

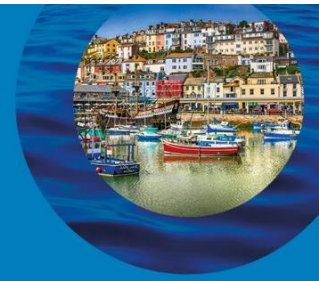


Marine
Management
Organisation

Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone Habitat Protection Strategy

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...ambitious for our seas and coasts

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction and Aims.....	4
Background	4
MMO's responsibility	4
What has happened so far?	5
Why is this strategy needed?	5
What are the benefits of protection?	6
How have stakeholder views been considered?	6
Part 1: Anchoring in Studland Bay MCZ.....	8
1.1 Phased voluntary approach	8
1.2 Education and awareness.....	10
1.3 Monitoring	10
Part 2: Other marine non-licensable activities in Studland Bay MCZ	13
Part 3: Mooring in Studland Bay MCZ	13
3.1 Marine Licensing	13
3.2 Moorings in Studland Bay	15
3.3 Guidance for Submitting a Mooring Application in Studland Bay MCZ	17
3.4 Other Consents.....	20
Conclusion	20
Glossary	21
Annex 1	22
Annex 2	23

Executive Summary

Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) (Figure 1) lies within the 6 nautical mile limit in English waters, on the Dorset coast. The site was formally designated on 31 May 2019 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The site has four designated features: intertidal coarse sediment, the long-snouted (or spiny) seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*), subtidal sand and seagrass beds.

In 2020, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) drafted an assessment on the impacts of marine non-licensable activities on the features of Studland Bay MCZ. It concluded that management measures would be developed for anchoring due to the potential impact on some designated features. Following this, the MMO held a call for evidence to seek views on the draft assessment and management options.

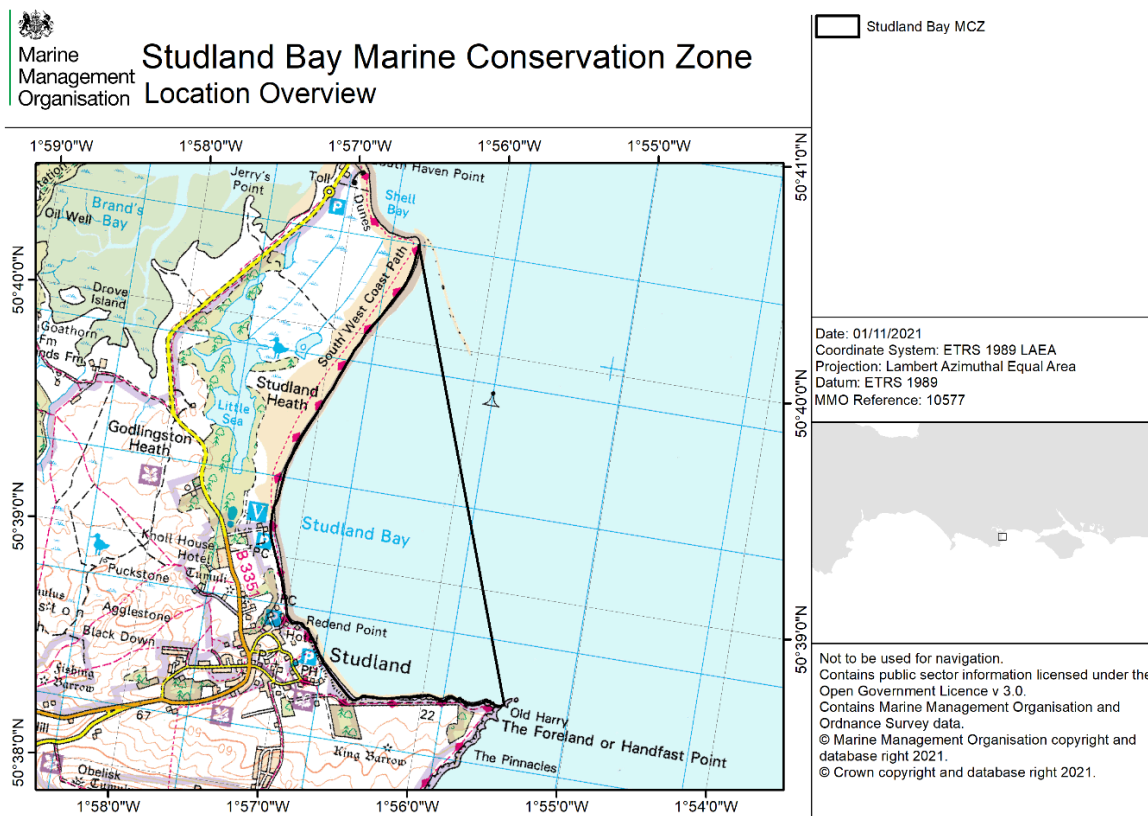
In early 2021, Dorset Coast Forum facilitated a formal engagement period for the MMO to gain further input from stakeholders about three draft anchoring management options.

Following feedback from stakeholders, the MMO introduced a phased voluntary approach for the management of anchoring in Studland Bay MCZ over 2021 and 2022.

This document provides an overview of MMO's management approach for marine non-licensable activities in Studland Bay MCZ. In addition, guidance is provided for individuals or groups planning to install moorings.

This strategy was first published on 10 September 2021 and is updated in response to feedback and delivery of the management measures outlined below.

Figure 1: Studland Bay MCZ location.



Introduction and Aims

The Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone Habitat Protection Strategy provides an overview of MMO's management approach for marine non-licensable activities in Studland Bay MCZ. In addition, guidance is provided to individuals or developers planning to install moorings.

The strategy has the following aims:

1. Set out the underlying principles of MMO's management of activities in Studland Bay MCZ.
2. Outline the chosen management approach for marine non-licensable activities within Studland Bay MCZ.
3. Raise awareness of the requirement for a marine licence to install, maintain or remove moorings.
4. Provide guidance for the application of future mooring proposals in line with the considerations of Studland Bay MCZ.

