

Strategic Guidance for the Solent: Water Based Recreation



Foreword

The Forum's Strategic Guidance for the Solent was first published in 1997, setting out the issues that the Solent faces and how these can be managed. This document is an update of the original recreation chapter. It was commissioned by the Solent Forum Recreation Subgroup and was prepared by the consultants Earth to Ocean Ltd. It was published in March 2011.

This chapter focuses on water based recreation. Its content was determined by an in depth literature review, stakeholder interviews and a workshop for recreational interests. It reviews the issues faced by water based leisure activities and looks at how they can be better managed in the future.

It aims to raise awareness of the needs of the many recreational activities that take place on and close to the Solent. It is hoped that it will be seen as a valuable guide to planners and participants in the future and will help to ensure that due consideration and allowance can be given to these activities, alongside everything else which demands space on this busy stretch of water.

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Introduction

Whether on its shores or beaches, or in, on and under the water, the Solent is synonymous with recreation. Many industries have flourished to serve the recreation market, clubs have been formed to enable organised participation and there is a substantial range of facilities and support infrastructure to ensure that recreation is available to large numbers of people.

Recreation is clearly of great importance to the Solent area but it faces a number of challenges - some long standing, and some new on the horizon. Population pressure, climate change, lack of space, new planning regimes, tightening economic circumstances – all these could cause a decline in the recreational opportunities that are currently available and limit the possible future expansion of the sector.

With eleven local authorities, thirteen harbour authorities (or their equivalent), one national park authority and a plethora of sporting governing bodies, clubs and informal groups, planning and managing water-based recreation in the Solent is not an easy task. Add to this a new marine planning regime, the need to designate Marine Conservation Zones and possible new uses of the marine environment near the Solent –e.g. offshore wind energy – and the picture becomes even more complex. This Strategic Guidance does not provide all the answers, but it attempts to present in one document the challenges facing water based recreation in the Solent, the aspirations for the future and suggested actions to help overcome the challenges and achieve the aspirations. On a very practical level, it also provides information on how to “get things done” in the Solent.

The original Strategic Guidance for the Solent was published in 1997 and included a chapter on Recreation and Tourism. This new, revised version will focus mainly on water based recreation¹ and aims to help guide sustainable marine planning and facility provision in the Solent. It should also help to illustrate the important contribution that water-based recreation makes to the economy, society and environment of the Solent.

This revised Strategic Guidance for Water Based Recreation opens with a summary of water based recreation in the Solent at the end of the first



decade of the 21st Century, providing key facts and figures and giving some context within which this sector operates. The next section covers trends and forecasts within the sector, providing the best estimates of what will shape water based recreation over the next decade.

Key challenges and aspirations, identified through a series of questionnaires, interviews and a workshop with representatives of the water based recreation sector around the Solent are presented, along with the suggested actions that might be required to achieve these aspirations. Case studies are given where possible, to illustrate where solutions have been found to some of these pressing issues in other locations.

During the research and consultation for this revised Guidance, it became apparent that there is very little co-ordinated information about “who does what” in the Solent. To address this lack of information, guidance is given on the protocols and permissions needed to carry out a range of activities in the Solent. The Safety section provides statistics about incidents involving recreational craft and those taking part in water based recreation as well as links to the key safety guidance for those participating in water based recreation in the Solent.

The Resources section, as the name suggests, provides links to useful information such as access points to the Solent, contact details for clubs and associations and details of the relevant sporting governing bodies.



General Key Facts and Statistics

The Solent coastline is around 241 miles long on the mainland between Selsey Bill and Hurst Spit, and includes Chichester, Langstone and Portsmouth Harbours, Southampton Water and the tidal extent of the main rivers. It is around 50 miles long from the Needles in the West to Bembridge in the East on the Isle of Wight. The stretch of sea itself is around 30 miles long and varies from 0.75 miles wide at its narrowest point to about five miles at its widest.

The estimated population figures for the three counties that border the Solent are:

- Isle of Wight: 130,000
- Hampshire (including Southampton and Portsmouth Unitary Authority areas): 1,729,600
- West Sussex: (753, 614) (Office of National Statistics)

This gives a total population for the counties bordering the Solent of 2,613,614 people.

Research carried out in 2007² showed that 2,713,035 people lived within a 60 minute drive of Manor Farm Country Park in Bursledon, which is situated roughly halfway along the mainland Solent coast. However, this figure doesn't take into account anyone living on the Isle of Wight.

It has further been estimated that 1.44 million people live within a 10 minute drive of the Solent coastline (Wells, 2009) demonstrating that possibly in excess of fifty percent of the region's population³ live very close to the coast or have very rapid access to it.

¹ Activities covered are: Use of anchoring areas, sea angling from a boat, canoeing, kayaking, personal watercraft, powerboating, rowing, sub-aqua diving, organised swimming events, surfing, water skiing, yacht cruising, motor cruising, dinghy cruising, dinghy racing, kite surfing and windsurfing.

² Research prepared by CACI Ltd for Hampshire County Council.

³ The population of Hampshire, Sussex and the Isle of Wight.

Water-based Recreation Facts

It is extremely difficult to say with any degree of accuracy how many people participate in the various water-based recreation activities under consideration. The nature of many of the activities means that people do not have to belong to any kind of formal organisation in order to participate, and so can turn up and dive / swim / kayak / sail without ever needing to engage with any organisation that might keep track of how many people are on or in the water. The figures can only give an indication of the numbers of people who may be involved with each activity.

Sailing/Yachting/Motorboating

There are currently seventy two clubs in the Solent (52 in Hampshire, 14 on the Solent coast of the Isle of Wight and 6 clubs in Chichester Harbour) catering for a wide range of sailing activity including dinghy racing and cruising, yacht racing and cruising and motorboating. Many of these clubs offer training courses.

There are twenty nine marinas within the Solent and the most recent audit of mooring spaces in 2009 showed that there are 20,136 moorings. Occupancy rates within marinas are running at around 90-95% across the Solent⁴, despite the testing economic conditions and although waiting lists for a marina space have largely disappeared, there continue to be long waiting lists for moorings in many of the Solent's prime locations such as on the Lymington River and the River Hamble.

Sea Angling

There are an estimated 40,000 sea anglers active around the Solent and about 50 clubs in the area – these figures include shore-based anglers as well as those who fish from a boat however. Around 64 charter boats are listed on the Solent Fishing Guide website.

Rowing

There are ten rowing clubs in the Solent, concentrated around the River Itchen, but also in Lymington, Southsea and on the Isle of Wight.

Kayaking and Canoeing

There are five canoe and kayaking clubs in the immediate Solent area, with other clubs accessing the Solent from slightly further afield (e.g. Winchester and Ringwood). The Solent clubs practice a mix of sea kayaking and flatwater racing.

Windsurfing

There are very few "formal" windsurfing clubs in the Solent. There is a junior club, the Calshot Flyers, which is linked to the Calshot Activity Centre and the local universities all have their own windsurfing clubs. There is also a club at West Wittering, just west of the entrance to Chichester Harbour. The main windsurfing locations in the Solent are: Lepe, Calshot, Hill Head, Lee-on-the-Solent, Stokes Bay, Hayling Island and the Witterings.

