# New licensing policy causes uproar among St Ives pleasure boat operators



A new controversy has emerged in St Ives as local pleasure boat operators express their discontent over a new licensing policy implemented by the town council. The policy aims to regulate how boat operators promote their services on the seafront, a move that has stirred considerable unrest within the local boating community.

According to the St Ives Pleasure Boat Association, members have reported confrontations with council enforcement officers who have issued fixed penalty notices of £100 per day, with warnings that fines could escalate to £1,000 and potentially result in a criminal record for non-compliance. The association strongly condemned the council's approach, stating in a Facebook post that they were left in dismay after learning that touting would be prohibited from the historic lifeboat corner—a tradition that has been a cornerstone for many local businesses for decades.

The council, however, has defended its position, claiming that the changes were prompted by concerns from various local businesses and specifically from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). The RNLI expressed worries over safety issues tied to operators touting for business near the lifeboat gate, prompting the council to implement a more organised system of regulated booths instead of allowing multiple operators to pitch from a single location.

Louise Dwelly, the town council clerk, was quoted as saying, "It's a system that's been in place for three years, we're extending it. We've just asked them not to trade on the gate, but to trade from a booth and have a licence." This new framework aims to limit operators to one booth per business entity, even if individual owners possess multiple boats, thus consolidating their presence on the seafront. Ms Dwelly stressed that all businesses were still permitted to trade, albeit under the new regulations that the council believes will provide a "more professional" and "identified" way of operating.

The St Ives Pleasure Boat Association communicated its frustrations, stating that the council had unilaterally determined locations for the booths without considering proposals from operators. They claimed that despite suggesting additional booth locations, the council dismissed these ideas, leading to a sense of desperation among operators as the Easter holidays approached—a critical time for trade.

In light of the ongoing tensions, the council has reiterated that the changes are not intended to drive businesses out. The new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO), introduced approximately four years ago, aims to improve the management of public spaces and to ensure that local businesses operate efficiently and safely. Citing previous complaints and health and safety issues raised by the RNLI, the council has mandated a more structured approach to manage the touting of boat trips along the seafront.

The preparations and anxiety surrounding this contentious issue have been further highlighted by testimonies from operators who fear for the viability of their businesses due to the restrictions. One operator, representing the Seahorse—an establishment that has been trading for over 50 years—lamented the impact of the new booth-sharing regulations which could compromise their longstanding trading location.

In response to the growing backlash, Councillor Andrew Mitchell, the Cornwall councillor whose division encompasses the harbour, clarified that the move to regulate touts was not solely driven by the council's initiative but was influenced significantly by feedback from the RNLI regarding safety and accessibility concerns.

As it stands, the situation remains fluid, with local boat operators grappling to adapt to the new framework while facing potential financial challenges. The outcome of these events will likely shape the future of pleasure boat operations in St Ives as both the council and the affected businesses seek to navigate this contentious change.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2025-03-26/debates/DAAA0E5B-9340-40F2-B028-F7B52A45B2AA/FishingQuotaNegotiationsImpactOnUKFleet> - This URL supports discussions around fishing and marine regulation in the UK, highlighting the complex issues of management and sustainability in marine industries, which can be related to broader issues of regulation affecting boat operators.
* [https://www.weymouth-harbour.co.uk/fcimages/files/Information%20&%20Policies/SWRPA%20boat%20guidelines%20-%20v1\_3%20Dec%2020.pdf](https://www.weymouth-harbour.co.uk/fcimages/files/Information%20%26%20Policies/SWRPA%20boat%20guidelines%20-%20v1_3%20Dec%2020.pdf) - This document outlines guidelines for boat licensing and operation, which can be relevant to understanding the framework of regulations that boat operators might face, similar to those in St Ives.
* <https://stivestowncouncil-cornwall.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Boatmens-Code-of-Conduct-final-issue-March-2022.pdf> - This PDF provides a code of conduct for boatmen in St Ives Harbour, highlighting the importance of regulations and licensing for boat operators in the area, which is relevant to the new licensing policy controversy.
* <https://www.mass.gov/news/massachusetts-environmental-police-raise-awareness-campaign-for-new-boater-education-law> - This news article discusses boating regulations and safety measures in Massachusetts, which can be compared to the regulatory framework affecting pleasure boat operators in St Ives, highlighting the importance of safety and compliance.
* <https://www.tradeonlytoday.com/industry-news/massachusetts-passes-safe-boating-law> - This article focuses on Massachusetts' safe boating law, illustrating how regions implement and enforce boating regulations, which parallels the regulatory efforts in St Ives.