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Solent Freeport

The UK Government is establishing Freeports around the UK. The bidding process for English ports closed in February 2021 with the successful bids, including the Solent Freeport, announced in the Spring. A Freeport is an area that is exempt from customs duties and tariffs to enable added-value processes to take place. Duty is only paid on goods upon leaving the Freeport area as a finished product and entering the UK market; no payment is due if goods are re-exported.

The UK Freeport model also encompasses a broad set of measures to stimulate economic activity, encourage the growth of certain industries, create jobs and have a regenerative effect on ports' local communities; it includes incentives relating to planning, tax, customs and innovation. Freeports are expected to launch in England in the latter half of 2021.

The Solent LEP submitted the Solent Freeport bid to government on behalf of a coalition of businesses, local authorities and other partner organisations. It estimates that Freeport status would help create more than 50,000 jobs and attract £2 billion in extra investment into the region.

Geographically the Solent Freeport area covers most of the Solent; it encompasses the New Forest waterside, Southampton, Portsmouth, the north coast of the Isle of Wight and most of the Solent's smaller harbours.

One proposal is for a dedicated Solent Freeport Green Growth Institute (SFGGI), to provide a centre of excellence in green skills and jobs created through environmental innovation.

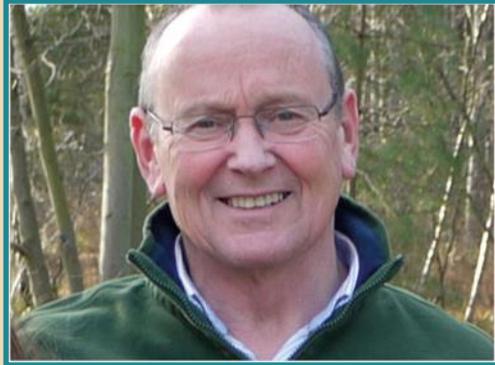


Find out more at: [Solent FreePort](https://www.solentfreeport.org).

Solent Freeport Map, © Solent LEP

News from the Forum

Chairman's Column



Peter Barham

I have been Chair of Solent Forum for a number of years, and throughout that time it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with Karen and Kate, and to meet and work with the people and organisations who all help to make the Solent Forum such a success. The testimonials in this 50th newsletter are clear evidence of the success and outcomes of all that work and the breadth of issues covered. It demonstrates why coastal fora, such as Solent Forum, are so important in today's world, where we need to manage things in collaborative ways looking for gains in all aspects of living and working in coastal areas.

Solent Forum is held in the highest esteem by all of us in the country who work with coastal issues and communities. Over the years it has pioneered many innovations to improve the way that coastal communities can work together and deliver real improvement. So, I congratulate all those who have been, and still are, involved with the Forum and as this edition of the newsletter shows, a lot is still going on and a lot more is still to be done.

For example, I am struck by the recent Seabin installation as part of the Hampshire and IoW Wildlife Trust's Secrets of the Solent project. In addition to all the other work they do, implementing such innovations makes a real difference to improving our environment and create a better place to live.

I am also impressed by the Maritime UK Solent Plan which not only looks at the way that businesses can promote sustainable development in the area, but also recognises that the environment and working with Blue Carbon is an essential part of future planning.

While we are looking at the future, we also know that biodiversity net gain will become a legal duty for all development. This will help us to think about how we can restore marine and coastal environments as well continuing to maintain and protect them.

Important in this will be the development of environmental targets which, through the Environment Bill, will become a statutory duty for all of us.

At the same time Government will be looking at whether we have the right targets for Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and what needs to be done to meet these. The Solent abounds with MPAs and wonderful wildlife; it will be an important part of Solent Forum's role in the future to play our part in helping to both set and deliver these targets, through the time honoured approach of working together in constructive partnership. I look forward to working with you all and helping play my part.

Members Testimonials

To help us celebrate this 50th edition of Solent News we asked our members to tell us what they think of the Solent Forum. Below and overleaf are some of their responses.

It has been of great benefit and pleasure to the Environment Agency to be a member of the Solent Forum. This has enabled us to access different opportunities and resources, form strong relationships, and to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders around the coast. The Solent Marine Sites Secretariat role provides a cost effective mechanism to coordinate the implementation of cross-cutting nature conservation actions on behalf of the statutory organisations. The Forum continues to support the development and delivery of innovative partnership projects, which deliver multiple benefits for people and wildlife within the Solent, and further afield. Environment Agency.

Solent Gateway, the operator and developer of Marchwood Port, is delighted to have joined the Solent Forum recently. It will help us develop a network within the Solent region and work with others to support the development of the region economically in an environmentally and socially responsible way. Solent Gateway.

The Solent Forum has been the go-to organisation for the last 25 years, facilitating, initiating and co-creating numerous projects with marine scientists from across the region, that want to improve the health and protect the rich coastal biodiversity of our Solent area. University of Portsmouth.

Aside from the excellent services and projects it delivers directly, the Solent Forum also creates a network that has enabled the creation of many other collaborations for the benefit of the wider Solent. A one-stop shop for information, often where I hear it first, and where I can go to find someone who can tell me more. Provides the feeling of being part of a team, one which is always progressive and supportive. River Hamble Harbour Authority.

Through their integral role in bringing together all key stakeholders in the Solent, Solent Forum have helped to ensure smooth collaborative working and knowledge transfer in an open and positive forum. The Solent Marine Sites Management Scheme is also often cited as the poster example of how a management group should work, so much of which is down to the efforts of Solent Forum. Natural England.

News from the Forum

A History of Solent News

A few weeks ago, we spent a morning hunting through the archives for back copies of Solent News. We managed to go back as early as the fourth edition which was the first one professionally printed back in summer 1998. These back copies of Solent News provide a fascinating insight into both the history and development of the Forum and the issues that were affecting the Solent at the time of publication. Some interesting snippets from this edition include:

- We launched the first Solent Forum website but only half of our members had access to the internet. Maldwin Drummond was the Solent Forum Chair.
- We ran a three day conference with the National Oceanography Centre to collate the state of scientific knowledge in the Solent. This led to conference proceeding published by Elsevier Science. We have copies in the Forum Office if anyone wants a look.
- New visitor centres opened on the Isle of Wight and at Hill Head.
- The Royal Navy's Festival of the Sea took place in August.
- The Western Yar and Medina Estuary Management Plans were developed.
- The Environment Agency launched 'A Water Related Recreation Strategy for the Southern Region'.



Members Testimonials Cont...

The Solent Forum provides a unique opportunity to work with a range of partners beyond those we work directly with. The Forum provides us with an insight into how other organisations are working towards the same objectives in the Solent relevant to their own remit, allowing us to identify areas for joint working and evidence sharing. Southern IFCA.

'The Solent Forum offers Coastal Partners great opportunities to understand more about the studies, developments and news in our area, directly from peers or via the Forum website and regular email updates. It also gives us crucial time to meet and discuss projects and issues with fellow professionals.' Coastal Partners.

Although RYA South covers a considerably wider area than just the Solent, the majority of our recreational boating activity takes place in the waters of the Solent so keeping abreast of what is going on particularly on the planning and environmental front is extremely useful - indeed essential. Thank you Solent Forum for all the work that you do to help us keep our Members, Clubs & Training Centres informed. RYA South.

