



**PLYMOUTH LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

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Anthony Payne  
Director for Development and Regeneration  
Plymouth City Council  
Civic Centre  
Armada Way  
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**This letter constitutes formal advice from the Plymouth Local Access Forum. Plymouth City Council is required, in accordance with section 94(5) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to have regard to relevant advice from this forum in carrying out its functions.**

When calling or telephoning please ask for: **Mr Ross Johnston**

Dear Mr Payne,

Plymouth Local Access Forum has been made aware of ongoing difficulties in boat owners launching and recovering boats and other water craft in the Mount Batten Area. One of the two public slips serving the peninsula had not been cleaned for some months and was seaweed covered, dangerous and a safety hazard and was the direct cause of injuries to at least one individual. We understand that the failure to clean the slip was through an oversight by the PCC Cleansing Department. They have been made aware of the problem and are addressing it. Incomprehensibly, having been told of the problem by the PCC official responsible for slipways, they initially deemed the slip to be acceptable and chose not to clean it. The official had already deemed it dangerous and closed it on 16<sup>th</sup> May pending cleaning.

Difficulties have been reported with other Plymouth public slips and it is important that these are cleaned regularly, to match the seasonal prolific weed growth and at the appropriate times to match low water springs when the slips are exposed.

Following these reports, a member of the LAF investigated what information was available on-line relating to access to the seas around Plymouth. He focussed on access from public slipways, pontoons and steps rather than from the many private marinas. On-line access is a prime source of information to most visitors. There is a web page relating to public access to the sea and rivers within the boundaries of Plymouth. It can be viewed at:

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/leisureandtourism/maritimeservices/landingstagesandslipways.htm>

At first glance, it appears to be clear and concise, albeit lacking in substance. There are good links to Google maps where Plymouth slips and pontoons are identified on the map. However he found major errors and omissions in its content. It is out of date, incomplete and lacking in useful information. It could of course be a reason why Cleansing Department did not clean one of the Mount Batten public slips as that slip is not identified as a slip on the linking Google map. It is important to note that Mount

Batten Peninsula is now by far the most popular area for visiting boat owners to access the seas around Plymouth.

It is widely acknowledged that the Waterfront is Plymouth's Unique Selling Point and this year much play is being made of the America's Cup using Plymouth in September for one of the heats for this prestigious event. It is likely that there will be an influx of visitors, with many boat users amongst them. To find the information on access to the sea provided to the public, via the PCC web site, so lacking in accuracy and content is inexcusable and in the opinion of the LAF should be corrected, improved and updated as a matter of urgency..

Rather than simply criticise the lack of content, that obviously needs correcting immediately, members of the LAF, who are experienced long time users of the Plymouth slipways, are willing to assist and work with PCC officials and other maritime agencies in updating the web page. The intention would be initially to correct the errors and omissions as soon as possible and in the longer term to provide an online resource that will give useful information of the attributes of the main public slips and other access points available to the public.

We have a Unique Selling Point with Plymouth Sound its harbours and rivers, PCC must make sure that it is marketed in an effective way.

Yours Sincerely,

Ross Johnston  
Secretary to Plymouth Local Access Forum