



# Small Craft Guide



Borough Council of  
**King's Lynn &  
West Norfolk**



## Welcome to the Wash & Local Area

The Hanseatic town of King's Lynn was one of England's most important ports from as early as the 12th century and this maritime past is still very much in evidence today. Fine old merchants' houses stretch down to the river between cobbled lanes and the elegant Custom House overlooks the harbour. The town's heritage is reflected in an amazing array of historic buildings and at two magnificent market places: Saturday Market Place, where St Margaret's Church, designated as a Minster Church in 2011 by the Bishop of Norwich, is surrounded by splendid buildings and Tuesday Market Place, quite possibly one of England's grandest squares. A map of King's Lynn and its attractions is featured overleaf.

The Wash is an area of outstanding natural beauty and is a designated European Marine Site. It is England's largest embayment and contains extensive sand-flats and salt-marshes. It is home to a diverse habitat of marine mammals, shellfish, wildfowl and many other migratory birds. It is fed by 4 rivers, which drain a vast hinterland stretching from Bedford, Northampton, Market Harborough up to Grantham. The interlinking inland waterways offer navigation to suitable craft over a wide area and even links into the Grand Union Canal.

The historic Ports of Boston, Wisbech & King's Lynn along with the more modern jetties at Port Sutton Bridge all are busy commercial ports with a range of ships arriving and sailing from all over Western Europe, the Baltic, Mediterranean and West Africa.

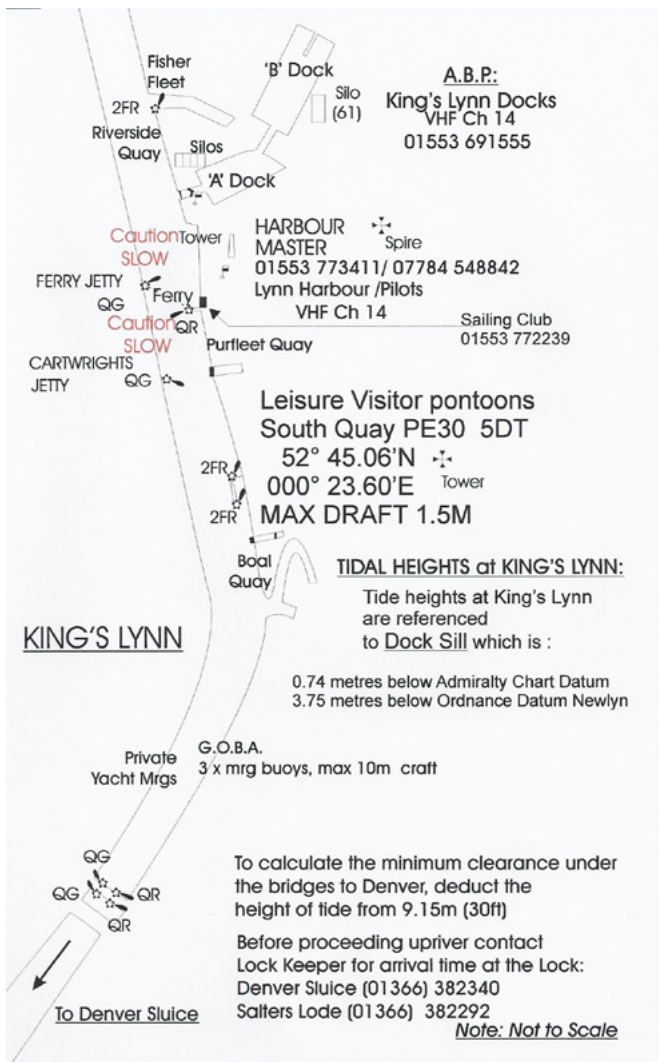
This leaflet should give you all the information you need to know to make your stay with us a pleasant one, but should you have any enquiries, please get in touch using the numbers published over leaf.

## Pontoon Mooring Information

The Port of King's Lynn offers visitors direct access to short term mooring pontoons for a maximum draft of 1.5m, with no bridges or locks to negotiate.