Solent Forum Work 2021

Over the course of 2021 we will be continuing our core work for members and we will also be undertaking small pieces of project work and supporting members with their projects. We will:

- Continue to produce our monthly e-newsletter and bi annual editions of this publication, Solent News.
- Host our next members meeting on 13 October hopefully in Portsmouth or otherwise via MS Teams.
- Progress phase 3 of the Beneficial Use of Dredgings project.
- Continue to develop and populate our three resource hubs: Building Biodiversity in the Solent, Habitat Restoration and Clean Solent Shores and Seas.
- Work with the Environment Agency on a Solent Plastics Pollution hub as a legacy output of their Preventing Plastic Pollution project.
- Publish the Solent Marine Sites Annual Management Report and progress its actions through the Natural Environment Group.

See full details in our Annual Report: [Annual Report](#).

Coastal Management

NSIPs to be covered by BNG

New Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) in England, such as future transport and energy projects, will need to provide a net gain in biodiversity (BNG) and habitats for wildlife, through an amendment made to the forthcoming Environment Bill. Responding to the Dasgupta Review on 'The Economics of Biodiversity', which was published earlier in the year, the Government agreed with the Review's central conclusion that nature, and the biodiversity that underpins it, ultimately sustains economies, livelihoods and well-being. Other key issues the government has set out in response to the Review include:

- A nature positive future in which we leave our environment in a better state than we found it and reverse biodiversity loss globally by 2030.
- Committing to protect at least thirty percent of our land and ocean by 2030.
- Legislating for a framework for setting new legally binding environmental targets.

You can follow the progress of the Environment Bill at: [Environment Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#).

England's Marine Plans Completed

The Government has adopted and published the North East, North West, South East and South West Marine Plans. The publication of these four marine plans follows the adoption of the East Marine Plan in 2014 and the South Marine Plan in 2018. This means all England's seas, an area of approximately 230,000 square kilometres, are covered by Marine Plans.

The full suite of Plans are covered by the MMO's digital system, Explore Marine Plans. Using this system you can find marine planning information for England, including data on marine licenses, environmental designations and policy information.

Access at: [Explore marine plans \(marineservices.org.uk\)](#).

The Solent is covered by the South Marine Plan. The documents are available to view at: [The South Marine plans documents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Bird Aware Advance Suite of Signage at the Coast

Even in these most interesting of times, Bird Aware Solent has been working hard across the wider Solent region to educate people about our shoreline, the birds reliant on it and how simple changes can make a big impact.

Working in partnership has always been at the forefront of the approach to its work. Invaluable opportunities for new signage and interpretation materials means the initiative now has additional coverage across the region.

Taking on-board expert training in messaging and behaviour change, the Bird Aware team now have content installed at Cams Bay, the Hill Head/Meon Shore and on the seafront at Hayling Island. More signage will also be put in place in Fishbourne on the Isle of Wight.

Further work is underway with the New Forest National Park Authority and Natural England on developing signage as part of the England Coastal Path initiative.

In conjunction with multiple landowners and Natural England, Bird Aware Solent will be involved in new research involving behavioural insights. Using nudge theory, they will be testing the effectiveness of simple visual cues on encouraging use of certain paths at key decision points on the coast. Work will start in the autumn, with Rangers monitoring progress. The team look forward to sharing the results with you next year.

On the theme of sharing, they are particularly interested in opportunities to install new signage at key points along the shoreline, could you help? If you think you can support the project and provide space please email Natalie at: natalie.hands@hants.gov.uk.



New signage at Meon Shore. © Bird Aware Solent.

Water Quality

First Seabin Installed on the Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight has received its first ever Seabin. The award-winning piece of technology is situated in East Cowes Marina. It will help tackle marine litter by removing plastic and other detritus from the aquatic environment. A Seabin is a 'litter skimmer'. It sits in the water, attached to a structure like a pontoon, and floats up and down with the tide. By drawing in and filtering water from the surface, the device catches a wide range of items from large plastic bottles to microplastics as small as 2mm. A single Seabin can collect over one tonne of litter each year, the equivalent of 50,000 plastic bottles or 40,000 drink cans.

Its installation represents a collaboration between several local organisations as part of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's marine project, Secrets of the Solent, which is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project will see several Seabins placed across the Solent, each accompanied by an information board explaining the technology and its environmental benefits.



East Cowes Seabin © Kate Gareham HIWWT

This first Seabin on the Island was generously funded by DP World Southampton, it will be maintained by national boating business, boatfolk, which operates East Cowes Marina. To learn more about the Secrets of the Solent project, please visit [Secrets of the Solent | Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust \(hiwwt.org.uk\)](https://www.secrets-of-the-solent.org.uk/).

RaNTrans - Rapid reduction of Nutrients in Transitional waters

Globally, nutrient pollution is a by product caused by a growing human population contributing to eutrophication of the aquatic environment. Challenges surrounding eutrophication and its mitigation has formed the basis of research for scientists working on the RaNTrans research project, funded by The Interreg France (Channel) England programme. It is led by the University of Portsmouth. The project brings together scientists, researchers, institutes and commercial businesses from the UK and France. It will, for the first time, test and utilise a number of approaches that could potentially form new ways to reduce and remove nutrients from transitional waters.

One of the project work streams looks to rapidly reduce algal mats, physically by boat and hand as a way to reduce the impact of eutrophication and remove the nutrients found in the algae. The four sites that this method will be tested at are in the UK and in France: The Solent, Langstone Harbour; Poole Harbour, Holes Bay; Baie des Veys, Calvados; and Ledano Mudflat, Côtes d'Armor.

Following these tests, the project team hope to use the data generated to produce a predictive, web-based model toolkit and interactive map for other organisations. This will assist end users and stakeholders to select the optimum locations and times to remove algal mats with physical removal, at other problem locations around the UK and further afield.

To find out more about this project, follow it on twitter (@ProjectRaNTrans / #RaNTransProject) or register for regular updates on the project website at: <https://rantransproject.com/>.