Swimming

Informal swimming takes place from the Solent's beaches and there are some organised events (mainly during the summer). The Solent Swimming Club organises a 2 kilometre and 4 kilometre Open Sea Championship at Calshot each year. It ratifies swims from the Isle of Wight (Ryde) to mainland Portsmouth or vice versa, and two way swims and a number of these swims take place each year, mainly for charity.

Personal Watercraft

There are two dedicated personal watercraft areas in the Solent: one off Lee-on-the-Solent and the other off Eastney, near the entrance to Langstone Harbour. The use of personal watercraft is generally either not permitted or speeds are severely restricted within the other harbours within the Solent, or within half a mile of shore in the dockyard port of Portsmouth (i.e. the Eastern Solent), except in the zones mentioned above or if a free license is applied for. There are two clubs for PWC users in the Solent: the Solent Skiers Association is a very active club, formed to protect the interests of PWC users launching from the Daedalus Slipway. The Hayling Island Personal Watercraft Club is for those using their craft in Langstone Harbour.

Waterskiing

There are three designated waterski areas in the Solent: Off Wooton Creek, within Langstone Harbour and off Lee-on-the-Solent (launching from the Daedalus slipway). Waterskiing is generally not permitted inside the other harbours in the Solent, or within half a mile of shore in the dockyard port of Portsmouth (i.e. the Eastern Solent), except in the zones mentioned above. There are no formal waterski clubs on the Solent, although skiers wishing to ski in Langstone harbour need to belong to the Langstone Harbour Water Skiers Association.

Sub Aqua / Diving

There are eight local diving businesses, about five dive charter boats and twenty sub aqua clubs which have, on average 40 members each. Many more divers will dive in the Solent through dive centres or from their own boats and other dive clubs will come from other parts of the country to dive in the Solent.

Kite-surfing

The main kitesurfing locations in the Solent are Hill Head, Lee-on-the-Solent, Calshot, Lepe, Keyhaven, the Witterings and Hayling Island. Kitesurfing schools are based in four of these locations (Hayling, Hill Head, West Wittering and Calshot) and a club system operates (informally) at Keyhaven and more formally at West Wittering.



Participation Figures

For the last nine years, an annual survey has been carried out by the RYA, BMF, MCA and RNLI to look at participation figures and trends for the watersports and leisure industry. Over the years, 21 activities have been considered, including all the activities covered by this Strategic Guidance review and also including spending time at the beach, cliff climbing, surfing and canal boating.

Unfortunately no data exists that relates to participation levels in the Solent alone – the results are analysed by ITV region so that the Solent is positioned within the London/East/South East region – which obviously extends far beyond the Solent's boundaries.

The most recent survey about participation trends in 2010 (published March 2011) focussed on the 12 core activities that make up "any boating activity"⁵ and does not include data on scuba diving or kitesurfing.

Headline results from the 2010 Watersports and Leisure Participation Survey are:

- All surveyed boating and watersport activities have declined in participation levels in 2010 compared to 2009.
- This decline is linked to those participants who take part in activities on a casual basis and the reason for this is likely to be that fewer people took overseas holidays during 2009/2010, where they often take part in water based recreation. The figures for those who take part more regularly have remained stable.
- Motor boating/cruising is the most stable of the activities with less than half a percentage point drop.
- Windsurfing has declined between 2002 and 2005 but has remained stable since 2005.
- Yacht cruising has been on a downward trend over the past couple of years.
- Powerboating shows the largest drop in participation during 2010.
- Canoeing remains relatively stable, consistently showing participation above 2%. Participation rates are highest among residents of Northern Ireland and those living in regions along the south coast of England.
- In 2010, 2.4% of households stated that they owned at least one boat (either in the UK or abroad). This is down by less than half a percentage point on the previous year. Taking the three year average from 2008 – 2010, the survey shows that 2.5% of UK households state they own a boat.
- The most common boat type to be owned is a canoe/kayak, being one of the smallest and cheapest types of craft asked about.
- Taking a 3 year average, there are 1,067,000 boats owned of which 1,003,000 are kept in the UK.
- Although not surveyed in 2010, the 2009 survey revealed that Kitesurfing is showing one of the largest increases in frequency of participation amongst the other activities.

Trends and Forecasts

As stated above, 1.44 million people live within a ten minute drive of the Solent coastline (Wells, 2009), perhaps this is not surprising given the number of densely populated areas around the region's shores but it gives an insight into how many people have the Solent on their doorstep. The proportion of these 1.44 million who partake in one of the variety of water-based recreational pursuits carried out on the Solent is unknown, but with the level of new housing planned for urban South Hampshire in the next 20 years⁶, it is almost certain that more people will be living within easy reach of the Solent. As people who enjoy water based recreation tend to choose to live closer to the water, it seems likely that more people will wish to take part in water-based recreation in the Solent in the future.

The population of the southeast as a whole is predicted to rise from 8.2 million now to 9.5 million in 2026 with urban South Hampshire designated as one of the region's "growth points."⁷ In November 2010 the housing target for urban South Hampshire was revised slightly downwards, but a figure of 74,000 new houses by 2026 remains.

⁵ The 12 boating activities making up "Any Boating Activity" includes Small sail boat racing, Small sail boat activities, Yacht racing, Yacht cruising, Power boating, Motor boating/Cruising, Using Personal Watercraft, Rowing, Canoeing, Canal boating, Water skiing and Windsurfing.
⁶ 74,000 addition homes to be built by 2026 (http://www.push.gov.uk/push_srh_strategy_summary.pdf).

⁷ The Sub-Region of South Hampshire, through PUSH, was selected as a New Growth Point Area in October 2006 and is considered a crucial part of the Government's ambition to increase housing supply.

A number of studies carried out between 2001 and 2007 predicted that sections of the population would experience an increase in discretionary income to spend on leisure. As these reports were mainly written before the recent economic downturn, these predictions may prove to be exaggerated, although much of the demand for certain types of recreational facilities is being driven by the over 55 age-group, who were perhaps more cushioned from the impacts of the recession. The over 55 population of GB has grown at twice the rate of the total population between 1981 and 2005, according to NOMIS data⁸, and there are now approximately 16 million over 55 year olds in Great Britain (British Marine Federation, 2007). It is estimated that there are around two million over 55 year olds with the highest disposable income of any consumer age group. In addition to disposable income, they also have more of that other precious commodity – time – and are increasingly choosing to spend it on leisure pursuits, including water-based recreation (with a particular focus on motor-boating).

Key trends that developers and planners should be aware of:

- Greater numbers of people are turning to nature to escape from increased urbanisation and pressured lives. Watersports offer a way to “get away from it all”.
- As people become more time poor and cash rich they are looking for ways to get on the water quickly.
- There has been a move towards larger boats and an associated desire for greater convenience with regard to accessing those craft.
- There is a move towards more “niche” holidays – i.e. those catering for specific activities, such as watersports.
- Shared ownership and timeshare schemes for boats are becoming popular with several companies now offering these services in the Solent.
- Inflatable canoes and kayaks are cheap, portable and allow for very quick and easy access to the water. They are the fastest growing sector of the canoe and kayak market (Biberdorf, 2007).
- Dry stack boat storage is becoming a popular choice, especially for RIB owners and if suitable sites can be found, is likely to expand.
- Road access to the Solent – already very good, will get even better with reduced travel times from London in particular.



