**Paddle boarders are solely responsible for their own safety and the safety of affected bystanders. We have published this voluntary code of conduct in conjunction with BSUPA guidelines. PHC cannot be held liable for your actions.**

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**Eelgrass do’s and don’ts:**

- **Do** be aware of where the eelgrass beds are in the harbour.
- **It is an offence to recklessly cause damage to these areas that provide shelter or protection to a variety of species.**
- **Don’t** trample the seabed in these areas.

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**Main eelgrass beds in Poole Harbour**

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Front cover photograph courtesy of Easyriders
Poole Harbour

Poole Harbour is home to many varied waterborne activities, and being one of the largest estuaries in Britain with an enclosed, lagoonal character is also home to many diverse habitats and species that led it being designated as, amongst others, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The harbour is extremely popular with all water sports, and is not without dangers to participants of these water sports, to others in the vicinity and also to the environment, it is for these reasons this Code of Conduct has been produced.

Poole Harbour is one of the world’s largest natural harbours and an environmental asset with its shallow waters, extensive mudflats, saltmarshes and reed beds. All of these are of exceptional ecological value to internationally important populations of regularly occurring bird species, migratory birds and assemblages of waterfowl.

It is vital these habitats remain undisturbed; educating all harbour users is a first step in managing these areas for the benefit of all.

Paddle Boarders should avoid the Harbour entrance or any of the main shipping channels, crossing at 90° if necessary and keeping a sharp lookout.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

- It is highly recommended that participants are members of the BSUPA and have undergone formal training in the sport.
- Wear a suitable buoyancy aid.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you will be back.
- Check the weather forecast and tide times. Do not underestimate the forces of nature.
- Always wear the leash so you don’t lose the board.
- Always carry a signalling or communication device. A whistle is a simple and effective device, or a waterproof and fully charged VHF radio or mobile phone, or flares.

If you get into difficulty it’s tempting to try to swim to safety but you should always stay with your kit as it will keep you afloat and make you easier to find.