

Solent Forum Annual Report: 2015 - 2016

The Solent Forum is an established coastal partnership that promotes and delivers integrated coastal zone management around the Solent coast. Established in 1992, it considers and provides advice on strategic coastal matters and facilitates communication and information exchange amongst its membership. Its work is steered by a group of funding partners who guide the work of the Forum Officers.

This report sets out what the Forum has achieved in the 2015/16 financial year and what it will deliver in the 2016/17 year. The long term aims and objectives of the Forum are set out in its Business Plan. This can be downloaded from the Forum's website at www.solentforum.org/publications/business_plan/.

The Forum has three categories of work that it undertakes; core service work that is ongoing each year, specific project work that runs for a defined time period and the servicing of topic groups.

The Forum also hosts regular events as part of its core service, and hosts other events to support project work and disseminate information on important Solent coastal issues.



Solent Forum Aims

The aims of the Solent Forum are:

- To promote, facilitate and support integrated planning and sustainable management of the Solent
- To provide a broad based consultative forum

These aims are supported by five objectives that show how the Forum will deliver integrated coastal zone management in the Solent.

Solent Forum Members

The Forum has a wide ranging membership with organisations from all coastal sectors. Members include professional bodies such as local government, harbour authorities, industry, user groups, trade associations and NGOs. The Forum is not open to individuals, local residents associations or issue specific lobby groups. It is politically neutral.

Membership benefits include:

- Up to date information on coastal management issues;
- Access to the Solent News and Meetings Calendar Services;
- Free attendance at the biannual Solent Forum meetings and reduced entry fee to other Forum events;
- An increased understanding of how to manage the Solent's resources and set priorities;
- Use of the Solent Forum network to communicate to other authorities, organisations and user groups;
- Opportunity to undertake partnership work and influence the direction of future Forum work;
- Opportunity to join Subgroups: Natural Environment, Water Quality and Solent European Marine Sites.



Photo courtesy of the Isle of Wight Council

Solent Forum Objectives

The Forum's Business Plan monitors its progress against an agreed set of five objectives; this Plan sets out in detail how the Forum will deliver them. Below is a summary of the relevant work that the Forum undertakes to deliver its objectives.

1. To raise awareness and understanding of members' roles and aspirations

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings.

2. To improve sharing of the information base

Relevant Forum work: Professor Mike Clark Award, Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Water Quality Awards, State of the Solent reports, Solent Disc and topical information sheets.

3. To facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings, STAR Calendar Service, topical workshops, Coastal Directories and a Coastal Consents Guide.

4. To raise awareness and understanding of the human and natural changes likely to materially affect the Solent area and its interests

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings and Solent Forum serviced subgroups.

5. To promote the national and regional importance of the Solent in policy, development and plan making

Relevant Forum work: Solent Forum Meetings, Solent News Service, Forum websites, officer input into national and European coastal policy making, Coastal Partnerships Working Group attendance, Strategic Opportunities Workshops, State of the Solent reports.

Solent Forum Core Work

- Biannual Forum meetings.
- News service - biannual newsletter, (Solent News) monthly updates and special alerts.
- Calendar of coastal events - Save Time and Resources (STAR) service.
- Maintaining two websites - solentforum.org and solentpedia.info.
- Provision of Solent Disc - a metadatabase of Solent research and reports.
- Servicing of subgroups.
- Administering Solent Water Quality Awards.
- Professor Mike Clark Award to support student research in the Solent.
- Maintaining a Solent indicator dataset and publishing State of the Solent reports.
- Membership networking.
- General engagement on key issues and with Solent organisations.

Solent Forum Subgroups/Service Groups

- Solent European Marine Sites
- Solent Water Quality Group (to administer water quality awards)
- Natural Environment Group

Solent Forum Work Programme 2015/16

Meetings and Events Held in 2015/16		
Meeting	Attendees	Date
Solent Forum	All Solent Forum members	Spring 2015, autumn 2015 and spring 2016.
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Three times throughout the year.
Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS)	SEMS Relevant Authorities	Annual monitoring and reporting took place in spring 2015. At their annual meeting in September the SEMS Management Group identified several activities they believe are having a residual impact on SEMS, actions were agreed to address these.
Natural Environment Group	NEG members	Met in April and October 2015. A recreation focus group was set up to look at producing Solent-wide guidelines on watersports and bird disturbance.

Project Progress in 2015/16		
Project	Objective	Status as of March 2016
Southern Marine Planning Support	The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is currently producing marine plans for the south inshore and offshore areas.	The Forum has gathered evidence on behalf of Solent stakeholders to inform the marine plans, and provided stakeholder engagement services to support plan development.
Seaview	This project is piloting an approach to improve water quality in the Solent's Transitional and Coastal Waterbodies (TraCs) as part of the Water Framework Directive.	The Forum continued to support the Defra umbrella bodies with this work. A pilot project is currently being proposed during 2016 for Southampton Water.
Solent Fishers Project	The Blue Marine Foundation (Blue) work with local fishermen to deliver a network of marine reserves and private sector led solutions.	The Forum will continue to support the Blue Marine Foundation to develop a project to support fishers to continue their livelihoods in the Solent.



Solent Forum Work Programme 2016/17

Meetings and Events Scheduled for 2016/17

Meeting	Attendees	Date
Solent Forum	All Solent Forum members	Spring 2016, autumn 2016 and spring 2017.
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Three times throughout the year.
Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS)	SEMS Relevant Authorities	Annual monitoring will be repeated online in spring 2016; actions identified will be discussed and taken forward at the SEMS annual meeting in September 2016.
Natural Environment Group (NEG)	NEG members	Will meet April 2016 and October 2016. Watersports guidelines developed by the Recreation Focus Subgroup will be agreed and circulated. Funding for projects that address SEMS issues will be allocated at the April meeting.
South Coast Marine Plan Workshop	Solent coastal community	The MMO have expressed an interest in the Solent Forum running a workshop during 2016 to facilitate consultation of the south coast marine plans.
Workshop on Tranche 3 MCZs	Solent coastal community	The Forum will seek to work with Defra to help facilitate Forum member input and consultation on potential tranche 3 Marine Conservation Zones in the Solent.
Solent Forum 25th Anniversary Celebration	Solent coastal community	The Solent Forum will be 25 years old in 2017. We will spend 2016/17 planning this celebratory event which will be held in May 2017 to celebrate past success and look to the future.

Project Development for 2016/17

Project	Objective	Work Plan
Southern Marine Planning Support	The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is currently producing marine plans for the south inshore and offshore areas.	The Forum will continue to provide stakeholder engagement services to support plan consultation and implementation, this will include co-hosting a consultation workshop with the MMO.
The Blue Economy	To set up a working group to discuss and address the issues facing the Solent's maritime businesses.	The Forum will hold a scoping meeting to explore establishing a new Blue Economy Group. This meeting will be held during 2016.
Beneficial Use of Dredgings	To explore how material from dredging that takes place in the Solent can be used in coastal defence and habitat replenishment schemes.	The Forum will work with partners to explore the issue of the beneficial use of dredgings around the Solent and how this can be facilitated.

Further Information

For more details of work undertaken by the Forum, please visit the Forum's website at www.solentforum.org or contact the Solent Forum Office at info@solentforum.org. More information on the Solent and coastal issues in general, can be found on the Forum's Solentpedia website at www.solentpedia.info.

The following organisations fund and steer the work of the Solent Forum:

Associated British Ports, Environment Agency, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Natural England, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority, Portsmouth City Council, QHM Portsmouth, Solent Protection Society and Southampton City Council.