⁸ Official labour market statistics from the Office of National Statistics.

Challenges

As part of the development of this guidance, an extensive literature review was undertaken during 2010 which focussed on a wide range of reports and studies relating to the Solent and / or water based recreation. The literature reviewed had all been published within the last ten years and provided valuable insights into specific issues and challenges facing water based recreation in the Solent.

In addition to the literature review, a survey was conducted to canvass opinion from key stakeholder organisations in the Solent on what the challenges are and what the priorities should be for water based recreation. A workshop was held to gather more detail from stakeholders and to provide a forum for debate as to how some of these challenges might be addressed.

From the literature review, survey and workshop, the following set of challenges were identified:

Lack of space

Lack of space as a challenge manifests itself in two main ways: Limited room for additional facilities on land, and not enough space on the water for either facilities or for the activity to take place.

Much of the Solent coastline is quite rightly protected for reasons of nature conservation, or is not available for development due to flooding risk (and with rising sea levels and the impacts of climate change, it is likely that ever greater areas of coastline will become too risky to develop on), or it is in private hands. Those parts of the coastline that are available for any kind of development are therefore subject to a high level of competition from a range of organisations and interests, of which recreation is only one.

In recent years, many waterfront sites within urban areas have been developed, or redeveloped, to provide housing, office space, shops, bars and restaurants. In other parts of the country this has sometimes resulted in the loss of public facilities such as slipways (e.g. at Portishead) but this does not appear to have happened in the Solent. One of the impacts of this trend has been an increase in the number of people living and working close to the water, and an associated rise in the number of cars – which require parking spaces. This, coupled with greater numbers of people wishing to access the water from prime “honey pot” sites, and possibly an increase in the number of people visiting the coast for other, shore-based pursuits (such as dog walking and bird watching) has led to real pressure on current car parking availability and there is either no space to build additional car parks or a lack of willingness to do so. In the picturesque villages of Hamble, Keyhaven and Bosham for example, the quayside car parks are frequently full on weekends and those wishing to launch boats will struggle to find anywhere they can leave their trailers.

Another impact of the trend for high density, urban housing is that the amount of storage space that people have at home is often much reduced. Flats and town centre dwellings often do not have a garage or even an area of hard standing on which to keep a boat or other craft and there is therefore greater demand for shore-based facilities such as dry stack boat storage, which generally prefer to have a waterside location.

The rising costs of keeping a boat on a mooring or in a marina (assuming that a space is available) are likely to be leading to an increase in people keeping their boats on a trailer, or in facilities such as dry stacks. Slipways are heavily used for launching RIBS, small motor boats (often used for sea angling), dinghies and for personal water craft. The western Solent in particular does not have many slipways with the result that the existing ones are very congested and relatively high charges are levied for their use, compared with other slipways in the Solent.

Many sailing clubs have a dinghy park available for members to keep their boats and these are frequently full, with the effect that clubs find it harder to expand their membership numbers if they cannot find areas to store members' boats.

The issue of lack of space on the water is partly a result of competition with other forms of activity taking place in the Solent, discussed in more detail under point 2 below. However there is clear pressure on existing facilities on the water – particularly marinas and moorings, with long waiting lists for moorings in popular areas and high prices for a marina berth. Two new marinas have received planning consent – a 263 berth marina in Marchwood, near the top of Southampton Water, and a 300 berth marina in East Cowes on the Isle of Wight, but further sites for marina construction are hard to envisage.

Conflict and competition

The Solent is a busy waterway with a major commercial port at Southampton, a military port at Portsmouth (and a smaller commercial port), several ferry routes between the mainland and the Isle of Wight as well as cross channel ferries operating from Portsmouth, and some small-scale fishing. Added to this, there is usually some dredging activity going on, plus there are vessels carrying out maintenance of undersea cables and pipelines.

The very large numbers of people taking part in water-based recreation need to fit into this jigsaw of other activity and also respect the many nature conservation designations while navigating the significant natural and man-made obstacles that characterise the Solent. It is no wonder that conflict and competition are cited by many as one of the challenges facing those participating in water based recreation in the Solent.

The types of conflict that arise generally fit under four main headings:

i. Conflict between recreational activities

In very busy areas of the Solent, particularly within the harbours themselves, a large number of recreational activities may be taking place at one time. Chichester Harbour is home to several dinghy racing clubs who may all be out racing at the same time that many cruising boats (both sail and power) are navigating within the Harbour and when windsurfers may also be out on the water. The same is true for the Hamble, Portsmouth, Lymington, Cowes, Langstone, Yarmouth, Beaulieu and Southampton. Other areas of the “open” Solent (i.e. away from the Harbours) are equally subject to such competition. The foreshore at Lee-on-the-Solent and Hill Head is used by swimmers, personal watercraft riders, kitesurfers and windsurfers, with dinghies also launching nearby and larger craft sailing past. Despite harbour byelaws prohibiting and restricting certain activities (particularly kitesurfing and personal watercraft use) and limited use of voluntary zoning (at Hill Head), conflicts between the various water-based recreational pursuits can and do occur. Ignorance may play a part in conflict occurring, with participants in one activity not understanding the limitations or difficulties involved with participating in another activity - e.g. kitesurfers find it much more difficult to go upwind and require a lot of clear space to launch and land their kites. Some recreational sea users may not be familiar with the meaning of lights, marks and sound signals and here too, conflicts can arise – e.g. when divers are down and other craft do not recognise or respect the flag that indicates divers are operating in that area.

ii. Conflict between recreational activity and other users / uses of the sea

With the wide range of other activities taking place on the Solent it is unsurprising that there is at least some element of conflict or competition between the various forms of activity taking place simultaneously on, in and under the water. Perhaps the most obvious and frequent conflict is between larger, commercial craft and smaller recreational craft. The many ferries and ships which use the Solent have navigational (and commercial) restrictions which mean they are far less manoeuvrable than smaller recreational craft. Anyone attempting to enter or leave Lymington River, Portsmouth Harbour, Southampton Water or the Medina River on a busy summer's weekend will almost certainly find themselves, at some point, in the path of a ferry, hovercraft, RedJet or large ship. Restricted by their draft, and their sheer size, these craft cannot easily take avoiding action should recreational craft get in their way.

iii. Conflict between recreational activity and nature conservation

The Solent European Marine Site (SEMS) is one of a number of European marine sites in the UK which are designated as internationally important sites for their habitats and species. SEMS covers the harbours, estuaries, areas of open coast and inshore water around the Solent. The site stretches from Hurst Spit in the west to Chichester Harbour in the east and includes areas along the north coast of the Isle of Wight from Yarmouth to Bembridge Harbour, as well as the mainland shores.