Background

MMO's responsibility

MMO is responsible for assessing and managing impacts of marine non-licensable activities in marine protected areas (MPAs) between 0 and 12 nautical miles (nm) from the coast in English waters. Where an assessment indicates that activities are

impacting an MPA, MMO is responsible for implementing management measures to protect them. Management measures can range from voluntary measures to statutory MMO byelaws and are developed through appropriate levels of engagement and consultation. MPAs are monitored to ensure their features remain protected and activities can continue where possible. Between 0 and 12 nm, MMO is responsible for monitoring activity levels. Natural England is responsible for periodically assessing the condition of the features of MPAs in their remit.

What has happened so far?

Studland Bay MCZ was formally designated on 31 May 2019 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)¹. Studland Bay MCZ lies within the 6 nm limit in English waters, on the Dorset coast (Figure 1). The site has four designated features: intertidal coarse sediment, long-snouted seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*), subtidal sand and seagrass beds. For more information about Studland Bay MCZ and its designated habitats and species, please refer to the Natural England Conservation Advice². Long-snouted seahorses are a designated feature of the MCZ as well as a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Both species of native seahorse, long-snouted seahorses and short-snouted seahorses (*Hippocampus hippocampus*), have been recorded in the seagrass beds in Studland Bay. Studland Bay is a known breeding location for the long-snouted seahorse.

In 2020, MMO drafted an assessment on the impacts of marine non-licensable activities in Studland Bay MCZ³. Between 28 October and 15 December 2020, MMO held a call for evidence to seek views on the draft assessment and management options. Following a review of all feedback received from the call for evidence, it was concluded that management measures would be developed for anchoring due to the potential impact on some designated features.

In March 2021, Dorset Coast Forum facilitated a formal engagement period for MMO to gain further input from stakeholders about three draft anchoring management options. The purpose of the formal engagement period was to inform the approach to managing anchoring in Studland Bay MCZ and to ensure the necessary level of environmental protection while minimising impacts on users of the sea.

In September 2021, MMO published the Studland Bay Habitat Protection Strategy to outline the approach to management of Studland Bay MCZ.

Why is this strategy needed?

This strategy has been developed to ensure that the activities in Studland Bay MCZ continue in a sustainable way. This document provides guidance on how to achieve this. At current levels, anchoring activity within the seagrass beds in Studland Bay MCZ is causing significant pressure and is posing a threat to achieving the conservation objectives of the site. The seagrass beds and long-snouted seahorse features within Studland Bay MCZ have been determined by Natural England to be

¹ [The Studland Bay MCZ Designation Order 2019](#)

² [Natural England Studland Bay MCZ Conservation Advice](#)

³ [Studland Bay MCZ marine non-licensable activities assessment](#)

in *unfavourable condition*. The conservation objective is therefore to bring these features into *favourable condition*. Natural England have published specific targets for attributes of the features of this site. Meeting these targets will help ensure that the features return to favourable condition. This information is detailed within the Natural England Conservation Advice². MMO has a statutory responsibility to take actions to further the conservation objectives of the MCZ. In determining management of Studland Bay MCZ, MMO has taken into account feedback from stakeholders and has used the best available evidence, including a range of peer reviewed scientific literature to support the assessment and subsequent decision making.

[What are the benefits of protection?](#)

Studland Bay MCZ is home to seagrass beds which provide a number of vital ecological functions. Most notably, seagrass beds stabilise sediments, provide habitat for species such as commercially important fish and seahorses, and act as a sink for atmospheric carbon. It is also home to bass and endangered undulate rays. Long-snouted seahorses are a designated feature of the MCZ and a protected species.

In addition to protecting the sensitive habitats and species, enhancing the marine protection in Studland Bay MCZ will also provide benefits for people. Protecting seagrass beds will aid prevention of coastal erosion, support commercial fisheries, help to combat climate change and provide an attractive environment for tourism and recreation.

[How have stakeholder views been considered?](#)

In line with our MMO Story⁴, we have undertaken a process to proactively seek, value and use feedback from stakeholders to help shape and improve our services in the development of this strategy. In this strategy, MMO has considered stakeholder comments from the call for evidence, formal engagement events and email correspondence and worked with Natural England to ensure a sustainable approach for future management of Studland Bay MCZ. In addition, MMO continues to engage with stakeholders to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of the voluntary measure post-launch.

MMO recognises the importance of Studland Bay for recreational activities and the wishes of those who use the bay to be involved in its management. The Studland Bay MCZ Decision Document⁵ provides further details on the feedback provided by stakeholders along with MMO guidance in response to this feedback. MMO have also created Studland Bay MCZ Frequently Asked Questions⁶ document to best support stakeholders with common queries raised.

This strategy is split into three parts:

⁴ [Our MMO Story - the next ten years](#)

⁵ [Studland Bay MCZ Decision Document](#)

⁶ [Studland Bay Frequently Asked Questions](#)

- Part 1 details the management approach for anchoring in Studland Bay MCZ.
- Part 2 details the approach for other marine non-licensable activities in Studland Bay MCZ.
- Part 3 provides guidance to clarify the process of applying for a marine licence to install moorings, as well as MMO's remit for managing moorings.

Table 1: Summary of stakeholder feedback and MMO responses.

Feedback	MMO Response
Safety	MMO regards safety as paramount and has considered concerns from stakeholders whilst deciding the approach. MMO understands the need to anchor in emergency situations as well as to avoid an emergency situation developing. The voluntary approach allows boat users to use the area if required for safety reasons.
Economic and leisure impacts	This strategy aims to allow recreational activities in Studland Bay to continue in a sustainable way. Socioeconomic impacts were considered by Defra in the MCZ designation process and do not remove the MMO's duty to further the conservation objectives of the site.
Enforcement and monitoring	A statutory measure is not being introduced at this time for anchoring. MMO will monitor the effectiveness of the voluntary approach as well as activity levels. MMO will liaise with Natural England regarding their assessment of feature condition.
Anchoring alternatives and moorings	This strategy includes guidance around moorings to support those interested in applying for a licence to install them. Through this guidance, MMO aims to support boat users in creating an alternative to anchoring in sensitive areas.
Education and community support	MMO has sought and taken on-board feedback from a large number of stakeholders. We recognise the importance of community support and would like to emphasise our aim to work with people to ensure the successful protection of Studland Bay MCZ. There will be an education period to support the introduction of the voluntary approach for anchoring.
Timescales	MMO has been engaging with stakeholders since October 2020 and refining the management approach in response to feedback. As a result of feedback, we decided on a phased voluntary approach over 2021 and 2022.
No anchoring zone size	MMO introduced a phased voluntary approach to anchoring management which involves a smaller interim voluntary no anchor zone in the first phase. This allowed time for alternatives to anchoring to be implemented before the zone was extended in 2022 whilst allowing the recovery of the site.
Effectiveness of voluntary measures	A voluntary approach was been decided by MMO to allow a participatory approach to management, allowing users of the bay to work collaboratively, with MMO and each other. It is envisaged that through this collaboration, a voluntary approach will lead to better protection of the site. If the voluntary approach is found to not be effective, MMO will need to consider whether a statutory byelaw is more appropriate, or where there is an urgent need to protect the site, MMO may introduce an emergency byelaw.