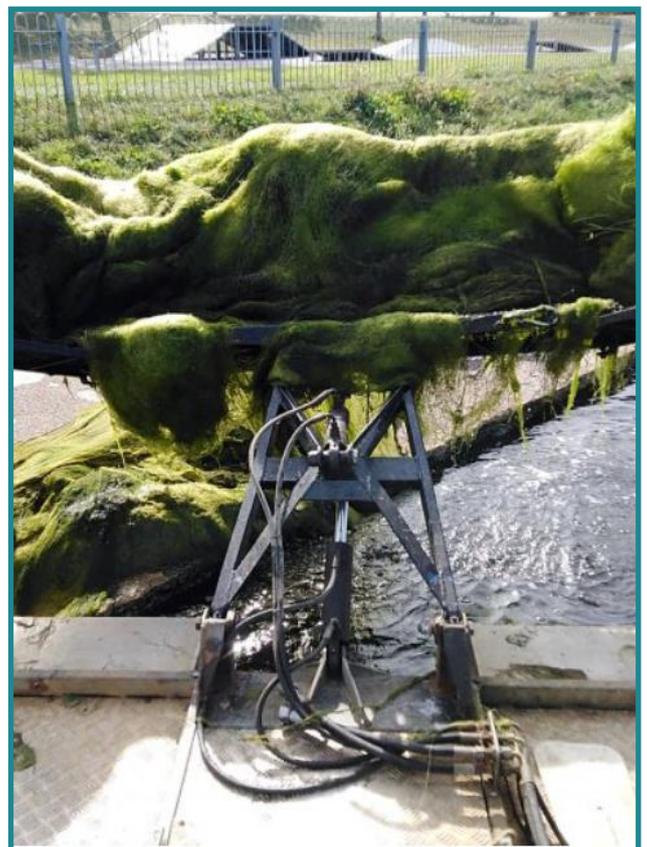


Photo courtesy of University of Portsmouth

Fisheries

Ensuring Sustainable Dredge Fisheries in the Solent

Over recent years, dredge fisheries in the Solent including those harvesting clams, cockles, oysters and scallops have been managed under a suite of measures, in order to ensure that fishing for bivalves remains compatible with the conservation objectives of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

The implementation of the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw (2016) introduced a number of areas closed to bottom towed fishing gear in the Solent. It introduced seasonal restrictions relevant to the use of shellfish dredge in specified areas across the Solent. The combination of spatial and temporal management was designed to protect particularly sensitive habitats, and ensure that fishing activities remain compatible with the conservation objectives of various MPAs.

When developing management measures, Southern IFCA consult with the fishing industry and any other interested parties. This provides an opportunity for active fishers to contribute their knowledge, insight and commitment to ensure sustainable dredge fisheries practice.

This approach has been recently encapsulated when Southern IFCA worked with fishers to explore management opportunities to support a developing and sustainable Solent scallop fishery. This detailed consultation has led to the recent implementation of the Solent Scallop Code of Conduct in April 2021, which has introduced a closed season and gear limitations, with the specific aim to ensure the sustainability of this emerging fishery. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, officers will be working closely with industry to monitor the effectiveness of the code as well as work in partnership to better evidence management of the fishery. In 2021 this will include a baseline scallop survey, undertaken in conjunction with members of industry to better understand the status of stocks.

Find out more on all these matters at: [Welcome To Southern IFCA : Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://southern-ifca.gov.uk).



Scallops. Photo courtesy of Southern IFCA

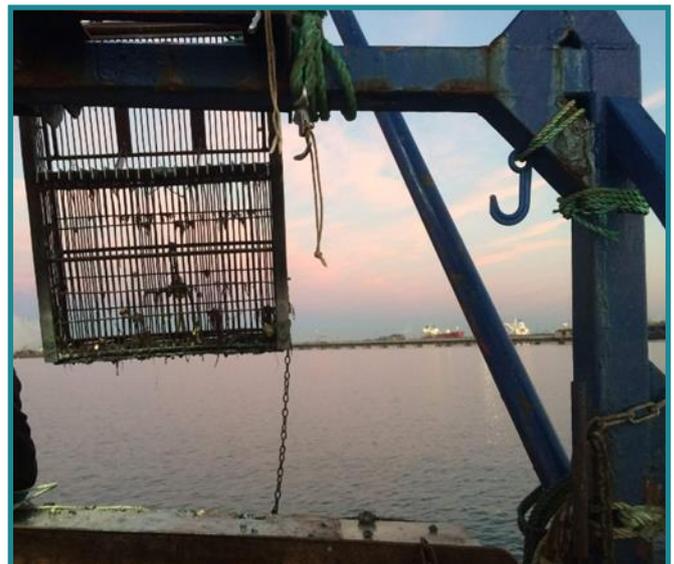
Looking Ahead: Introduction of the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw

In November 2021, Southern IFCA will continue to build upon its work with the implementation of the Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw. This will incorporate many of the protections afforded by pre-existing byelaws, whilst allowing for adaptive management of the Solent dredge fisheries through Permit Conditions. Management, introduced through this Byelaw, will be developed in conjunction with stakeholders and will be informed using the best available evidence.

This evidence base will include consideration of the annual Southern IFCA Solent Oyster Survey and Southern IFCA biannual Solent Bivalve Survey, which are published on the Southern IFCA website. Due to the expertise and experience held within the industry, and the need for partnership working, these surveys are undertaken in collaboration with the fishing industry aboard local commercial fishing vessels.

Looking to the future, Southern IFCA will continue its review of towed fishing gear measures in the Solent, progressing a spatial management review, which considers whether updates to MPA management are required. It will continue engagement with local fishers on Solent dredge fishery management through community forums and consultations.

More information on these areas of work can be found in the Fisheries Management and Policy Team Strategy 2021-2022 available on the Southern IFCA Website, see: [FMP-Team-Strategy-2021-22.pdf \(toolkitfiles.co.uk\)](https://www.toolkitfiles.co.uk/FMP-Team-Strategy-2021-22.pdf).



Clam dredge in the Solent. Photo courtesy of Southern IFCA

Marine Industries

Maritime UK Solent Economic Recovery Plan

The recently published Maritime UK Solent Economic Recovery Plan charts a course to success for the regional maritime sector; it showcases the Solent's position as a global maritime hub, supporting the UK's ambitions for global trade and green growth.

The Plan's four priorities are too:

- Position the Solent as an international gateway
- Make the Solent an innovation base
- Pioneer decarbonisation solutions
- Develop future skills

Maritime UK Solent is part of the Maritime UK family, it is the sector's leading regional cluster, championing the maritime sector in the Solent and connecting with Maritime UK and wider stakeholders including HM Government, Local Councils and academia.

The Solent is the UK's premier international gateway. It is the first port of call on the key Shanghai-Rotterdam shipping superhighway, home to the UK's biggest export port at Southampton, and the UK's most successful municipal port at Portsmouth.

The region's maritime sector acting as a catalyst for economic recovery, was demonstrated by the recent activity in the restart of the cruise industry in Southampton and Portsmouth. Southampton saw the arrival of P&O's flagship Iona, the largest cruise ship built for the UK market. Viking's newest ship, Viking Venus, sailed into Portsmouth before taking passengers aboard and MSC Cruises' new ship Virtuosa became the first UK cruise ship to set sail from a British port in more than a year.

Read the plan at: <https://solentlep.org.uk/media/3727/60410-maritime-uk-solent-recovery-plan-final-270521.pdf>.