The fact that the Solent is a European Marine Site would be largely unknown to many of its recreational users and herein lies the problem. If recreational users don't know that a site is protected, the features that are being protected and why, it is not surprising if their actions sometimes have an adverse impact on the site's condition.

iv. Conflict between recreational and other activities on land

Even before people have got on the water, there is scope for conflict between those engaged in water based recreation and other users of and visitors to waterside sites. As an example, there is often competition for parking spaces in waterside car parks. Those who have trailers to park will need more than one parking space, which, on a busy day,

can be very difficult to find. On beaches, there can be conflict between the various users of the space if, for example, there are kitesurfers launching and landing kites, windsurfers rigging their sails, and people trying to walk along the beach or sunbathe.

Conflict is sometimes a misconception based on isolated incidents however and without some kind of monitoring of conflict, it is hard to gauge the scale of the problem. Often, incidents are resolved quickly and immediately on the water, with one user having to give way to another and there is no further action taken.

Threat of regulation

There is very little that directly regulates water based recreation (harbour byelaws being the obvious exception) but the sector is subject to planning, licensing, nature conservation and environmental legislation that indirectly influences what can and cannot be done, whether in terms of the activities themselves, or the facilities that support them.

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 has introduced several new elements into marine legislation which have the potential to have a significant impact on water-based recreation. A new licensing regime may require clubs to apply, and pay for, a marine license for certain works that were previously exempt under the former system, such as small scale maintenance dredging to keep a channel to moorings open. Marine Conservation Zones, which are in the process of being agreed on and designated, may result in restrictions on recreational activity within their boundaries – which may impact on sea angling and anchoring in particular.

The Solent European Marine Site Management Scheme monitors the SEMS sites and flags up any activities that may be causing damage to the condition of the protected areas. A few cases of recreational activity impacting on protected sites have been identified in recent years (e.g. small recreational hovercraft being used near Ryde Sands).

Changes in planning policy may also impact on water-based recreation – particularly with regard to developments in the coastal zone, which may become even more restricted as the impacts of climate change become more evident.⁹

There are particular challenges for regulators in communicating effectively with the recreational sector, which is not organised in a way that makes it easy to consult. Many people who participate in a water-based recreational activity will not belong to any club or governing body. They may not always access the Solent from the same place and as there is no form of mandatory licensing system or registration system for recreational craft, there is no way for regulators to know who owns which boat, or where the owner or user can be contacted. Clubs are often run by volunteers, and their focus is on enabling people to gain greater enjoyment from their chosen activity, not to respond to consultations and to fend off regulation. The flip side of this is that the recreational community is not best-placed to have a voice in consultations which may profoundly affect them. Some activities are well-represented by governing bodies, who can provide an effective lobbying service. This is not the case for all activities however, and those without any representative body may not hear about proposed changes until it is too late for them to have a say.

Lack of data

Relatively little is known about the economic contribution of water-based recreation to the national economy, let alone the regional, or the local economy. The British Marine Federation collates some statistics, but these centre on the contribution made by the leisure marine industry, including boat builders, engine manufacturers, boat yards, marinas etc. The contribution to the wider economy made by those visiting the Solent to take part in water-based recreation is largely unquantified – i.e. someone coming to the Solent for a weekend's kayaking may pay to launch their kayak at the slipway, may stay in a local B&B, eat at local pub and pay to park their car in a coastal car park. The only attempt made to quantify this kind of spending was carried out by Tourism South East in 2005 when they surveyed visitors arriving by yacht to the South East and collected data on how much was spent.

While participation surveys show that a wide range of people participate in water based recreation (i.e. across age ranges and social classes), there is a perception that these activities are perhaps only for the wealthier sections of society. People may therefore be deterred from trying a water-based recreational activity if they think that the costs will be very high. The sector would therefore benefit from some more robust data on the costs of undertaking the various activities to raise public awareness that water-based recreation need not be significantly more expensive than other forms of land-based recreation.

A better record of the economic value and contribution of recreational activity to the region would be helpful to ensure that recreation is considered as more of an equal player alongside other economic activities such as shipping and

⁹ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/>.

fishing. Without any accurate data, recreation may be perceived as the poor relation to other industries and this may have significant repercussions when marine plans are drawn up for the South Inshore area (of which the Solent is part) under the new marine planning regime.

A better idea of the contribution made by water-based recreation would also be helpful in justifying the need for investment in facilities, or for influencing planning decisions in favour of recreational facilities.

Limitations on access to the water

Much of the north Solent coastline in particular is privately owned (especially in the Western Solent) and is therefore inaccessible to the public. The tidal range within the Solent also means that those requiring deeper water access are restricted to just a handful of launching points if they want to launch at anything other than high tide. Some slipways have very few facilities alongside them and inadequate parking and toilet facilities may deter some users.



Again, a lack of centrally held information about access points to the water may mean that some slipways and access points are not well-known and therefore under-used. Those access points that are well known and that have good facilities nearby are often congested and can be expensive to use. Many public access points in the Solent have conditions attached to their use and may not all be used for launching all types of craft. Personal watercraft in particular, may only use certain slipways.

A few slipways that used to be available for public launching have been lost to coastal defences or local authorities have made the decision not to maintain them (e.g. No. 2 Battery Slip at Stokes Bay) – either due to beach reinstatement or due to sufficient alternative facilities being available nearby.

If the trends in craft ownership continue, then it seems likely that greater numbers of people will own smaller craft which they will not permanently keep in the water. If this is the case, then the pressure on access points to water will intensify in future. New waterside developments rarely include any provision for improved access to water however, despite the fact that greater numbers of waterside residents is likely to mean more people wishing to get on to the water. A good example of this is the redevelopment of the large site in Woolston, Southampton, formerly home to Vosper Thornycroft's shipyard.

The "Centenary Quay" site covers an overall area of 31 acres and will provide 1,620 new homes, a boat yard, retail space, a supermarket and a number of restaurants and cafes. New cycling and walking routes will be created, but there is no evidence of any public slipway in the plans despite the large numbers of people who will be moving in to this area.

Aspirations

The challenges outlined above are ones which, to some degree, affect all those involved with delivering or participating in water-based recreation. Overcoming these challenges will require a range of actions and interventions from the many different stakeholders in the water-based recreation field. A series of “aspirations” has been identified from the preliminary research work which underpins this document and which aim to address the challenges that have been identified. The aspirations and the actions which accompany them are presented as suggestions, rather than as “objectives” or “targets”, recognising that it will be for the various stakeholder groups to decide how they wish to take them forward with the Solent Forum potentially acting as a co-ordinating body.

Making the most of the space available

Mark Twain, in the 19th century said: “Buy land, they’re not making it anymore” - and of course his quote is more relevant than ever in the early 21st century as competition over how to use land intensifies. Given that there is no more land to be had (or sea area either) then a sensible approach would be to make the best use of the space available. The suggested actions to help achieve this are:

Strengthen the links between planning decision makers and representatives of water-based recreation

Better links are needed between planning decision makers and recreational representatives. Local authorities are required to consider competing interests which they do through consultation and using available evidence. Water-based recreation would undoubtedly benefit from being more closely involved with the development of planning policy.