Supporting evidence	MMO has sufficient evidence to support the introduction of a voluntary measure for anchoring in Studland Bay MCZ. Please see Annex 1, section 3 of the Studland Bay MCZ Decision Document ⁷ for details.
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Part 1: Anchoring in Studland Bay MCZ

Following feedback from stakeholders, and advice from Natural England, MMO decided to introduce a phased voluntary approach for the management of anchoring in Studland Bay MCZ over 2021 and 2022. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of bringing in measures over time and an education period to support users of the bay, to ensure compliance. The planned phased voluntary approach allows time for awareness raising and education. It gives users of the bay time to understand the measures and explore alternatives to anchoring in sensitive areas of the MCZ. A voluntary measure also allows a participatory approach to management, allowing users of the bay to work collaboratively, with MMO and each other. It is envisaged that through this collaboration, a voluntary approach will lead to better protection of the site.

1.1 Phased voluntary approach

A voluntary no anchor zone was introduced in two phases over 2021 and 2022 in the sensitive areas of seagrass.

Phase 1 – Interim Voluntary No Anchor Zone

Phase 1 commenced on **17 December 2021** with an interim voluntary no anchor zone being introduced. Boat users are requested not to anchor in the zoned area to protect the designated habitats and species which are sensitive to damage from anchoring.

Figure 2 displays the area where the interim voluntary no anchor zone applied. See Annex 1 for coordinates. The zone was been designed to protect features while still allowing access to Studland Bay for boat users. This interim period allowed time for boat users to arrange alternatives to anchoring within the protected seagrass habitat before phase 2 was introduced.

Phase 2 – Voluntary No Anchor Zone

Phase 2 commenced on **1 June 2022**. In phase 2, the interim zone was extended to protect a larger area of seagrass habitat. Phase 1 and phase 2 extension is now the voluntary no anchor zone within the MCZ.

Figure 3 displays the area where the voluntary zone applies in phase 2. See Annex 1 for coordinates. Please see the monitoring section for more details on the review.

⁷ [Studland Bay MCZ Decision Document – available online.](#)

Figure 2: The area where the interim voluntary no anchor zone applied in Studland Bay MCZ in phase 1 (2021)

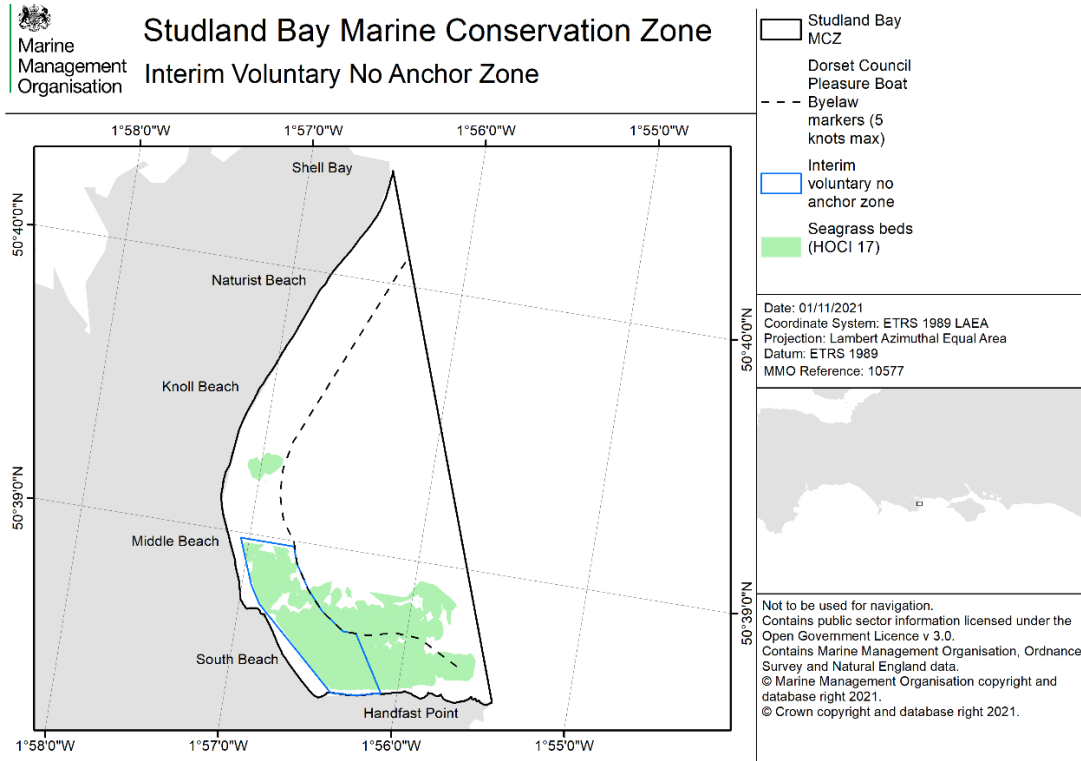
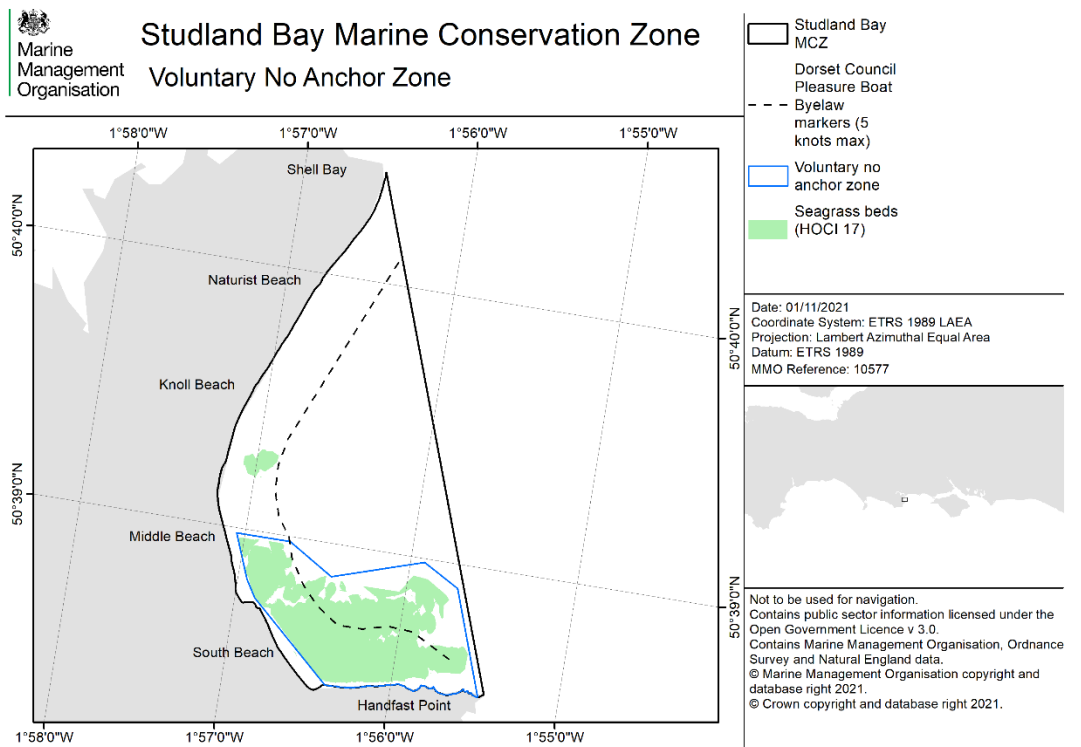