Cunard's Three Queens, photo courtesy of Solent LEP

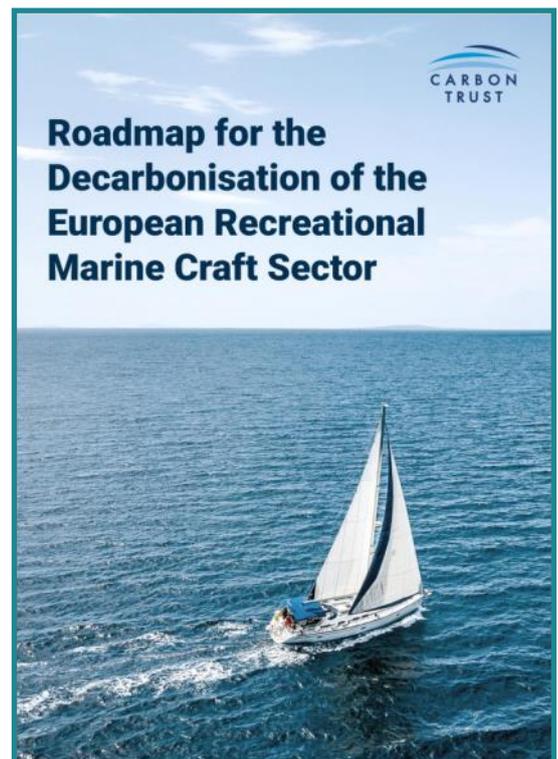
Decarbonisation of the Recreational Marine Craft Sector

The Carbon Trust has released a report on the 'Roadmap for the Decarbonisation of the European Recreational Marine Craft Sector'. The report was commissioned by the Department for Transport and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. It contains research and recommendations from the Carbon Trust to European governments and recreational craft marine businesses on how they can decarbonise this sector.

The recreational craft sector encompasses many different types of sports and leisure vessels including cruising, water sports, fishing, sailing and inland waterway crafts. The UK is one of the leading markets within the sector, particularly in relation to export sales in Europe, as well as globally. The recreational craft sector is an important contributor to the UK's economy, representing around £2.7 billion in revenue and over £1 billion in Gross Value Add (GVA).

The report notes there is no single decarbonisation solution that can be applied across all boat types. It explores different options including design optimisation, electrification and alternative fuels. The industry supply chain is dependent on consumer demand, which in turn is dependent on availability of technologies and infrastructure. To accelerate change, targeted research and development, cross industry collaboration and regulatory and financial intervention are required to support the development and uptake of technologies.

View at: [Roadmap for the Decarbonisation of the European Recreational Marine Craft Sector \(storage.googleapis.com\)](https://storage.googleapis.com/roadmap-for-the-decarbonisation-of-the-european-recreational-marine-craft-sector).



Coastal Defence

Hook Lake Coastal Management Study

Coastal Partners, as part of Fareham Borough Council, has secured £556,000 from Defra Grant in Aid to commence a two-year study focusing on the future management of Hook Lake (part of the Hook with Warsash Nature Reserve) and opportunities to create new habitat at the site.

The Hook with Warsash Nature Reserve, located at the entrance to the River Hamble, hosts a variety of coastal habitats which provide shelter for overwintering and breeding birds each year. The coastal footpaths that intertwine the reserve are very popular with the local community and visitors.

The Solent coastline is facing significant pressure from rising sea levels, more frequent and bigger storms, and increased flood and erosion risk. Important coastal habitats such as saltmarshes are slowly being lost as they are squeezed against existing sea defences.

Hook Lake has been chosen as a potential site to create new intertidal habitat, it is already managed as a nature reserve. Historical maps indicate that the site was previously a tidal inlet with Hook River forming a tributary of the Hamble Estuary. The size and topography of the site means there is space for a variety of habitats to be created ranging from mudflat and saltmarsh, brackish and land-based habitats, and for these habitats to naturally adapt to sea level rise over time. See: [Hook Lake Coastal Management Study — Coastal Partners](#).



Photo courtesy of Coastal Partners

Coastal Partners' Services

Coastal Partners, the Partnership that carries out coastal management along the Havant, Portsmouth, Gosport and Fareham coastline, is commonly recognised for their work building, improving and maintaining sea defences. Although this is the most visible area of the organisation, there are other crucial services that fall under the its banner.

One such area is the Geomatics division. When an area needs assessing the Geomatics team are on hand to use their state of the art Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's) to capture a host of different imagery such as 'point clouds'. A point cloud is simply a group of points coordinated in space that details the topography of the land. Each individual point is three dimensional and are integral to produce 3D maps and models. The Geomatics team produce point clouds using terrestrial Laser Scanners or Photogrammetry software to help plan future developments and monitor existing structures.



Geomatics team on site. © Coastal Partners

Coastal Partners Environment division are also key to the success of many projects. The team undertake Habitat Regulations, Water Framework Directive and Environmental Impact Assessments to support planning permissions, marine licences, and other consents. Alongside these, they carry out bird, bat, reptile and vegetation surveys to help guide the development of coastal management policies. The Environment team are also responsible for 'greening the grey'. They work alongside universities and experts includes the design of individually textured sea walls that allows vegetation to take hold, creating new a habitat for marine life.

The Partnership (formally known as ECSP) continues to grow its expertise in many industry sectors offering new services within the public service arena. More information is available on their website at: www.coastalpartners.org.uk.

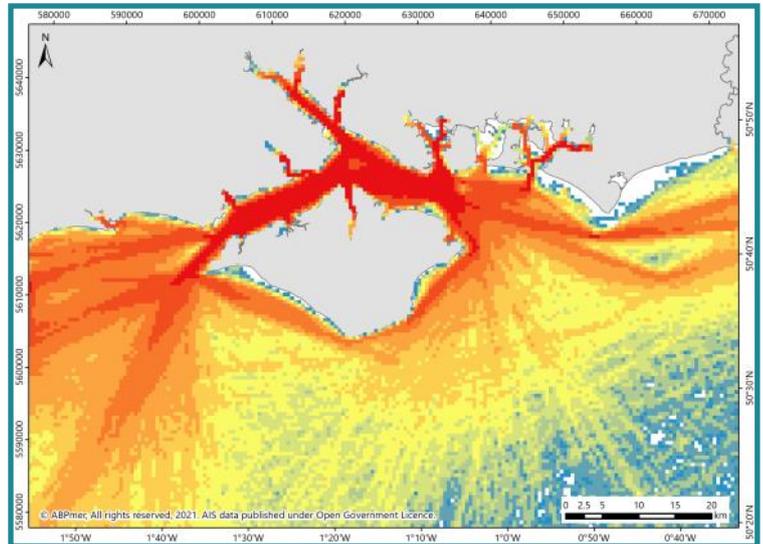
Recreation & Leisure

RYA Coastal Atlas update of Recreational Boating

The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) has commissioned ABPmer to update their digital map of Recreational Boating Intensity, held in their online UK Coastal Atlas of Recreational Boating. The Atlas is a GIS dataset of recreational boating activity around the UK. It comprises spatial data including indicators of intensity of use and general boating areas, as well as the locations of clubs, training centres and marinas.

The Atlas is an important tool for the RYA, aiding the representation of recreational boating interests. It is used to help identify and protect areas of importance to recreational boaters, to inform responses to development proposals and in discussions about navigational safety.

ABPmer will develop maps of recreational boating activity and intensity between 2015 and 2019. This will update and maintain standards for recreational boating activity in UK waters in planning and licensing applications. The update is expected to be available from the end of 2021.



