

# Solent News

The newsletter of the Solent Forum

Issue 39: Winter 2015/16

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*Aerial view of East Head, West Sussex. Credit National Trust images/John Miller*

## Mapping our Shores

In 1965, concerned about the impact of development along the coast of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the National Trust launched the fundraising campaign 'Neptune' to help raise money to buy and protect the most 'pristine' stretches from the threat of development. In order to understand which areas were most at risk, the Trust commissioned the University of Reading to produce a ground-breaking land use survey. Students and staff walked the whole coastline mapping land use classes onto maps.

Now, half a century later, the campaign has raised £65 million, helping the National Trust to look after a total of 775 miles. Last year it commissioned geographers from the University of Leicester to determine the location and nature of land use change along the coast.

The 'Mapping our Shores report', which can be found on the National Trust website, shows that three quarters of the coast of England, Wales and Northern Ireland remains undeveloped, providing an important resource for people and nature. Of the 3,342 miles of coastline identified by the 1965 survey as 'pristine' and in need of protection, ninety-four per cent of this is either owned by the Trust, other like-minded landowners or has some form of statutory protection. The report also found:

- A forty-two percent increase in urban and built-up land, in England and Wales this was generally confined to infill in coastal settlements, with development into open countryside limited by development control.
- A thirty-nine percent increase in industrial areas, with sites moving geographically as the type of industry has changed.
- Land under defence use has decreased by twenty-four percent, showing a shift from the post-war era of 1965.

It is hoped that the findings can facilitate important conversations in order to maintain a sustainable and beautiful coast for the next 50 years. All of the land use maps can be explored at: <http://goo.gl/GexGGY>.

# News from the Forum

## Chairman's Column



**Peter Barham**

This is a testing time for anyone associated with marine management. The government are committed to removing the deficit and one way of doing this is to look for continuous cuts in funding across many areas. This has included Defra and all the Defra agencies and this will carry on for the next four years at least. In addition, it looks like the government will be reviewing the way all these bodies deliver their work and we may see major changes in the near future with organisational change and upheaval. While this is clearly going to put constraints on to the work that organisations like the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) deliver, it will also potentially create difficulties in how they work with others. This seems to contrast with the government's own intention that there should be more partnership working, and I look forward to hearing how these issues will be addressed when the government examines the way that marine management is structured, funded and delivered.

Like so much activity at the coast here and elsewhere in the UK, the Solent Forum is based on constructive working partnerships, not just with public bodies but also with industry and others. We have just developed and agreed a five year business plan with members, and this acknowledges that the Forum needs to grow and that its members need to be more diverse. Funding for the Forum comes from a range of sources and we will continue to look for new members, but without the support of public bodies the Forum would be in a very difficult position to continue to do the excellent work it does in developing and growing partnerships for action in the Solent area. The Forum has been running for nearly 25 years and, in

2017, we will be celebrating that fact not only by looking forward but also by looking back at what the Forum has achieved by working with others and assisting public bodies in carrying out their work. Consequently, we hope that the government continues to ensure real commitment to promoting partnerships, through supporting whichever organisations are responsible for marine management after the reviews and changes have been made.

A real example of the need for partnership arises from the South Coast Marine Plans which the MMO are finalising. This is an important statutory document which sets out how the government's Marine Policy Statement for the South Coast will be achieved. Many people will be involved in the delivery of the Plan, and many more will need help in understanding how it can be used to plan and deliver activity which benefits the Solent area. The MMO cannot do this on their own, and it is already understood by them that organisations such as the Solent Forum could be very helpful in disseminating the Plan, and facilitate working with people to enable them to understand how the Plan can help.

We are meeting the local MMO staff in January to investigate how we can do this, and we will be talking to you about this and seeking your suggestions at forthcoming Solent Forum meetings. We think that this will be a very valuable way in which the Solent Forum can help members and others as well as the MMO in delivering the Plan. However, it is dependent on the Forum being able to do the work and for the MMO to be able to make clear how they envisage the Plan working; both of which require money and resources. It is going to be a very interesting time in 2016 and we will continue to work positively and constructively for the Solent, but we will need to work better and to work together to ensure that this happens.

## NEG Recreation Focus Group

One of the issues that has been raised in the Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) annual monitoring by the relevant authorities, is the potential impact of watersports on the SEMS, particularly by disturbing birds. The SEMS Management Group asked the Solent Forum's Natural Environment Group (NEG) to look at this issue in more detail. A small group of NEG members from a range of sectors formed a recreation focus group (RFG) and met for the first time in December 2015 to undertake this task.

The Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy has carried out detailed work over the last few years on the impacts of land based recreation on over-wintering waders and wildfowl, but to date this work has not looked at the impacts from water based recreation. The RFG agreed that their work would cover paddlesports, kite and wind surfing, personal watercraft, paramotors and small shallow draft boats.

The RFG decided that efforts would be best focused by working with different water sports groups to provide a central educational message that is common to all SEMS sites, on how to avoid disturbing birds when out enjoying the water. This message would be sent out to all the Solent's relevant authorities for them to use in their online media, publications and signage.