Figure 3: The area where the voluntary no anchor zone applies in Studland Bay MCZ in phase 2 (2022)



1.2 Education and awareness

MMO has used a range of communication channels to raise awareness of this management approach to help users of the bay understand the voluntary measure. As well as in person and on water engagement, MMO has produced and distributed leaflets and raised awareness through social media. During April 2022 MMO attended meeting and drop-in sessions at boat clubs in the Poole Harbour area to raise awareness of and speak with the community about the voluntary no anchor zone. Further communications and engagement are planned for summer 2022.

MMO has worked with the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office and other navigational app providers to arrange for management areas to be displayed on admiralty charts so boat users can view where the voluntary no anchor zone applies. When visiting Studland Bay MCZ, MMO advises boat users to use admiralty charts or refer to the coordinates of the voluntary no anchor zones detailed in Annex 1.

1.3 Monitoring

Activity levels and management efficacy

MMO is responsible for monitoring activity levels for marine non-licensable activities as well as the efficacy of management measures in place. We recognise the importance of community support and would like to emphasise our aim to work with people to ensure the successful protection of Studland Bay MCZ.

Through monitoring the zone, MMO is seeking to understand how the voluntary measure is working and collecting further data on activity levels.

MMO is monitoring activity levels via a range of methods, for example, MMO coastal officer observations and additional MMO or other partner agency assets.

MMO will use partner ecological data alongside activity data whilst reviewing the effectiveness of management.

Autumn 2022 Management Review

MMO will review the effectiveness of this management approach in autumn 2022 following the end of the 2022 boating season.

MMO recognises that it will take time for a voluntary approach to be adopted and therefore will work with users of the bay to increase awareness and avoid a move to a statutory measure wherever possible.

During the autumn review, MMO will seek to understand levels of awareness of the zone and take into consideration factors which may influence level of observance as raised by the boating community, such as the provision of marker buoys and availability of moorings. Whilst MMO will not be installing moorings, we will continue

to work with partners such as the Studland Bay Marine Partnership⁸ who are exploring approaches to facilitate the introduction of moorings.

As part of the review, MMO is keen to hear from the community on their experience of the voluntary no anchor zone. In autumn 2022, we will invite stakeholders to share feedback via a coordinated survey to help inform this review. To be contacted about future surveys, please follow the steps outlined below.

The Marine Conservation Team at the Marine Management Organisation are building up their stakeholder contacts database. If you are interested in being contacted by the Marine Conservation Team regarding marine protected areas in England, please contact them with the text below via conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk. **Please use the email subject "Contact me"**.

"I give my permission to be contacted by the Marine Conservation Team at the Marine Management Organisation regarding marine protected areas in England.

In particular, I am interested in [please detail specific marine protected areas, activities etc.]

[Insert full name and organisation]

If the voluntary approach is found to not be effective, MMO will need to consider whether a statutory byelaw is more appropriate (Figure 4). This can come in two forms:

- A statutory MMO byelaw where consultation will occur before management; or
- A statutory MMO emergency byelaw that can be implemented in a matter of weeks without the need for consultation.

An emergency byelaw is more likely to be the mechanism when there is an urgent need to protect the site. Emergency MMO byelaws do not require formal consultation but can only remain in place for up to 12 months. If MMO decides to consider a statutory byelaw, this would involve input from the public via a formal consultation.