An example AIS map showing recreational boating intensity in the Solent, © ABPmer, 2021

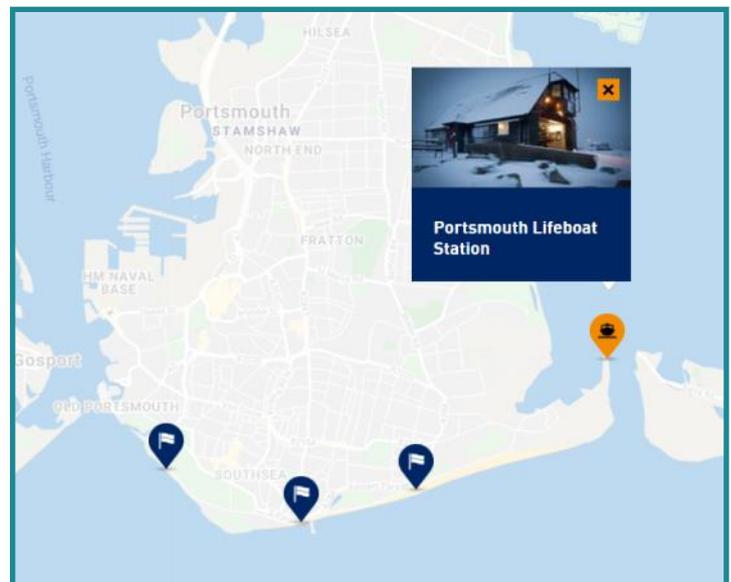
RNLI Lifeguards for 20 Years

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) has reached 20 years of delivering a lifeguard service to coastal communities and their visitors around the UK and Ireland.

Back in 2001, the charity took action when stark figures showed 200 lives were lost on UK beaches. Lifesaving clubs were already patrolling but not on the scale required, the RNLI wanted to provide a solution and established a co-ordinated rescue service. Working with lifesaving clubs and beach owners, the RNLI piloted lifeguarded beaches in southwest England saving twenty lives the first year.

It led to an official service being formed and advancement in the equipment and training available to lifeguards. Safety literature information and warning signs were also developed for beaches so visitors knew what dangers they may encounter and how to keep themselves safe.

Since 2001, RNLI lifeguards have saved 1,681 lives, aided 320,087 people through water rescue, returned lost children and delivered first aid and casualty care. They have responded to 251,436 incidents and carried out 32 million preventative actions.



Locations of RNLI lifeguarded beaches and lifeboat station, Portsmouth.

British Canoe Safety Videos and Material

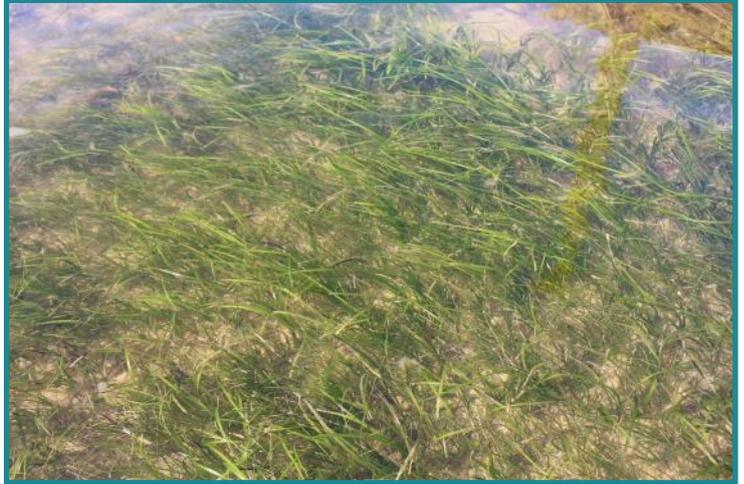
British Canoeing and Go Paddling have launched eight new safety videos and printout infographics, aimed at new paddlers. The videos tackle the more common issues paddlers face when they're brand new to the sport. Each video is accompanied by a printable sheet or checklist, to make sure they're fully prepared before they head out on the water in each situation. They cover everything from stand up paddle boarding to canoes and kayaks, getting on and off the water safely and preparing for weather, wind and tides. See: [Go Paddling](#) | [Go Canoeing](#), [Go Kayaking](#), [SUP](#) | [PaddlePoints](#) | [Tips](#).

Conservation

Seagrass Ocean Rescue: A Focus on the Solent

Seagrass Ocean Rescue is a project involving WWF-UK, Project Seagrass and Swansea University; it works with local partners in different areas across the UK to halt and reverse UK seagrass loss. Seagrass meadows are a valuable habitat they can capture carbon and provide a sediment sink, provide nursery grounds for commercially important fisheries, absorb excess nutrients and pathogens from the water column and provide a sink for microplastics. Meadows protect coasts from storms and coastal erosion.

Poor water quality, coastal development, and physical damage have contributed to the loss of up to ninety two percent of the UK's seagrass in the last century. The project target, through a series of partnerships with local to regional stakeholders, is to support the restoration of 30 kilometres squared of seagrass across the UK by 2030. It will also collaborate with other seagrass initiatives like LIFE ReMEDIES.



Solent seagrass. © Bird Aware Solent

Environmental scoping work, to facilitate future seagrass restoration, is currently being undertaken by the project team in the Solent to identify potential sites that might be suitable for restoration. This has included extensive surveys of the flowering and seed production of meadows around the Isle of Wight and the assessment of the underwater light environment. If you would like to find out more or get involved please email: Leanne@projectseagrass.org.

LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES: Solent next stop for Seagrass Planting Programme

The LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES marine conservation partnership began England's largest seagrass planting programme in April 2021. Around 16,000 seagrass seed bags and 2,200 seedling bags were deployed across almost a hectare of seabed in Plymouth Sound. The partnership is now looking to conduct similar planting work here in the Solent. A series of dives took place in June to assess the health of Solent seagrass beds and the density of flowering shoots. This data will be used to support the baseline echosounder and drop down video surveys conducted last autumn.

Seed collection dives will follow in late summer, with seeds being cared for at the bespoke ReMEDIES cultivation facility in the National Marine Aquarium, Plymouth before planting takes place during winter 2021/22. The ambition is to plant a total of four hectares in the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation, although the exact location of the planting site is still to be determined. ReMEDIES is working with Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, World Wildlife Fund, Isle of Wight Estuaries Officer and Project Seagrass to ensure seagrass restoration efforts in the Solent are coordinated.



Seagrass Surveying. © Natural England.

ReMEDIES is working to protect existing seagrass habitat by reducing pressures from recreational activities such as boating. Through its partners the Royal Yachting Association and their environmental programme with British Marine, The Green Blue, the project team are working with recreational boaters to highlight the importance of sensitive seabed habitats and advise how their boating methods, particularly anchoring and mooring, can play a role in protecting them. Advanced Mooring Systems (AMS) were installed at Yarmouth last winter, designed to have less impact on the seabed. There are plans for more to be installed in Yarmouth this year and Cowes Harbour Commissioners are currently looking at suitable AMS locations within their jurisdiction.

Find the latest news and updates on this restoration work on the ReMEDIES website at: [Restoration - Save Our Seabed](#). ReMEDIES is funded by the EU LIFE programme and led by Natural England in partnership with The Royal Yachting Association, Marine Conservation Society, Ocean Conservation Trust and Plymouth City Council/Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum.

Heritage

England's Seaside Heritage from the Air

A new Historic England book illustrates England's rich seaside heritage as few holidaymakers ever see it from the air. 'England's Seaside Heritage from the Air', written by Historic England features over 150 aerial photographs of England's best-loved seaside resorts.