How could this be achieved?

- Local authorities could develop and disseminate guidance for recreational organisations on how to get involved with consultations on planning policy. Governing bodies for the various activities could also help their member organisations to respond to such consultations by researching when the Solent’s local authorities are consulting on their Local Development Documents and alerting their members when consultations are occurring.
- Governing bodies could provide central guidance by giving their members examples of where recreational input to Local Development Documents has resulted in a positive result for recreation. The RYA has produced a number of guidance documents for sailing clubs to help them input to the planning process which can be found here: <http://www.rya.org.uk/sitecollectiondocuments/legal/Web%20Documents/Environment/RYA%20Planning%20Handbook%20Second%20Edition%20formatted.pdf>
- Recreational organisations could make contact with their local authorities and ask to be put on the list of consultees when planning policy is being consulted on. It may also help for planners and recreational representatives to be part of the same local groups such as Harbour Users Forums or the Solent Forum itself.

Thinking laterally.....

If no more land can be made available, then perhaps the way that space is currently used can be better thought out. Dry stack storage is one example of how boats can be stored in a space efficient way – similar to multi-storey car parking.

How could this be achieved?

- In locations where there are specific problems, such as a lack of car parking, local authorities and those using the area for recreation need to work together to identify possible solutions. If there are schools or other public buildings nearby for example, then their car parks could be opened up for public use at weekends when the car parks would otherwise be empty.
- Local businesses could be approached to see if they would be prepared to lease any of their parking spaces or grounds at weekends to help alleviate parking problems.
- Websites such as www.parkatmyhouse.com/uk or www.yourparkingspace.co.uk match up homeowners

who will rent out their drives by the day or week with people needing a parking space.

- Retain and support recreational development within urban areas of the Solent
- Although the urban areas of the Solent are already very built-up along the waterside, it is in these locations that there is probably the best chance of additional space for recreational facilities to be created. As industrial and business premises become vacant, or even derelict, waterside sites may become available which could be used for facilities that support water based recreation.
- How could this be achieved?
- Local Authority Recreation Officers could provide useful input on behalf of the water-based recreation sector during the early planning stages of major waterside redevelopments, when facilities such as public slipways could more easily be incorporated into site design plans.
- Local Development Plans could contain policies which explicitly aim to earmark waterside sites for activities and industries which require access to water, before considering these sites for other uses.

Sharing the water

With more people wishing to get out on the water, in different types of craft and with increased use of our waters for a range of different industries and activities, ways of sharing the water effectively need to be found. Suggested actions to make this possible are:

Introducing zoning of activities in particularly heavily used areas (to manage intra-recreational activity conflict)

‘Poole Harbour introduced zoning in 1995 with designated areas for windsurfing, kitesurfing, water ski-ing, personal watercraft and swimming. The vast majority of harbour users now know about and respect these zones and Poole Harbour is generally viewed as a good example of how zoning can work to reduce conflict.’

Responsibility for introducing zoning to an area will fall to either a Harbour Authority or to Local Authorities, depending on the area of water in question. Zoning may not be viewed as a positive development by all recreational users and so user groups should be properly consulted well in advance of any zoning arrangement being made. The various user groups who need to be allocated their own water space should be identified along with their requirements (e.g. easy launching for windsurfers and kitesurfers in shallow water; sheltered water for water-skiing, slipway access for PWCs). Some Local Authorities also have reservations about introducing formal zoning areas, as they are concerned that this could lead to increased numbers of people coming to use sites which are already crowded.

Improved communication channels between user groups

It seems likely that many of incidents of conflict which arise in the Solent are as a result of a lack of understanding of how the actions of one type of user may impact on other sea users. Improved understanding of the various restrictions and limitations which apply to the user groups and better communication between user groups may help to alleviate this problem.

How could this be achieved?

- National Governing Bodies could run features in their publications aimed at raising awareness of the requirements of other sea users.
- Harbour authorities could also publish information about how the various types of craft manoeuvre within the harbour area.
- Clubs could display information about the different types of craft that operate within the same vicinity.
- Provision of more information as to why certain areas are protected for nature conservation purposes.

Information should be available on-line and on-site to provide the users of sensitive sites with more information about why the area is protected and the potential impact that their activity may have on the site.

How could this be achieved?

'A canoe and kayaking company on the Beaulieu River has reached a voluntary agreement with Natural England to modify the timing and nature of some of its activities in response to concerns about the impact of the canoeing and kayaking on local bird populations. Rather than use regulation to change the way the company operated, a voluntary agreement was drawn up which does not affect the company's ability to run a successful operation and also benefits Natural England because the company is able to carry out monitoring and sampling on their behalf.'

Voluntary schemes to limit conflict

Sustained conflict may arise if there are different users of a site whose use of the water or adjacent coastline significantly affects others or is causing damage. Voluntary schemes are one way for a user group to try and self-regulate their activities and to improve relations with others.

How could this be achieved?

- Some National Governing Bodies have produced guidance on how to set up voluntary management schemes (e.g. for Personal Watercraft).
- Local authorities have helped other groups to establish clubs, e.g. the Hurst and Keyhaven Kitesurfing Club was established with the help of the New Forest District Council River Warden
- Natural England have a website – “Best of Both Worlds” (www.bobw.co.uk) which aims to encourage the co-existence of outdoor recreation and conservation
- Responsible action to minimise regulation

As the Solent gets more congested, the arguments intensify as to whether greater regulation is needed to manage the range of activities taking place there. As far as can be ascertained from recreational users, the consensus is that regulation of their activities would be largely unwelcome. To avoid or minimise the chances of this, demonstrating responsible action will show that the recreational sector can continue to operate without the need for further regulation.

How could this be achieved?

- Solent recreational groups could make contact with the Marine Management Organisation to clarify and establish appropriate channels of communication - depending on the issue. E.g. for broad licensing regulations, it may be appropriate for a National Governing Body or trade association to negotiate with and lobby the MMO. For decisions with a more local impact, it may be more appropriate for local groups / fora to engage with the MMO.
- Harbour Authorities could consider / introduce a regular review process for any regulations and byelaws with an ability to amend or discontinue if deemed ineffective / unenforceable or causing unexpected conflicts.
- Kitesurfers on the River Exe in Devon have set up a club and drafted a voluntary code of conduct in partnership with the Exe Estuary Management in response to concerns over safety risks to water users posed by kitesurfers.
- The Code of Conduct presents 'Kiteboarding Road Rules', general safety guidelines, advice on equipment, flying skills, setting up/launching, landing advice and encourages kitesurfers to be aware of other water users.
- Local authorities / Harbour authorities could improve signage for recreational users to help raise awareness of byelaws and could also promote this information through clubs and associations, marinas and harbour publications.
- Best practice in managing recreational activity could be shared through organisations such as the Sport and Recreation Alliance and through local groups such as the Solent Forum.

Valuing recreation

Recreation brings with it a wide range of benefits – economic, social, health related and, on occasion, environmental (Surfers Against Sewage have done much to help raise awareness of marine water quality for example). In order for water based recreation to “compete” on a more level playing field with other industries for land and water space, for funding and also for a voice in terms of policy making, a greater value needs to be placed on what it brings to the Solent.