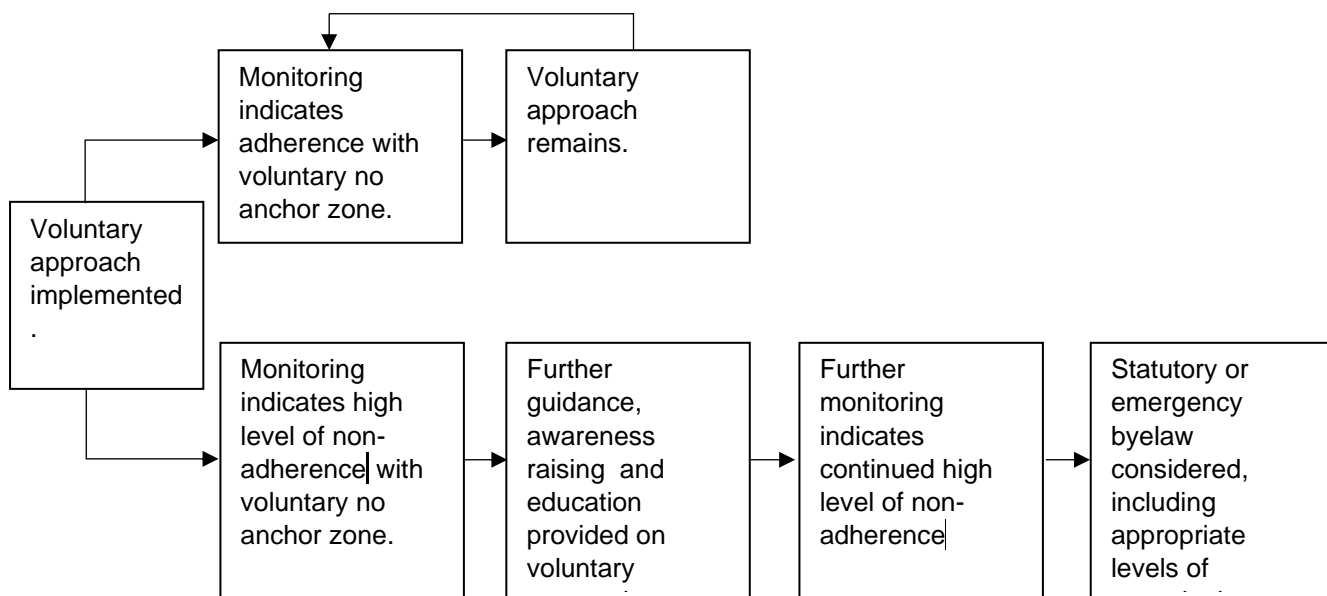
It is ultimately the decision of MMO to determine the level of adherence with the voluntary measure that will trigger the need for a statutory measure to be introduced. This will depend on the level of non-adherence over a period of time. MMO will not employ a stance where one act of non-adherence will cause a statutory measure to be made.

All MMO compliance work is carried out on a risk-based intelligence led basis. MMO's approach to compliance is based on three principles: inform, educate and enforce. MMO works to try to ensure that all parties understand what rules apply and

⁸ [Studland Bay Marine Partnership webpage](#)

will provide guidance and raise awareness, where possible, as a first step to achieving compliance. MMO ensures there are appropriate education periods for new legislation or rules in order to provide clarity and enable compliance.

Figure 4: Summary of the voluntary approach review process.



Assessment of feature condition

Natural England is responsible for reporting on the condition of the designated features of the MCZ every six years. To that end, Natural England works with partners to carry out monitoring and establish the best available evidence base to assess the condition of site features. Depending on resources, formal monitoring of sensitive features like seagrass occurs more regularly than other features because of its vulnerability and comparatively rapid changes that can occur. MMO will use this, and other pertinent ecological data, alongside activity data whilst reviewing the effectiveness of management.

The extent and quality of the seagrass is monitored using a range of techniques including remote sensing (e.g. acoustic ground discrimination), echo-sounding, drop-down video and diver-collected data. Quality is monitored using a variety of metrics, including; seagrass percentage cover; number of shoots present; maximum shoot length; presence of epiphytes and infection and evidence of anthropogenic impacts.

This data is used alongside activity data to inform reviews of the Natural England Conservation Advice² for the site, which can be subsequently updated. Conservation Advice includes conservation objectives, as well as targets, either 'recover' or 'maintain', for various attributes associated with the designated features of the MCZ. The targets, with site-specific notes and additional information, are used to produce

the Supplementary Advice on the Conservation Objectives⁹, which are a component part of the Conservation Advice package for the site.

Part 2: Other marine non-licensable activities in Studland Bay MCZ

Monitoring and control is in place for all other marine non-licensable activities, no further management is being introduced for other activities at this time. Annex 4 in the Studland Bay MCZ marine non-licensable activity assessment¹⁰ details the monitoring and control process. The marine non-licensable activities to be monitored include:

- Powerboating or sailing with an engine: launching and recovery, participation
- Sailing without an engine: launching and recovery, participation
- Non-motorised watercraft (e.g. kayaks, windsurfing, dinghies)
- Diving and snorkelling

The reason for this approach is that, at current levels, the other marine non-licensable activities occurring within the site have been assessed to be compatible with the conservation objectives of the MCZ. Activity monitoring is therefore required to check whether anything changes in the future. If monitoring indicates that activity levels increase and are no longer compatible with conservation objectives, MMO will consider whether management is required. This will involve appropriate levels of engagement and consultation to inform the approach.

MMO will review this strategy document if any management measures are implemented for other activities.

Part 3: Mooring in Studland Bay MCZ

3.1 Marine Licensing

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 states that a marine licence is required for certain activities carried out within the UK marine area¹¹. The installation, maintenance and removal of both temporary seasonal moorings and permanent moorings would require an application to MMO for determination. Licensable activities within the MMO's jurisdiction are detailed in Part 4 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009¹². Below we detail the licensing process, further information can be found on our 'The marine licence application timeline' webpage¹³.

⁹ [Natural England Studland Bay MCZ Conservation Advice – Supplementary Advice on Conservation Objectives](#)

¹⁰ [Studland Bay MCZ marine non-licensable activities assessment](#)

¹¹ [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 - Part 2, Section 42](#)

¹² [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 - Part 4](#)

¹³ [The marine licence application timeline](#)

Please note that additional consents may be required, such as landowner's consent from The Crown Estate. MMO advises that relevant authorities are contacted prior to submission of a Marine Licence Application.

Application

To apply for a marine licence, applicants are required to register on the MMO's online system¹⁴ and set up an online account which can be used to submit a marine licence application. This system can also be used to submit a specific enquiry for pre-application advice.

MMO aim to make a decision on most applications within 13 weeks of an application being validated. However, each application is different, and some applications will take longer than this.

If further information is required to support your application, MMO will provide details of what is required and the timescale in which it should be received.

There is an associated cost with a marine licence application. The applicant will be advised of the payment band. There are 14 days to accept or make the appropriate payment. Further information on fees for marine licences is available on our website¹⁵.

Assessment

MMO makes decisions in accordance with the Marine Policy Statement and relevant marine plans, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise. Further information about marine plans can be found on the Explore Marine Plans¹⁶. In deciding the outcome of an application, MMO must consider all relevant matters including the need to:

- protect the environment
- protect human health
- prevent interference with legitimate uses of the sea.

In this context, the environment includes sites of historic or archaeological interest as well as natural habitats and species.