The images were taken between the 1920s and the 1950s, when England's coastal destinations were nearing the peak of their popularity. The images form part of the Aerofilms Collection, held by the Historic England Archive. The book tells the story of how England's seaside resorts developed both as places of leisure and as working towns. Initially places where a few wealthy people bathed in the sea to improve their health, increasingly they became a magnet for the whole population.

The images also offer insights into the relationship between transport and resort development. The train was still the dominant means of going to the seaside in the interwar years, and the images illustrate how railway lines and stations shaped the fabric of many seaside resorts.



www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/EPW024420

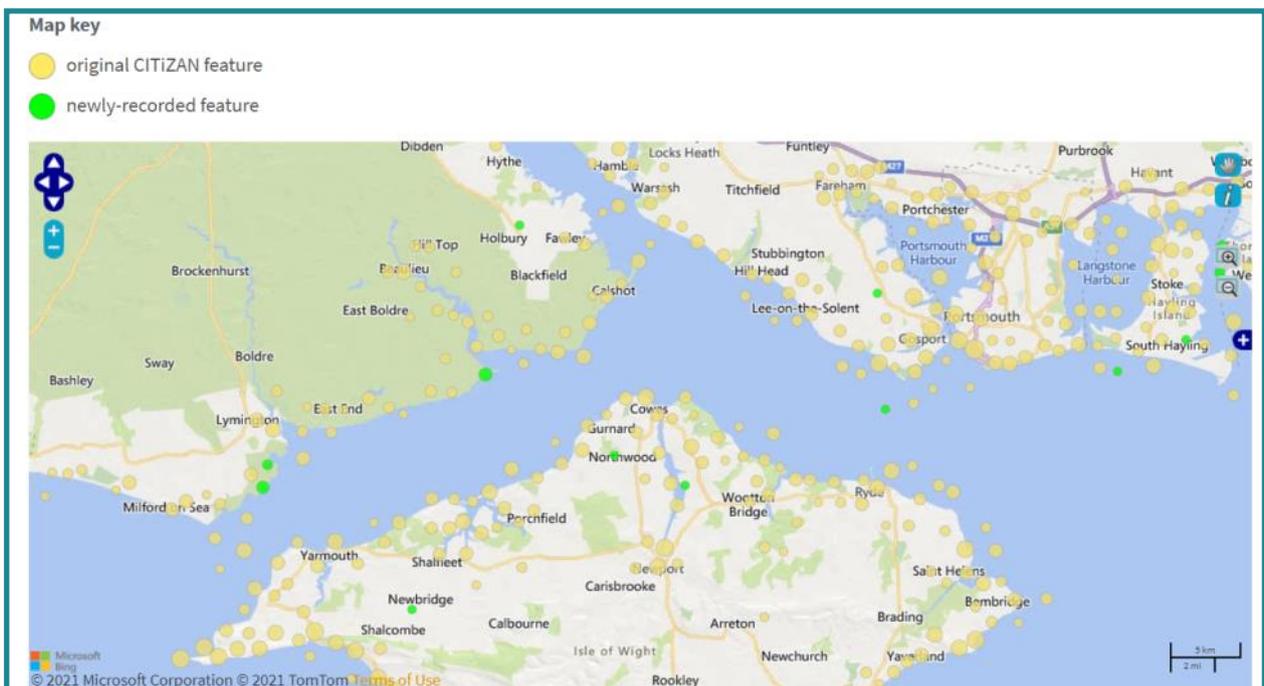
© Historic England

Lee on the Solent 1928. © Historic England

The Aerofilms Collection in the Historic England Archive includes over a million urban, suburban, rural, coastal and industrial aerial photographs of Britain. It was created by Aerofilms Ltd, a pioneering aerial survey company set up in 1919 by First World War veterans. View the photos at: [Britain From Above](https://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/).

Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network (CITiZAN) Map

CITiZAN have launched a new Reports and Research Outputs Map, which allows selected website content to be browsed geographically by site, in an accessible and engaging way. Research outputs have been mapped geographically according to their relevant sites and arranged in four distinct categories: Reports, Low Tide Trails, Digital Exhibitions and Blogs. The map will be updated as CITiZAN creates further digital content, contributing to a useful interactive tool of research and an exciting way of exploring past and current projects. Access at: [CITiZAN - CITiZAN Research Outputs & Reports Map](https://www.solentforum.org/citizan-reports-research-outputs-map/).



Harbours & Business

Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour reopens for 50th Anniversary

Lord Montagu has reopened Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour following the completion of its major £2m redevelopment, fifty years after the marina was first built as a haven for boats on the Beaulieu River.

Half a century after it was opened in 1971, Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour is now ready for the next chapter of its history. The expanded marina includes 66 new berths, including larger berths to suit vessels up to twenty metres, improved facilities and a dedicated visitor area. This helps it to keep pace with modern demands, while maintaining its natural charm which makes it one of the most desired locations on the south coast.

As one of the few privately owned rivers in the world, the custodianship of the Montagu family has protected the Beaulieu River for over four centuries; the redevelopment was undertaken in a sustainable way to protect its unique character.

Gosport-based specialist marina consultancy, Marina Projects, retained the traditional look and feel of the original 1971 marina, while updating it with the best of modern equipment and design. Fareham-based Walcon Marine reused as much of the existing infrastructure as possible. Unique to the Beaulieu River, they pioneered a new way to reuse the Greenheart timber piles, reusing the piles in their entirety where possible, or creating a new 'hybrid' pile, which combines a section of the existing timber with a lower steel encasement for the below-water-line section. This sustainable method has helped maintain the traditional charm of the marina.

The redevelopment is part of a continuing programme of improvements at the yacht harbour, which was awarded The Yacht Harbour Association's coveted Coastal Marina of the Year (for under 250 berths) trophy in 2018/19, then named runner-up in The British Yachting Awards' Marina of the Year category in 2020.



Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour. © Beaulieu Enterprises Ltd

Hampshire Waterside Strategy

Hampshire County Council is developing a transport strategy that covers all the main modes of transport in the Waterside area of the New Forest. It aims to build on the adopted Waterside Interim Transport Policy of November 2017.

The Waterside area is peninsular in nature, with the A326 being the main road connecting the 60,000 residents and businesses in Marchwood, Hythe, Dibden, Fawley and Totton with the wider Solent and UK. Up to 30,000 vehicles travel along parts of the corridor each day. The area already has nationally significant infrastructure assets that have proposals for expansion and redevelopment, alongside substantial additional plans for new development, which would also have national significance.

As the Waterside area continues to evolve, a transport strategy is needed which responds to current and future transport needs and challenges. It needs to provide and support the area's transport infrastructure to manage growth effectively at a local level, whilst providing resilient connections to the wider regional and national strategic transport networks.

In parallel, a number of funding bids and schemes are being developed for transport improvements in the Waterside area.

Marine Robotics Centre for Southampton

The Royal Navy is set to be involved in Europe's first maritime operations and training centre for robotic vehicles. Joined by Seabot XR and the UK National Oceanography Centre (NOC), the facility will future-proof training for civilian and military vessel operations.