How could this be achieved?

- Creation of a 2012 legacy – National Governing Bodies, Local Authorities and County Sports Partnerships can capitalise on a renewed national interest in sport to raise awareness of the benefits that sport and recreation can bring. There may be opportunities to encourage more people to try out the Olympic Sports of sailing, windsurfing, kayaking and rowing.
- The Solent Forum could co-ordinate the gathering of evidence and data on the economic contribution of the sector. Local Authorities, Trade Associations, National Governing Bodies will all have data that could be fed in to such a survey.
- Initiatives such as “The Blue Gym” (www.bluegym.org.uk) are working to gather data and evidence on the health benefits of water-based recreation and its contribution to well-being and are also conducting primary research into how water based recreation can lead to improved health. Solent based recreation groups could sign up to the Blue Gym initiative at no cost and help contribute to the research which should ultimately serve to benefit them.
- It would be beneficial to the sector to establish a more coherent “voice of recreation” for the Solent. This would require a more joined up approach between National Governing Bodies and representatives of the various activities. Again the Solent Forum would be in a good position to establish this group and promote the advantages of its continuation.
- Local Authorities and tourism boards could work together to deliver co-ordinated promotion of the Solent as a destination for water-based recreation.
- Information about new activities and trends in participation would be useful for managing authorities. Information of this type is gathered by marine industries and National Governing Bodies and it would be beneficial to the sector as a whole if this information were to be shared as widely as possible.

Improving access to water and to water based recreation

Access to the water for recreational pursuits in the Solent is broadly very good, with a range of slipways, hards and beaches for launching from. Certain areas of the Solent are far better served than others however and there is scope for improving the access to the water and for allowing people to access water based recreation. At present, there are very few opportunities for people to take to the water by turning up at a location and hiring equipment (subject to appropriate safety considerations). This is likely to be a growing market and facilities that offer pay and play could help introduce a wider range of people to water based recreation without the need for a large amount of additional infrastructure.

How could this be achieved?

- National Governing Bodies to liaise with Local Authorities and Harbour Authorities to address shortfalls in facilities provision.
- Those responsible for water based recreation within Local Authorities could review planning policy and include provision for improved access to water for recreational purposes.
- Identify ways for the RYA to make its comprehensive data on access points and car parks more widely available.
- Local Authorities and National Governing Bodies (as part of a Facilities Strategy) could work together to try and develop greater opportunity for “Pay and Play” facilities.

Conclusions

Over the last fifty years or so, the Solent has developed as a destination for a wide range of water-based recreation and has been able to do so largely without any form of structured planning for the sector. As the pressures on the waters and coasts of the Solent increase in terms of number of users, types of use, and relating to climate change, it seems likely that a more co-ordinated approach to managing water based recreation will be needed in future. Water based recreation now needs to make its voice heard as a sector that not only brings immense enjoyment to so many people, but one which is also a major contributor to the regional economy and which brings with it many health benefits. By its very nature, water based recreation appeals to individuals, but now is the time for the groups and organisations which represent the many varied interests to work together for the good of the sector as a whole.

Who does what in the Solent?

This section of the Guidance for water-based recreation poses a number of questions that recreational users of the Solent may have, and attempts to provide as comprehensive an answer as possible, without becoming too bogged down in detail of specific examples. In terms of “who does what?” in the Solent, a good rule of thumb is that Harbour Authorities generally have jurisdiction over most of the activities that happen within their boundaries. The table below gives details of the Solent’s Harbour Authorities and the areas they cover.

| Location | Area Covered Harbour / | Local Authority |
|---|--|--|
| Chichester Harbour | Entire Harbour | Chichester Harbour Conservancy |
| Langstone Harbour | Entire Harbour | Langstone Harbour Board |
| Portsmouth Harbour | Entire Harbour | Queen’s Harbour Master |
| Eastern Solent | See QHM Website for map; includes area east of a line Hill Head to Old Castle Point, to South of Hayling Island. Part of Sandown Bay. | Queen’s Harbour Master |
| Southampton Water | See ABP Website for map: includes all Southampton Water including rivers Test and Itchen to a line Hill Head to Old Castle Point and another line Egypt Point to Stansore Point. | Associated British Ports |
| River Hamble | Whole River | Hamble Harbour Authority |
| Western Solent | No Harbour Authority. New Forest District Council or Isle of Wight County Council depending on which side of the Solent. | New Forest District Council/ Isle of Wight County Council |
| Beaulieu River | Whole River | Beaulieu Harbour Master |
| Lymington River | Whole River to Jack in the Basket and Start Box | Lymington Harbour Commissioners |
| Keyhaven River | Whole River | New Forest District Council |
| Sandown/Shanklin Yaverland/Wooton Ryde/ Ventnor | See QHM Website for boundary | Queen’s Harbour Master/Isle of Wight Council |
| Bembridge | Harbour only | Bembridge Harbour Improvements Council |
| Cowes | River Medina, Cowes Road to Prince Consort, Old Castle Point to Egypt Point | Cowes Harbour Commissioners |
| Yarmouth | Yarmouth Harbour | Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners |

ABP is the statutory harbour authority for the port of Southampton, whereas the harbour authority for Portsmouth Harbour and the Eastern Solent (The Dockyard Port of Portsmouth) is the Queen’s Harbour Master (QHM). ABP and the QHM co-operate in administering shipping movements within the Eastern Solent with ABP taking a co-ordinating role.

ABP, Portsmouth Commercial Port and Cowes Harbour Commissioners are the designated Competent Harbour Authorities (CHA) for the Solent. All pilotage of commercial ships is undertaken by pilots licensed by the respective CHA. There are close liaison arrangements between the three CHAs and QHM Portsmouth over pilotage and navigational safety matters. The smaller harbour authorities within the Solent carry similar responsibilities for ensuring navigational safety and close working relationships exist between them and the larger authorities.

Undertaking Waterbased Activities and Events

Below is a list of activities linked to water based recreation that people may wish to carry out within the Solent and guidance on who needs to be contacted to obtain permission or find out more information:

What do I need to do if I want to:

Put on an event?

Anyone wanting to put on a recreational event in the Solent will first need to consult with the relevant Harbour Authority as far in advance of the planned event as possible. For most types of events a formal risk assessment will be required although the content of this assessment will be proportional to the event / activity. The event risk assessment should identify all risks concerned with the safe and efficient use of the harbour by all harbour users. Details of how the risk is to be controlled will be part of the assessment.

The formal risk assessment should be submitted not less than 4 weeks prior to the planned event to enable the harbour authority to comment and consult on the assessment. When the harbour authority is satisfied that the risks to harbour safety and port users have been effectively mitigated, formal acceptance of the risk assessment and authorization for the event to proceed will be given.

The QHM website provides some useful advice to those planning on organising a recreational event and this can be found here: <http://www.qhmportsmouth.com/leisure-events>.

Organise a race?