The applicant is responsible for providing sufficient information with an application in order for MMO to assess it. This must include details about the activities to be carried out as well as information on the likely impacts associated with them.

MMO may consult interested parties about an application. This usually includes other public authorities or agencies and may also include the general public. If MMO require this, there may be a requirement to place notices in national and local publications as well as on site. Mooring applications will have a public consultation period which are open to the public, these consultations and records of completed

¹⁴ [MMO Marine Case Management System](#)

¹⁵ [MMO guidance – Marine licence fees](#)

¹⁶ [Explore marine plans](#)

applications, can be viewed on the MMO public register¹⁷. MMO can directly consult with specific groups by request.

Determination

Having assessed an application, MMO will either:

- grant the licence
- grant the licence subject to conditions
- refuse the application.

Conditions will often be used to mitigate adverse impacts to the environment, human health and other legitimate uses of the sea.

3.2 Moorings in Studland Bay

Overview

During the formal engagement period, stakeholders requested that moorings are installed within Studland Bay to counteract displacement caused by the implementation of a no anchor zone. Advanced mooring systems, which avoid scour of the seabed, were suggested as an approach which has been successful in other areas. MMO recognises the value of advanced mooring systems to provide an alternative to anchoring and as an approach to ensure long-term protection of seagrass. It must be noted that it is the position of MMO, in line with advice from Natural England, that the site cannot support as many moorings as there could be anchored vessels when the site is busy. Initial analysis indicates that the areas of seagrass within the 2022 voluntary no anchor zone (Figure 3) could support 100 advanced mooring systems without hindering the conservation objectives of the site. This is because advanced moorings still have a degree of impact to the features. MMO have subtracted, and will continue to subtract, processed applications for advanced mooring systems from this number to calculate the number that can be installed. This number may be reviewed and updated in the future. There are a number of existing swing moorings in Studland Bay MCZ, please see the relevant section below for details.

MMO remit

MMO is not planning to install moorings or advanced mooring systems within Studland Bay MCZ. MMO is however, open to marine licence applications for advanced mooring systems, as outlined above, where this is compatible with the site's conservation objectives and other marine licensing considerations. MMO will not cover the costs of any applications to install advanced mooring systems and the liability of moorings rests with the licence holder.

Advanced Mooring Systems

It is advised that only a form of advanced mooring system is installed within the sensitive features of Studland Bay MCZ.

¹⁷ [MMO Public register](#)

Advanced mooring systems (also known as ecomoorings, or eco-friendly moorings) avoid the placement of large mooring blocks on the seabed and chain abrasion through the use of alternative mooring technology. There are different fixing methods available for advanced mooring systems, as well as the use of floats or elastic lines to avoid chain abrasion on the seabed. Please see further information on the Royal Yachting Association website¹⁸.

Within Studland Bay MCZ, it is advised that only static moorings that will not move or drag, have a minimal footprint and use subsurface floats, are installed. This will avoid scouring the seabed or causing abrasion to nearby flora and fauna. It is advised that helical anchors are first considered as these provide a minimal footprint. Installation of moorings must be mindful to the sensitivity of habitats and species.

Existing Moorings in Studland Bay MCZ

There are a number of existing swing moorings in Studland Bay MCZ. MMO has records of these moorings and commissioned a survey recording their locations as of June 2021. MMO conducted a further underwater seabed survey in May 2022 to gain a better understanding and a baseline for all mooring structures within the bay. Details can be found in Annex 2. Many of the moorings have been in place for many years and predate the marine licensing system introduced under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, and the designation of the MCZ. MMO is not currently planning to remove them but will keep this under review.

MMO does however, encourage licence applications to upgrade existing moorings to an advanced mooring system. Removal of a mooring is classified as a licensable activity, and it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they have the correct consents in place before undertaking any activity. Any activity undertaken without the appropriate consent could be subject to enforcement action by MMO. Please refer to the marine assistance tool for further information¹⁹.

MMO will not predetermine marine licence applications, and each is determined on its own merits, but please note it will be unlikely that MMO will make a positive determination on maintenance activities on a swing mooring unless the applicant can demonstrate that they are adopting technology that eliminates the pressures from traditional swing moorings.

It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they have the correct consents in place before undertaking any activity. Any activity undertaken without the appropriate consent could be subject to enforcement action.

If existing swing moorings were removed, there may be scope for additional advanced mooring systems to be installed beyond the current maximum number detailed above.

Monitoring

As described, MMO has records of the location of the existing moorings within Studland Bay MCZ. Going forward MMO will arrange annual monitoring of moorings

¹⁸ [RYA – Advanced Mooring Systems](#)

¹⁹ [MMO marine licence interactive assistance tool](#)

within Studland Bay MCZ. This will ensure that any unconsented activity is identified, and appropriate enforcement action is taken in line with the MMO Compliance and Enforcement Strategy²⁰.

3.3 Guidance for Submitting a Mooring Application in Studland Bay MCZ

This guidance is intended to outline the process of obtaining a marine licence for installing moorings within Studland Bay MCZ.

Following this guidance is voluntary, but it will enable the applicant of a marine licence to identify the information they are required to submit and the considerations they should have within Studland Bay MCZ.

Location and Density

It is advised that new applications for moorings are first considered outside of seagrass beds in the 2022 voluntary no anchor zone (Figure 3) due to their importance as a habitat for long-snouted seahorses. It is advised that the long-snouted seahorse area displayed in Figure 5 is avoided for applications. Applications for moorings within seagrass beds will require greater assessment and may be subject to a longer application process.

It is the applicant's responsibility to determine suitable locations and density of moorings. To assist with identification of suitable locations, shapefiles of the voluntary no anchor zone are available online^{21,22}.

MMO will consult relevant bodies, including navigational authorities on the suitability of proposed locations on any application. Consultations which are open to the public, as well as records of completed applications, can be viewed on the MMO public register. MMO does not intend to manage placement of mooring installations pre-application.

As outlined in section 3.2, the advised maximum number of advanced mooring systems that can be located within the areas of seagrass in the 2022 voluntary no anchor zone (Figure 3) is currently capped at 100. MMO has subtracted, and will continue to subtract, processed applications for advanced mooring systems from this number to calculate the number that can be installed. Please contact the MMO Marine Licensing Team²³ for the remaining number. The figure of a maximum of 100 advanced mooring systems within the voluntary no anchoring zone was developed with Natural England to provide capacity to allow continued access whilst not hindering the conservation objectives of the MCZ. This number may be reviewed and updated in the future based on discussions with Natural England and the latest available ecological data on the site.