The partners, all members of the Solent Maritime Enterprise Zone, signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to create the National Centre for Operational Excellence in Marine Robotics, based in Southampton.

The MoU will see a combined training and testing site where companies can try out their own autonomous and remote-controlled vessels, as well as tap into pioneering in-person training designed for military and civil marine operations.

Customers will have access to a remote operations centre and various surface and sub-surface vessels, to experiment with different weather and tidal conditions, vessel features and operational practicalities.

The centre of excellence will be based at NOC's two UK testing facilities in Southampton and Loch Ness, Scotland. It will be officially launched at the Marine Autonomy Technology Showcase exhibition (MATS) in Southampton, in November.

More News

ATM Street Art at Hythe Pier

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Secrets of the Solent project continues to highlight the fascinating marine life around our coast in new ways through a variety of projects. The first project to get underway is a vibrant artwork piece by street artist ATM. The striking piece, featuring a spider crab, adorns a wall space at Hythe Pier, Southampton, where it is hoped it will inspire visitors to learn more about the hidden wildlife roaming the waters beneath their feet. The Trust, which commissioned the mural, held an online poll for the local community to choose their favourite marine species from six options, with the spider crab being the overwhelming winner.

This is ATM's second painting for the Trust, with the former, his first-ever marine portrait, being a huge cuttlefish mural outside Portsmouth Museum and Art Gallery. Later in the summer ATM will be painting murals in five other locations, and the Trust is looking forward to sharing the results with the public soon. Each piece will feature a different marine species.



Crustaceans, Habitat and Sediment Movement (CHASM)

The Selsey fishing grounds have traditionally been well managed and productive. However, huge changes in the fishing ground have been seen in recent years. Local observers from the fishing industry feel there has been more change in the last 10 years than in the previous 100 years.

Key observations are that crab and lobster catches in the Selsey area have been greatly reduced, particularly lobster. However the amount of sediment on the seabed and rocks locally has increased to the extent that water depth in the mooring grounds of the Selsey fleet has been greatly reduced.

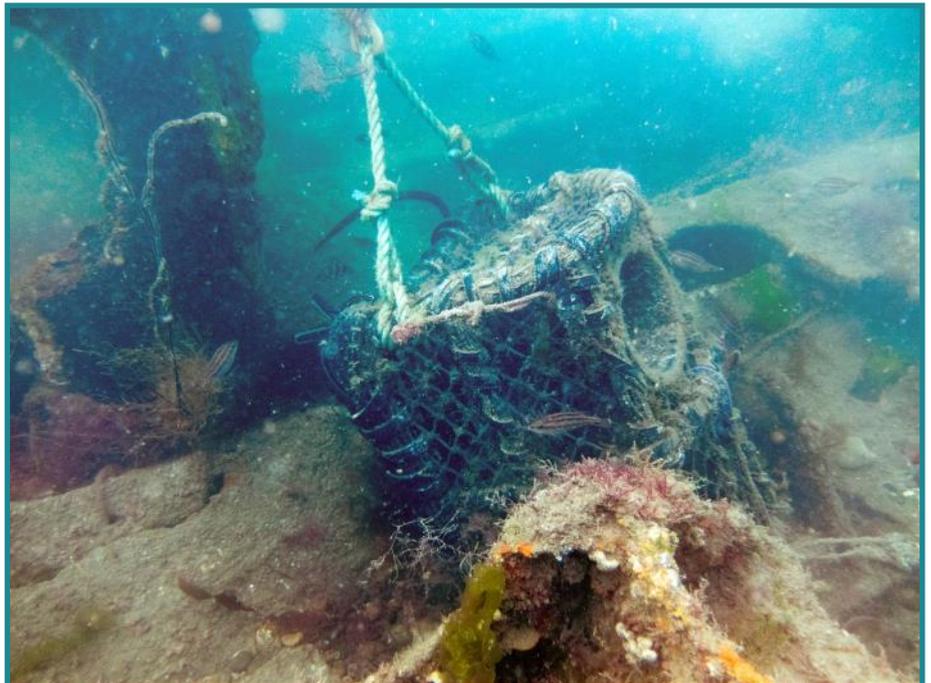
If the fishing ground has changed there is a need to gain a good understanding of the nearshore area, and to understand the significance of the changes to the fishing industry from an economic and community perspective. To investigate the issues the Chichester District Council led project group

CHASM (Crustaceans, Habitat And Sediment Movement) met in January 2020 to discuss what the pilot year of a project could look like. Participants were asked to consider how to shed light on the problems and to recommend next steps.

Despite lockdown, the group continued to meet online to push the project forward. The key participants in these early stages were Selsey fishermen, Channel Coast Observatory, Brighton University, Chichester District Council, and diving organisations Southsea BSAC and Mulberry-ME.

Researchers from Brighton University analysed sediment movement in and around Medmerry. Channel Coast Observatory investigated information on coastal change held in reports, data sets and satellite imagery. Divers gathered sediment samples. Fishermen's observations were captured in interviews. Cefas analysed crabs and lobsters, and The National Lobster Hatchery gave their views too.

Initial findings are due to be published in a report by Channel Coastal Observatory this summer while the project team consider how to take things forward.



Landing Craft, Bracklesham Bay. © Claire Read

More News

Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN)

A new initiative is working to focus on protecting the habitats in Chichester Harbour and create new wildlife recovery areas. Chichester Harbour is one of the most important sites for wildlife in the whole of the United Kingdom. However, like many similar habitats it's under great pressure from climate change and other human pressures, both of which lead to a loss of biodiversity.

Recent studies by Natural England highlight a sixty percent decline in saltmarsh since 1946 due to coastal squeeze from sea defences, sea level rise, and excess nitrates. Coastal habitats are not only important for wildlife and biodiversity but also for the ecosystem services they provide; they can store carbon, nitrates and phosphorus, thereby helping to mitigate against climate change.

A recent study by the universities of Portsmouth and Plymouth has put a value on the 'ecosystem services' provided by saltmarsh, seagrass and oysters across the Solent area. The cost of otherwise removing and holding equal amounts of carbon, nitrates and phosphorous by human generated alternatives would be £1.1 billion pounds per annum across the Solent. The coastal habitat in Chichester Harbour is the single largest contributor in the Solent to this ecosystem service.

To ensure the best outcomes for Chichester Harbour, the Conservancy have formed a steering group with partners. Known as Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN) it will focus on priority habitats such as saltmarsh, seagrass, and oysters, as these are at the biggest risk of further loss, have a high natural capital value, and provide an efficient carbon store.



Photo courtesy of Chichester Harbour Conservancy

Litter Survey Leads to roll-out of new Litter Busting Interventions

A scientifically robust litter survey took place over May half term across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole using drone technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

BCP Council, environmental charity Hubbub and McDonald's partnered to map litter patterns using drone technology and AI. Early data from the surveys collected showed that over 123,000 items were identified over the seven days of May half term, up from 22,266 from the March survey, a 454 per cent monthly increase.

The top three items littered in terms of number were cigarettes (47,467), paper such as receipts and napkins (32,678) and plastic fragments (6,578). More food sachets (1,677) were identified than plastic bottles (1,530). Sachets are a Covid-related trend, PPE, including facemasks, only made up 0.7 per cent of total litter.