The same principles apply to organising a race as to organising an event – i.e. early contact should be made with the relevant Harbour Authorities and a risk assessment should be carried out. Where an event is held regularly, i.e. a weekly yacht race organised by a yacht club, a generic risk assessment may be authorised by the Harbour Authority which may last for the whole year.

If the race in question is a yacht race, the Solent Cruising and Racing Association should also be consulted. The SCRA, among other things, co-ordinates the racing fixtures list in the Solent. Over 400 sailing events take place in the Solent every season and it is the job of the SCRA to coordinate these events, reduce clashes of major fixtures and to promote good liaison between the Yacht Clubs. The SCRA website, www.scra.org.uk, lists these events, both racing and cruising, and is continually updated from information given by the member clubs and classes. A fixtures poster is produced every January for distribution around the Solent and representatives of clubs and classes liaise every June to discuss the following year's fixtures.

Depending on the nature of the race, and the sport involved, it may also be prudent to contact the National Governing Body to inform them that the race will be taking place and to get appropriate advice.

Develop in the marine environment?

For recreational purposes, it is assumed that development will be in the coastal zone (i.e. close inshore or connected to the shore) rather than offshore. As well as any terrestrial planning permission, a marine license is also likely to be needed. Applicants should contact the Marine Management Organisation to find out if they need a marine license and what this will entail.

If the development is taking place within a harbour and if the proposed development or activity is likely to have an effect on navigational safety, variation to the hydrography of the harbour or affect areas of environmental sensitivity then you will certainly need to consult with and obtain the written permission of the harbour authority.

In any area designated for nature conservation purposes (which large parts of the Solent are) then Natural England, the statutory nature conservation body must also be consulted and it is likely that an "appropriate assessment" will need to be carried out to assess the impacts of the proposed development on the conservation site.

Lay racing marks?

Clubs wishing to lay seasonal racing marks should seek permission from the relevant Harbour Authority before doing so. If the marks are removed at the end of each racing season, then no marine consent is currently required. If the marks will remain in situ, then a CPA consent is likely to be needed and the Marine Management Organisations should be contacted before the marks are laid.

Trinity House maintains records of all Local Aids to Navigation, including seasonal racing marks. Anyone laying such marks should complete the form here http://www.trinityhouse.co.uk/aids_to_navigation/local_aids_to_navigation/application_forms/yacht_racing_marks.html to help ensure that Trinity House publish accurate information. The Solent Cruising and Racing Association should also be informed of the location of racing marks.

Set up a new club?

Anyone wishing to set up a new club would do well to consult with the relevant National Governing Body, who will be able to provide guidance and advice on everything from designing a suitable facility to making sure all the legal requirements are considered. Sport England and the Hampshire County Sports Partnership can also provide support and advice.

Dive on wrecks?

There are three protected wreck sites in the Solent: The Needles, Yarmouth Roads and HMS Invincible. To be able to dive on these sites you will need a license issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

Bring a large vessel into the Solent?

All vessels in excess of 20 metres in length, bound to or from or passing through the Port of Southampton, vessels bound to or from or passing through the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth and vessels bound to or from anchorages or other locations in the Solent are required to communicate by VHF with Southampton VTS.

All vessels in excess of 20 metres LOA entering the East Solent are required to report to Southampton VTS on VHF Channel 12 when 10 miles from Nab Tower.

Due to the limited number of berths within the Solent for vessels over 20 metres, it would be wise to book a berth prior to arriving in the Solent and inform the relevant Harbour Master that this size of vessel will be entering the harbour.

Set up a water-based recreation business?

No permissions are required from Harbour Authorities to set up and operate a business within a harbour unless any new structure is built on or in the water or on the shore, extending out onto the water. If these structures are to be built, then Harbour Works Consent will be required from the Harbour Authority.

If the business will be offering tuition in a water sport, the relevant National Governing Body should be contacted for advice, information and accreditation.



Photo: Portsmouth City Council

Safety in the Solent

Primary responsibility for the safety of those taking part in water based recreation in the Solent rests with the individual, who should be adequately trained, prepared and equipped when they go out on the water. General safety advice on water based recreation in the Solent can be found on QHM's website here: <http://www.qhmportsmouth.com/regulations-safety-points> and here <http://www.qhmportsmouth.com/leisure-Intm?action=view&id=205>.

The following organisations also have a role to play in ensuring the safety of those out on the water and in responding to incidents.

Harbour Authorities

Most harbour authorities are governed by their own local legislation, which is specific to each authority and tailored to meet their individual needs. Under local legislation and regulations, each harbour authority is responsible for administering the ports and coastal waters within its jurisdiction for the main purposes of ensuring the navigation and safety of vessels using them. The harbour authority role encompasses responsibility for the navigational safety of all vessels, including the maintenance dredging of channels to advertised depths, navigation marks, hydrographic data, and control of developments which would affect hydrography by issuing harbour licences.

QHM and ABP are responsible for the safety of navigation in the Eastern and Central Solent. The Department of Transport has responsibility for the safety of navigation within the Western Solent, as this currently lies outside the jurisdiction of any of the harbour authorities.

Each harbour authority has its own byelaws which are specific to that harbour and many of these are in place to ensure the safety of navigation for all users.

All harbour authorities are expected to comply with the Port Marine Safety Code, which has been developed to improve safety in UK ports and to enable harbour authorities to manage their marine operations to nationally agreed standards. It provides the standard against which the policies, procedures and the performance of harbour authorities can be measured.

The Code requires harbour authorities to undertake a formal Safety Assessment of the hazards in the harbour, to assess the associated risks and to introduce control measures to minimise these risks to as low a level as reasonably practical. This is known as the Port's Marine Safety Management System (SMS).

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)

The MCA provides a wide range of information on its website relating to the regulations that apply to pleasure craft and it also gives safety advice. The MCA also operates Her Majesty's Coastguard service which coordinates maritime search and rescue within the UK Search and Rescue region. HM Coastguard also has its own volunteer service, the Coastguard Rescue Service, who are teams of volunteers who can respond to land based emergencies such as cliff and mud rescues or searches for missing people.

There is currently a Coastguard station for the Solent at Lee-on-the-Solent, which is also home to a Search and Rescue Helicopter. The MCA are reviewing their operations at the time of writing this report however, and it seems likely that this station will close and be replaced by services offered by one of three Maritime Operations Centres to be built around the UK. The locations for these new Centres have not yet been revealed.

RNLI

The Royal National Lifeboat Institute provides a 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service around the Solent with lifeboat stations at Lymington, Yarmouth, Calshot, Cowes, Portsmouth, Hayling Island and Bembridge. The RNLI does not currently provide a lifeguard service on any of the Solent's beaches. The RNLI also works to promote sea and beach safety.

Solent Rescue

Solent Rescue is an independent organisation based at Lepe Country Park, Exbury. It was established in 1971 initially as a beach rescue unit operated by auxiliary coastguards.

Solent Rescue has since then developed into a fully operational lifeboat station, which operates under the direct control of HM Coastguard and is responsible for approximately 33 square miles of the central and western Solent.