This number may vary depending on where it is suitable for moorings to be located with regards to safety and usage practicalities, it is the responsibility of the applicant to consider these factors. The number of available advanced mooring systems will

²⁰ [MMO Compliance and Enforcement Strategy](#)

²¹ [Shapefile from Defra group ArcGIS Online organisation](#)

²² [Feature Layer from Defra group ArcGIS Online organisation](#)

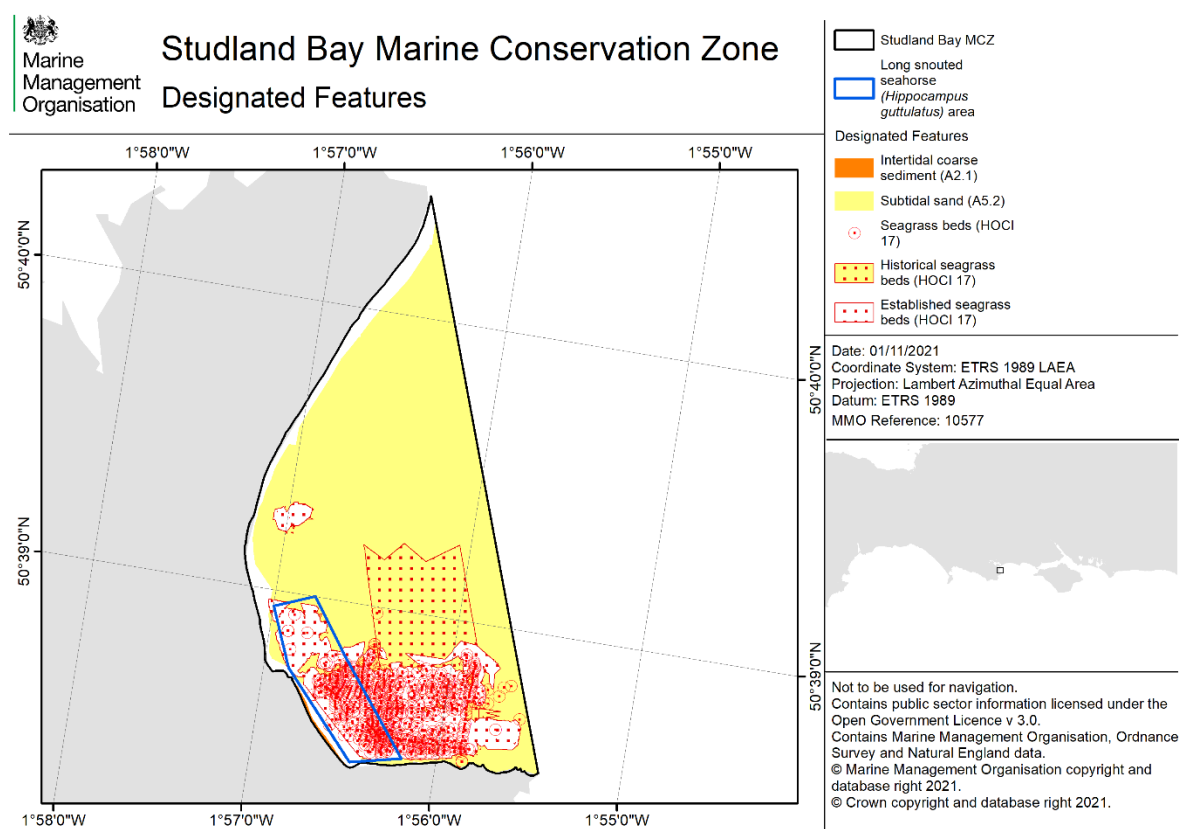
²³ Contact MMO Marine Licensing: marine.consent@marinemangement.org.uk

be reviewed annually in line with future monitoring of activity and condition of the designated features in Studland Bay MCZ.

New applications for moorings should have consideration of the spacing between individual moorings, including those which already exist within the bay. This is both for the purposes of safety and impact to sensitive habitats. Within seagrass beds, it is advised that a spacing of at least 50 metres between moorings is planned to avoid adverse impact to seagrass habitat.

MMO is responsible for issuing marine licences for the installation of moorings, however, the decision of the mooring owner to charge for their use is not part of the MMO's licensing process. This means that it is not within MMO's powers to control any private or chargeable use associated with moorings. MMO has licensed 10 advanced mooring systems within Studland Bay which are currently free for public use, and we understand that there are plans to install further moorings for public use.

Figure 5: Studland Bay MCZ designated features.



Mooring Specifications

For proposals for new mooring installations within Studland Bay MCZ, MMO advises the following information is provided:

- Type of mooring: it is advised that this demonstrates how scour will be avoided, and the footprint of the sinker should be minimised. It is advised that a helical anchor is first considered

- Number of moorings: to ensure numbers proposed align with numbers advised in this guidance (please see section 3.3 Guidance for Submitting a Mooring Application in Studland Bay MCZ)
- Proposed location: should have consideration of the sensitivity of the location
- Depth of water in proposed location: to understand if at low water, propellers or prop wash would interact with seagrass beds
- Density of moorings applied for: to ensure spacing considers impacts to safety and sensitive habitats
- Method of installation: to better understand the implications of installation
- Timing of installation: to understand seasonal impacts. Installation during winter months would be preferred
- Intended use of mooring: must describe if for public or private use, specify the maximum size of vessel that can use the mooring and expected regularity of use to understand the mooring resource available for the wider public

Ecological Considerations

Consideration must be provided in relation to sensitive features and other species. The applicant of a marine licence must provide sufficient information to allow MMO to undertake the necessary assessment of impacts to Studland Bay MCZ. This will include:

- the location of the project in relation to the MCZ
- the features of interest and conservation objectives of the MCZ
- an indication of the means by which the plan or project could impact upon the conservation objectives and designated features of the site and a description of any such effects
- the potential for in combination effects with other plans or projects. Other plans and projects can be viewed on the MMO's Public Register¹⁷.
- any proposed mitigation measures

Particular consideration should be given to impacts to seagrass beds and seahorses and ensuring appropriate mitigation to avoid disturbance, for example, timing of installation, avoiding key areas for long-snouted seahorses (Figure 5), and/or employment of a code of conduct.

