Bridges. Vessels observed breaking the speed limit will be refused a bridge lift until the next advertised small craft opening.

14. Traffic signals for vessel movements between the Bridge channel and the Yacht Basin are controlled for departing vessels only. Due to the restricted visibility and manoeuvring room, vessels must at all times contact the Port Control before departure on **VHF14**, telephone +44 1502 572286 (3)

As there are no controlling lights for vessels entering the Yacht Basin, vessels exiting this basin must proceed with extreme caution, even when the green white green lights are shown for departure from the Yacht Basin.

15. The mooring of small craft or yachts alongside any property owned by Associated British Ports is only permitted with the permission or direction of the Harbour Master, and may attract a charge in accordance with the published tariff.
16. All small craft / yachts are strongly advised to obtain the latest weather information before proceeding to sea.
17. Lifejackets should be worn at all times when on passage in Lowestoft Harbour and when at sea.

MUTFORD LOCK AND OPENING BRIDGES

Transit bookings by telephone +441502 531778 Lock or +441502 574946 Oulton Broad Yacht Station or VHF 73

Mutford Lock, connecting the Lowestoft Inner Harbour with Oulton Broad, is operated daily by East Suffolk Council for the Broads Authority and provides a point of access to approximately 120 miles of navigable inland waterways.

The Lock, with safe usable dimensions of 22 metres x 6.5 metres, has a water depth of 2 metres plus tidal variations and should only be used by craft suitable for the water depths of Oulton Broad. Non-local craft with a draft exceeding 1.7 metres should seek advice from Mutford Lock staff and consider the Oulton Broad tide, which is approximately three hours after Lowestoft with a mean range of 0.7 metres.

Mutford Road Bridge, adjacent to the Lock, has a clearance of 2.1 metres at mean high water springs (approximately 2.4 metres on the Lowestoft tide gauge) and it is therefore advisable for all craft requiring an opening to make an advance booking and to be prepared to wait. Such bookings will automatically include the Railway Bridge located close eastward. VHF Channels 73, and 14 are monitored on an occasional basis by Mutford Control, which is attended daily in response to bookings and at the following times: a) **Weekly**: 0800-1800 b) **Additionally for Bank Holidays**: Any vessel wishing to use Mutford between 1800-1930 must give notice on VHF or telephone before 1700 on the previous day

NOTES:

1. A charge is levied for each lock transit or day return – (subject to review). Contact Oulton Broad Yacht Station for information on charges.
2. Broads tolls are payable in addition to the inward lock transit depending on length of stay.
3. Craft entering with a fixed air draft of more than 7.3m are confined by fixed bridges to the River Waveney.
4. Local maps and publications are recommended.
5. Mutford Road Bridge, Restrictions: Prior to 0900, 1200-1300, 1700-1800. Nov-March available 0900-1145
6. Railway Bridge may be delayed swinging due to late arrival of trains.

USE OF JETSKIS – LOWESTOFT HARBOUR

The Lowestoft Harbour Bye-laws 1993 - No. 10 states:-

'Water ski-ing, boardsailing and the use of jetbikes or jetskis in the Harbour area, may take place only where expressly permitted in writing by the Harbour Master'.

In order to obtain written permission from the Harbour Master, the following criteria must be met before a decision is made on allowing an applicant in the Harbour area with a jetski or jetbike.

- The Port does not operate a launching slipway, so written proof of an agreement with a berth owner or operator, is needed where the jetski is to be launched.
- There must be hand-held VHF onboard the vessel to monitor traffic and call the Port Control on VHF Channel 14 when launching, approaching the Bridge and entering and berthing the Harbour.
- Jetski to proceed from its launch slipway directly to sea, keeping to the speed limit of 4 knots and observing all traffic signal lights in the Harbour and directions from the Bridge Operator.
- Mooring of jetskis in the Harbour alongside ABP quays or vessels berthed in the Harbour is strictly prohibited unless prior agreement is obtained from the Bridge Control or vessel owner.
- Details of jetski and any distinguishing features to be registered with the Harbour Master.
- Jetskis to be in sound and good mechanical condition.
- Lifejackets are to be worn by all riders.
- Written evidence of adequate insurance cover must be provided and maintained.

Written permission will be provided by the Harbour Master, if he is satisfied that the above conditions will be met. A.B.P. reserves the right to suspend or revoke any permission if any of the above conditions are not kept, or if it is felt that on the grounds of safety, the passage of jet skis in the Harbour becomes a hazard to its owner or other Harbour users.

CAPTAIN MICHAEL MARTINS

DIVISIONAL HARBOUR MASTER EAST ANGLIA

21st October 2025