Incidents involving recreational craft

As the Solent is such a busy stretch of water, it is unsurprising that incidents occur fairly frequently, but finding data on safety incidents involving recreational craft for the Solent as a whole has not been possible. Harbour Authorities keep a log of incidents that happen within their jurisdiction but these are not, as yet, collated into a central database (see section on WAID below). The MCA were also unable to give figures for the Solent or for recreational craft in particular.

ABP's incident statistics indicate the growing number, year-on-year, of close quarters situations between recreational vessels, predominantly (but not exclusively) under sail, and large commercial vessels transiting the Central Solent and Southampton Water. The incidences suggest an apparent lack of knowledge of the Port of Southampton's regulations, relevant in particular to 'The Precautionary Area' and 'Moving Prohibited Zones'.¹⁰ MCA national statistics indicate a year-on-year increase in the number of incidents involving kitesurfers – no doubt linked to the rapid increase in participation.

Reporting Requirements in the event of an incident

An "incident" can range from a major accident (collision, sinking, explosion) to a minor event (speeding, bad behaviour, near miss). Harbour Authorities in the Solent encourage recreational users to report incidents so that problems can be monitored, and perpetrators brought to account where possible. The websites of many of the Harbour Authorities contain forms to complete, which can then be faxed or emailed to the relevant authority. A copy of this report should also be sent to the Hampshire Constabulary Marine Unit on 023 8023 6733. All serious accidents must be reported to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch.

The MAIB

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) examines and investigates all types of marine accidents to or on board UK vessels worldwide, and other vessels in UK territorial waters. As far as the MAIB is concerned, the sole objective of investigating an accident is to determine its circumstances and causes, with the aim of improving the safety of life at sea and the avoidance of accidents in the future. The MAIB does not seek to apportion liability or blame, nor does it enforce laws or carry out prosecutions.

Accidents, including major injuries, must be reported to the MAIB by the quickest possible means. This is so they can be investigated immediately, before vital evidence decays, is removed or is lost. Serious injuries must be investigated by the vessel's skipper, and the findings reported to the MAIB within 14 days. Hazardous incidents (otherwise known as a "near miss") don't have to be reported, but the MAIB encourages skippers to report them. Hazardous incidents often teach lessons that are every bit as relevant as those arising from accidents.

The MAIB has a 24 hour dedicated reporting line: 023 8023 2527.

Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP)

The aim of CHIRP is to contribute to the enhancement of maritime safety in the UK, by providing a totally independent, confidential (not anonymous) reporting system for all individuals employed in or associated with the maritime industry.

CHIRP welcomes safety-related reports from people in the maritime sector, including the shipping industry, fishing industry and leisure users.

¹⁰ http://www.cowesonline.com/zonexml/story?story_id=6717;cp=0.

Reporters' identities are kept confidential. Personal details are not retained and are returned to the reporter or destroyed on closure of their report. The information provided is made available, with the approval of the reporter to those who can take action to remedy the problem. Important information gained through reports is also made as widely as possible with the aim of improving safety standards.

More information, including details of how to make a report, can be found at www.chirp.co.uk

The Water Incident Database (WAID)

WAID is a service developed by the National Water Safety Forum to bring together water-related incident data from a wide range of sources within the UK search and rescue region. Its key aims are to:

- Provide insights into levels of risk enabling meaningful comparisons with activities outside the water sector, and the determination of risk acceptability.
- Supersede the uncoordinated efforts of organisations trying to establish national trends based on limited data of uncertain quality.
- Produce much better quality evidence.
- Maximise value and minimise aggregate cost of data collection.
- WAID was launched in November 2009 and data and reports are available from mid 2011.

Resources

Harbour Authorities

- Associated British Ports (Southampton) - <http://www.southamptonvts.co.uk/index.asp>
- Beaulieu River - <http://www.bucklershard.co.uk/bucklershard/beaulieuriver>
- Bembridge Harbour - <http://www.bembridgeharbour.co.uk/>
- Chichester Harbour Conservancy - <http://www.conservancy.co.uk/>
- Cowes Harbour Commissioners - <http://www.cowesharbourcommission.co.uk/>
- River Hamble Harbour Authority - <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour>
- Keyhaven- <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5200>
- Langstone Harbour Office - <http://www.langstoneharbour.org.uk/>
- Lymington Harbour Commissioners - <http://www.lymingtonharbour.co.uk/>
- Queen's Harbour Master, Portsmouth - <http://www.qhmpportsmouth.com/>
- Ryde Harbour - <http://www.rydeharbour.co.uk/>
- Yarmouth Harbour - <http://www.yarmouth-harbour.co.uk/>

Local Authorities – Recreation

- Hampshire County Council - <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/rh>
- New Forest District Council - <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4934>
- New Forest National Park Authority - <http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/>
- Southampton City Council - <http://www.southampton.gov.uk/s-leisure/>
- Eastleigh Borough Council - <http://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture.aspx>
- Fareham Borough Council - <http://www.fareham.gov.uk/council/departments/leisure/>
- Gosport Borough Council - <http://www.gosport.gov.uk/>
- Portsmouth City Council - <http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/36.html>

- Havant Borough Council - <http://www.havant.gov.uk/havant-7987>
- West Sussex County Council - www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure1.aspx
- Chichester District Council - www.chichester.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=7441
- Isle of Wight Council - www.iwight.com/living_here/leisure/harbours/

Local Authorities – Planning

- Hampshire County Council - www3.hants.gov.uk/planning.htm
- New Forest District Council - www.newforest.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=83
- New forest National Park Authority – www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/planning.html
- Southampton City Council - www.southampton.gov.uk/s-environment/planning/
- Eastleigh Borough Council - www.eastleigh.gov.uk/planning--building-control/planning-policy-and-design.aspx
- Fareham Borough Council - www.fareham.gov.uk/council/departments/planning/policyandstrategy.aspx
- Gosport Borough Council - www.gosport.gov.uk/sections/your-council/council-services/planning-section/
- Portsmouth City Council – www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/30.html
- Havant Borough Council - www.havant.gov.uk/havant-3877
- West Sussex County Council - www.westsussex.gov.uk/living/planning1.aspx
- Chichester District Council - www.chichester.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5080
- Isle of Wight Council - www.iwight.com/living_here/planning/planning_policy/

National Governing Bodies

- Royal Yachting Association – www.rya.org.uk
- British Canoe Union – www.bcu.org.uk
- British Waterski & Wakeboard – www.britishwaterski.co.uk
- British Sub-Aqua Club – www.bsac.com
- British Rowing – www.britishrowing.org
- British Kitesurfing Association – www.britishkitesurfingassociation.co.uk
- Angling Trust - www.anglingtrust.net
- Outdoor Activity Centres
- Calshot Activity Centre - www.hants.gov.uk/calshot
- Portsmouth Watersports Centre - <http://www.portsmouthwatersports.com/>
- Southampton Water Activities Centre - www.swac.co.uk

Environmental and Conservation Organisations

- Natural England - www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/south_east
- RSPB – www.rspb.org.uk
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust – www.hwt.org.uk
- Environment Agency – <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/recreation/default.aspx>

Other

- Maritime and Coastguard Agency - www.mcga.gov.uk
- British Marine Federation – www.britishmarine.co.uk