In a bid to crackdown on litter, litter-busting interventions are being launched in key hotspot areas to encourage people to dispose of their rubbish. These include glow in the dark bins and the world's first disco bin that lights up and plays music, to bins where you can vote with your rubbish. A Catch of the Day spoof fishmonger stall (see image) will pop up at weekends with trays of litter items. Signage will lead people to the next nearest bin if one is full and 'ballot bins' will tackle cigarette butts. These are customisable bespoke ashtray bins.



Catch of the day stall

For more information email: hello@hubbub.org.uk.

News & Snippets

National Marine Heritage Record

Historic England is currently developing the National Marine Heritage Record (NMHER). This will be a dynamic dataset for everyone to search for records on marine heritage. It will inform responses to marine planning and contribute to assessments of significance for heritage assets under consideration for statutory protection. Researchers can also consult it for thematic studies to inform conservation.

Building on Historic England's existing marine data, the NMHER will relate to heritage assets that lie between mean high water and the 200 nautical mile sea limit, as well as the tidal extent (at Mean High Water spring tides) of rivers, estuaries and creeks, i.e. the operational extent in England of the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) inshore and offshore remits as laid out under the terms of the 2009 Marine and Coastal Access Act.

Historic England will work with partners, such as Local Planning Authorities, to future proof the NMHER as much as is feasible. It will also work with other national partners, especially the MMO and the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO), to hold all appropriate heritage data on the English Offshore (12-200 nautical mile) area.

IoW Seagrass Surveys

In 2020, Natural England commissioned the Environment Agency to undertake a survey to monitor the extent and density of seagrass beds at sites on the Isle of Wight.

A drop-camera and single beam echosounder survey of subtidal seagrass beds took place in September 2020. Photos were analysed for percentage cover of *Zostera marina*, macroalgae, non-native species and anthropogenic impacts such as litter.

Headline findings were:

- The Osborne Bay bed was dense covering 164.7ha.
- The River Medina seagrass bed was approximately 12ha in size.
- There was 0.13ha north of Cowes.
- At Gurnard Bay the bed measured approximately 0.93ha.

Read at: [LIFE Recreation - ReMEDIES River Medina and Osborne Bay, Isle of Wight Subtidal Seagrass Surveys 2020 - NECR372 \(nepubprod.appspot.com\)](https://www.nepubprod.appspot.com/NECR372).

Snippets

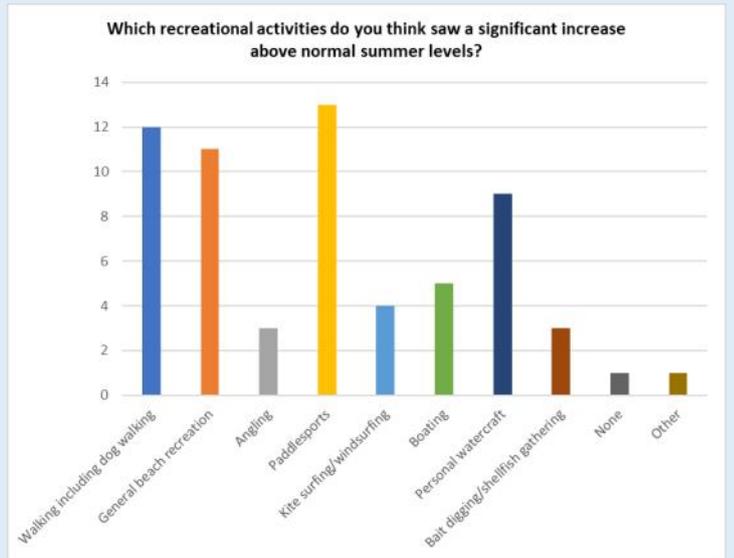
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will, from 2022, help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need, including rural and coastal communities, and for people who face labour market barriers.
- National Marine Week takes place from Saturday July 24th to Sunday 8th August and the Hants and Wight Wildlife Trust will celebrate with the premiere of a new film highlighting the amazing people and wildlife that share the Solent's coastline and waters.
- In 2021, The Crown Estate concluded the competitive tender process of Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4, identifying six potential new offshore wind projects in England and Wales. These projects (which are now progressing to an environmental assessment known as Plan-Level HRA) could deliver a further 8 GW of offshore wind power.
- As a direct result of covid and the pandemic, Bembridge Harbour decided in early Summer 2020 to change a habit of a lifetime and did away with rafting on its visitor pontoon. A complete installation of finger berths was carried out so no boat crews have to clamber over adjacent boats; all boats moor alongside a pontoon berth. A huge change in customer service and quality of berthing.
- Associated British Ports has taken delivery of a new £5 million airbridge for the new Horizon Cruise Terminal. The 235 tonne airbridge has been custom built for the Port of Southampton's newest terminal. Providing ship to shore access for cruise vessels calling in Southampton, the airbridge is designed to adjust automatically with the tide.
- Working with city residents, Tipner West has been renamed as Lennox Point. Residents in focus groups chose to name the site after Charles Lennox, Master General of the Board of Ordnance, who was responsible for the fortification and protection of the south coast.
- The Solent Maritime Enterprise Zone (Solent MEZ), established December 2019, is an umbrella organisation comprising a consortium of the Royal Navy, industry (including small and medium sized enterprises), government and academia working collaboratively in creating a centre of excellence for maritime research, innovation, education, skills and training.
- The Island Sailing Club put on a spectacular 90th anniversary party for the 2021 Round the Island Race with a huge fleet of over 1200 boats. Local Cowes boat Eeyore, an Alacrity 18 Bilge Keel, secured back-to-back overall victories and retained the prestigious Gold Roman Bowl which she has held since the 2019 race.

Solent News

SEMS Questionnaire on the Impacts of Visitors to the Coast in Summer 2020

In spring 2021, the Solent Forum asked the Solent's Relevant Authorities, who are members of the Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) Management Scheme, to undertake a one off snapshot survey about if and how recreational activities in the Solent impacted on designated sites over summer 2020. The Solent Forum carried out the survey in its role as the SEMS Secretariat. The chart show which activities saw the biggest increases; paddlesports, walking (including dog walking) and general beach recreation all proved popular.

Concerns were raised on potential impacts such as the trampling of fragile habitats, litter, mudflat and bird disturbance. The Survey report also identifies best practice and measures to try and manage visitor numbers, see: [Covid Snapshot Survey summer2020 Report.pdf](#). (solentems.org.uk).



The Solent Forum

Since 1992, the Solent Forum has provided a platform to deliver Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Solent sub-region of the southeast. It operates at a strategic coastal management level, providing a network for closer working relationships, information dissemination and discussion of topical coastal issues. The Solent Forum members meet twice a year and will next meet on 13 October 2021.

Solent News is prepared and edited by the Solent Forum Officers. It is a biannual publication and issue 51 will be produced in winter 2021/22. To find out more about the publication, how to submit articles or be included on the mailing list, please visit http://www.solentforum.org/publications/solent_news/.

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The following organisations steer the work of the Solent Forum.