Please ensure your craft is moored sufficiently to cope with the strong tidal flows which on big spring tides will reach up to 7 knots for a while. Commercial ships may come very close to the pontoons as they swing during busy tides and fishing craft heading to/from Boal Quay may be encountered at speed well before & after high water.

There are no moorings available alongside any of the quays in King's Lynn for any leisure craft and the quay immediately to the south of the pontoons is an emergency lay by berth for ships up to 85m long, as well as short term visits for any commercial vessel. Vessels with greater draft or commercial vessels should contact King's Lynn Conservancy Board 01553 773411 or Associated British Ports King's Lynn 01553 691555



**Please note – these Charts should be used only in conjunction with the appropriate navigational Charts. Admiralty Chart 1200 & 108 and Imray Y9**

## Information for Skippers

King's Lynn Conservancy Board maintains an informative website: [www.kingslynnport.co.uk](http://www.kingslynnport.co.uk), which has a wide range of information for visiting craft. Downloadable chart extracts can be viewed which show the most recent navigable channel with all the navigation aids and all current positions listed if you wish to plot the buoys into your chart plotter. Please always check the website just prior to arriving to ensure you have the latest positions. The website also has all the latest notices to mariners, tidal data and detailed survey charts for the River from West Bank beacon to Boal Quay.

The one common feature of the Ports on the Wash is that when the tide is out, access is very restricted, with frequently shifting shoals, often within the channels, and the sandbanks are very hard and high. The tidal flows in the often man-made channels can be up to 6 knots on spring tides, **but all the main channels are well surveyed and buoyed**, and are suitable for navigation day & night for any craft. However, navigating outside of the buoyed channels cannot be advised for any leisure craft.

The approach channel has moved to the Daseley's Sled, you must now check the latest [Channel Chart](#) and [local Notice to Mariners](#) at [www.kingslynnport.co.uk](http://www.kingslynnport.co.uk). Approaching King's Lynn, visiting craft are advised to head mid way between the Sunk Light Buoy and Seal Sand Lightbuoy then towards the No.1 Lightbuoy at 52° 56'N 000°21.5'E and onwards into the Daseley's Sled. It is not recommended to proceed up to King's Lynn earlier than 3½ hours before high water and only then if the tide reading is more than 1 metre greater than the vessel's draft. There are no other surveyed or buoyed routes to King's Lynn. Any routes across the sand banks should not be attempted without good and current local knowledge with suitable electronic position fixing equipment and only then in a sturdy, well-founded boat with protected propellers and with a hull capable of drying out.

Commercial shipping could arrive into the anchorage at any time to wait for a suitable tide and will normally meet the fast pilot boat approx 2 hours before high water at the No.1 Lightbuoy, they may have to alter course to provide a lee, so all leisure craft should proceed with caution when commercial shipping is underway and note that **Rule 9 of the Colregs** is relevant as ships will be confined to the best of the available water. Out bound vessels will normally be clear of the Daseley's Sled by 1 hour after high water. All shipping communications are carried out on VHF 14 and clarification of shipping activities can be sought from "Lynn Pilots" when operational.

**To/From the Wash** - from seaward the large white grain silo and the 2 tall power cable pylons indicate King's Lynn with the spire of St Nicholas Chapel providing a very historic landmark. As you approach the river mouth it starts to get confined by stone banks to the west and marshes to the east. The northern end of the stone bank is marked by beacons commencing with West Stones (Q W). At No. 26 buoy the channel turns directly to King's Lynn and becomes confined with the current increasing.

It is about 3 ½ miles from here to abeam of the commercial Docks, and good attention should be given to VHF Ch. 14 for any information broadcast by "Lynn Docks" or other craft especially in the period 1½ hours before high-water to just after high-water.

Fishing vessels are likely to be encountered throughout the area, and may enter or leave the channel anywhere north of No.26 buoys, but leisure craft should not be tempted to follow them as they may be heading for an area to run aground and dry out.