For more information about Studland Bay MCZ and its designated habitats and species, please refer to the Natural England Conservation Advice².

Further guidance on assessment for marine licence applications is available on our website²⁴

Marine Licence Conditions

If MMO decides to grant a licence, it is likely that conditions will be added to mitigate adverse impacts to the environment, human health and other legitimate uses of the sea.

²⁴ [MMO Guidance – Marine Licensing: impact assessments](#)

The following conditions are likely to be imposed for any positive licence determinations for moorings within Studland Bay MCZ:

- Prior notice of commencement to MMO, Her Majesty's Coastguard and local marine users
- Submission of data to update navigational charts
- Marking requirements as specified through consultation with navigational authorities
- Seahorse disturbance mitigation as specified through consultation with conservation bodies (e.g. temporarily halting works if seahorses are encountered)
- Pollution prevention measures
- Photographic evidence of moorings prior to and following installation
- Requirement to remove moorings in the event they become disused

3.4 Other Consents

It should be noted that activities in and around the marine environment may also require additional consents from other organisations, or persons, irrespective of whether they need a marine licence or not. For example, planning consent is sometimes necessary for works to be undertaken above the low water mark and consent from the landowner may also be required.

MMO advises that prospective applicants also consult with The Crown Estate to manage landowners' consent for moorings within Studland Bay.

A marine wildlife licence is required to carry out certain activities affecting a protected species, this process is also administered by MMO and currently is free of charge. A licence will only be granted where the activity satisfies the requirements of the relevant legislation. Further guidance on the requirement for marine wildlife licences is available online²⁵. It should be noted that a wildlife licence is a separate consent to a marine licence, managed under separate legislation. The granting of one consent does not guarantee the granting of any other consent though we do though work to coordinate applications where both marine and wildlife licenses may occur from the same activity.

These examples are not intended to be an exhaustive list of other permissions that may be required, enquiries should be made as to what, if any, other authorisations and permissions are required.

Conclusion

MMO has developed this strategy to outline the management approach for marine non-licensable activities in Studland Bay MCZ and provide guidance to the public. For anchoring in Studland Bay MCZ, MMO has introduced a phased voluntary approach. Phase 1 commenced on 17 December 2021 which was an interim

²⁵ [MMO Guidance - Understand marine wildlife licences and report an incident](#)

voluntary no anchor zone to protect sensitive habitats and species. Phase 2 launched 01 June 2022, in which the interim zone was be extended to protect a larger area and has become the permanent no anchor zone within the MCZ.

Through monitoring, MMO aims to understand how the voluntary measure is working, collect further data on activity levels. The phased voluntary approach for anchoring has allowed time for alternatives to anchoring in sensitive areas to be explored, while recovering the site. This strategy provides guidance to support those interested in installing moorings in Studland Bay MCZ. For other marine non-licensable activities, a monitoring and control plan will be put in place, no further management is being introduced at this time.

Glossary

Attribute: Selected characteristic of an interest feature/sub-feature which contributes to the overall condition of the feature to which it applies.

Byelaw: Byelaws are statutory measures which can be introduced by regulators to manage activities within their jurisdiction.

Conservation objectives: Conservation objectives are set for each designated feature of an MPA, to either maintain or restore a feature of the protected site. Set by Natural England for sites inshore of 12 nautical miles.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra): A UK government department responsible for environment, food and rural affairs. Defra is supported by 33 agencies and public bodies.

Designated features: Habitats or species within an MPA which have been designated as protected features.

Marine protected area (MPA): Marine protected areas are protected sites with a marine element, this includes special areas of conservation (SAC), special protection areas (SPA) and marine conservation zones (MCZ).

Marine conservation zone (MCZ): Marine conservation zones protect species and habitats of national importance and are designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Marine non-licensable activities: Activities occurring in the marine environment which do not require a marine licence. They are mainly recreational activities. This does not include the exploitation of sea fisheries resources.

Marine Management Organisation (MMO): An executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by Defra. MMO's purpose is to protect and enhance our precious marine environment and support UK economic growth by enabling sustainable marine activities and development.

Natural England: Government advisor for the environment in England. This includes aspects of the marine environment from 0 to 12 nautical miles.

Annex 1

Voluntary no anchor zone coordinates

The area where the interim voluntary no anchor zone applied in Studland Bay MCZ in phase 1 is enclosed by a series of geodesic lines drawn from:

Point 1 - 50°38.9814'N 01° 57.0306'W; to
Point 2 - 50°38.9814'N 01° 56.7150'W; to
Point 3 - 50°38.9214'N 01° 56.6820'W; to
Point 4 - 50°38.8314'N 01° 56.5890'W; to
Point 5 - 50°38.7618'N 01° 56.4906'W; to
Point 6 - 50°38.7000'N 01° 56.3508'W; to
Point 7 - 50°38.7000'N 01° 56.2746'W; to the boundary of the MCZ at
Point 8 - 50°38.4948'N 01° 56.0730'W; following the boundary of the MCZ to
Point 9 - 50°38.4690'N 01° 56.3676'W; to
Point 10 - 50°38.7504'N 01° 56.8620'W; to
Point 11 - 50°38.8146'N 01° 56.9256'W; and returning to point 1.

The area where the voluntary no anchor zone to applies in Studland Bay MCZ in phase 2 (as of 01 June 2022) is enclosed by a series of geodesic lines drawn from:

Point 1 - 50°38.9814'N 01°57.0306'W; to
Point 2 - 50°38.9814'N 01°56.7072'W; to
Point 3 - 50°38.8752'N 01°56.4324'W; to
Point 4 - 50°38.9868'N 01°55.8966'W; to
Point 5 - 50°38.9094'N 01°55.6782'W; to the boundary of the MCZ at
Point 6 - 50°38.5188'N 01°55.4568'W; following the boundary of the MCZ to
Point 7 - 50°38.4690'N 01°56.3676'W; to
Point 8 - 50°38.7504'N 01°56.8620'W; to
Point 9 - 50°38.8146'N 01°56.9256'W; and returning to point 1.

Annex 2

Records of moorings in Studland Bay MCZ

Figure 6: Locations of surface marked fixed moorings and other surface marker buoys in Studland Bay as of June 2021. (Please note, this does not show moorings that a marine licence application has been submitted for).