The West Bank beacon and tide gauge is an inward reporting position, and apart from the Lower Cut Lt. (Q R) there are no other navigational aids until the lights of the ferry jetties. The electricity pylons indicate approx 0.8 miles to the commercial docks and with the waste treatment plant on the west bank and the chemical plants on the east banks there is normally sufficient light to see the river banks at night. It is recommended that a call to "Lynn Docks" as you pass the chemical plants is made to advise them of your position and they will, if manned, tell you about shipping movements.

Commercial shipping can be encountered on either side of the channel in the Cut depending on the shoals and vessels exiting or entering the Docks do so at 90° to the channel and will often be completely blocking the channel until they have swung, so early contact with the Docks will enable you to take the necessary action to avoid passing the docks when shipping is manoeuvring. A flashing orange light exhibited from the docks flagstaff indicates vessels exiting the docks.

Just north of the Docks is the Fisher Fleet, which is the base to many of the commercial fishing vessels. Leisure craft should not attempt to enter this fleet, and there are no moorings available.

After passing the docks the town of King's Lynn is evident on the East bank and the Council operated visitor pontoons lie about ½ mile ahead. A small passenger ferry runs Mon – Sat between West Lynn jetty and King's Lynn, please reduce your wash when passing. Small harbour craft moorings lie on the west side just upstream of the ferry jetty and 2 large steel mooring buoys for larger harbour craft are found mid-stream off the Purfleet. Once clear of these, you can shape up for the pontoons.

Numerous support craft are likely to be encountered, often transiting at high speed servicing the off-shore windfarms stretching from Skegness to Sheringham.

The MOD maintains an active firing range at Holbeach and low-flying aircraft can arrive very suddenly day or night and flares/ smoke/ explosions might also be noticed.

**To/ From Inland Waterways** - Vessels wishing to continue upriver to Denver or Salter's Lode and entering the inland rivers systems should have an agreed arrival time with the appropriate Lock keeper, and time your departure accordingly. Apart from the 3 moorings buoys available for G.O.B.A. users just before the 1st bridge, there are no facilities on the river upstream of King's Lynn. Due to the low bridges and often featureless riverbanks nobody should attempt navigation during darkness.

## Visitor Pontoon Facilities

- Berths with max permitted draft of 1.5 m
- CCTV - Secure access
- Electricity & Water to all berths
- Close proximity to town & visitor attractions
- Maximum stay 7 nights
- Historic riverside location

Please book your berth 24hrs prior to arrival by calling Tourist Information Centre on 01553 763044. For General Enquiries email [visitorpontoons@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:visitorpontoons@west-norfolk.gov.uk) or visit [www.sailthewash.com](http://www.sailthewash.com)

## Local Services

- Electricity meter cards available locally at the Tourist Information Centre and Marriott's Warehouse
- General and recyclable waste disposal available to the rear of Marriott's Warehouse
- Common Staithe Slipway – please contact 01553 616200 for access

## Neighbouring Facilities

Boat lift & maintenance facilities at Wisbech Yacht Harbour and Fosdyke Yacht Haven

## Useful Information

Navigation Information	<a href="http://www.kingslynnport.co.uk">www.kingslynnport.co.uk</a>
Harbour Master	01553 773411/ 07784 548842
Sail the Wash	<a href="http://www.sailthewash.com">www.sailthewash.com</a>
Visit West Norfolk	<a href="http://www.visitwestnorfolk.com">www.visitwestnorfolk.com</a>
Tourist Information Centre	01553 763044
Harbour Office (KLCB)	01553 773411
Environment Agency – Incident Hotline	0800 807060
Police - Non Emergency	101
- Emergency	999
Hospital - King's Lynn	01553 613613
Humber Coastguard	01262 672317
NHS Direct	111
Boston Grand sluice	07712 010920
Boston Black sluice	01522 785041
Wisbech Yacht Harbour	01945 588059
Fosdyke Yacht Haven	01205 260240
Great Ouse Boating Association	01480 493582
Denver Sluice Lock Keeper	01366 382340
Salters Lode	01366 382292
Ouse Amateur Sailing Club	01553 772239

All visitors are required to respect the special nature of the area and enjoy the sights and sounds that abound.