The group also appreciate that there is much good practice already in existence from recreational bodies and user groups, and that it would collate and disseminate this information and help the producers to publicise it throughout the Solent. Please contact the Forum Office for more details on the group at [info@solentforum.org](mailto:info@solentforum.org).

# Coastal News

## New Coastal Community Team for the Manhood Peninsula

A new coastal community team, the Peninsula Coastal Economy Team, will be created in the Manhood Peninsula to help boost the local economy, following a successful bid to the government for £10,000. The new coastal team will be affiliated to the existing Manhood Peninsula Partnership and will include Chichester District Council, Selsey Town Council, East Wittering and Bracklesham Town Council and Selsey Business Partnership, among others. The government has provided more than £1 million to fund 104 Coastal Community Teams, on top of 12 existing pilots, to help bring jobs, growth and prosperity back to our beach towns and cities. The teams, bringing together local business, councils and people, will help coordinate regeneration projects in their area and get the chance to shape the next wave of the successful Coastal Communities Fund, announced in the recent Budget. Manhood Peninsula Partnership members Chichester District Council and Selsey Town Council have bid for this money to help fund two projects in Selsey and East Wittering and Bracklesham.

The first is a feasibility study to investigate the costs and benefits of constructing a small harbour or haven in Selsey. The aims are to generate benefits for the town, protection for the fisheries, and economic opportunities for the visitor economy across the peninsula. In December 2015, a technical workshop for regulators was held by Haskoning in Selsey. Attendees discussed options and 'showstoppers' to be considered in the context of three options for a small haven. Those who took part included Natural England, Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation, Crown Estates, Selsey Fishermen's Association, Coastal Engineers from Chichester and Arun DCs, Chichester District Council in its role as Planning Authority, and Selsey Town Council. The final report is due early in 2016.

The second project is to commission a report on the demographics and employment in Selsey, East Wittering and Bracklesham. This will look at the quality of employment opportunities, education and training. It will also look at the impact of seasonality and how this links to issues creating barriers to work. The research is intended to benefit local businesses and those involved in tourism on the peninsula.



*Cakeham Estate. Photo courtesy of the Manhood Peninsula Partnership*

## Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy

Considerable progress was made during 2015 on implementing the Interim Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy, which seeks to mitigate the impact on over-wintering waders and wildfowl of the additional recreational pressures which will arise from the new housing planned around the Solent. A team of coastal rangers started work in December 2015 to help people to better understand the over-wintering birds and their vulnerability, with the aim of reducing bird disturbance. For this winter the ranger team is three-strong, but in 2016 funding should be available for a larger team.

Dogs are responsible for a disproportionate amount of the bird disturbance and work has started on identifying initiatives which will be effective in encouraging responsible dog walking. Tendering is currently underway for a consultant who will 'market test' the proposed initiatives, so that when rolled out they are broadly acceptable to dog walkers and are likely to secure the desired behavioural change. The aim is to have the resulting printed literature and/or electronic media ready for next winter.

The Strategy is being implemented by the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership which comprises the area's fifteen local authorities, Natural England, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and Chichester Harbour Conservancy. Developer contributions from new housing schemes are providing the funding for the Partnership's work. The Partnership published its inaugural Annual Report in October 2015. These annual reports will record the implementation of the mitigation measures, but it is also necessary to monitor the effectiveness of them. To maximise the effectiveness of the survey work, the Partnership has commissioned consultants Footprint Ecology to design a monitoring system and their recommendations will be considered by the Partnership in early 2016.

The Partnership aims to finalise a definitive mitigation strategy by the end of 2017. The Annual Report and further information about the Strategy and Partnership can be seen at: <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/community-and-environment/environment/solent-recreation-mitigation-strategy.aspx>.

# Coastal Management

## Capturing our Coast



Capturing our Coast (CoCoast) is a new Heritage Lottery funded project, which will train members of the public to collect important scientific data from shores around the country. The University of Portsmouth is one of the six academic hubs coordinating CoCoast and will be recruiting and training volunteers from January 2016. Dr Watson based at the Institute of Marine Sciences is leading this part of the project.

These volunteers will be able to go out to their local coast and collect data with a focus on species that interest them. All data collected will be collated and used by the project scientists to help investigate how species distributions are affected by climate change and understand the impacts of non-native species. Volunteers are also able to take

part in advanced training courses, attend science talks and get involved in targeted experimental and laboratory-based work as the project progresses. This is a unique opportunity to learn from marine scientists and to collect data which will help answer some of the biggest questions in marine science and ultimately inform UK policy.

The Portsmouth hub covers an area of coast from Dorset to Kent but there will be plenty of study sites in the Solent and training courses will take place in Portsmouth and on the Isle of Wight, in addition to Kimmeridge in Dorset and Seven Sisters Country Park in Sussex. You can find more information about the project on the project website (<http://www.capturingourcoast.co.uk/>) or on the regional Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/CoCoastSE](http://www.facebook.com/CoCoastSE)). Alternatively please contact Project Officer Katrin Bohn or Research Assistant Abbi Scott (email: [cocoast@port.ac.uk](mailto:cocoast@port.ac.uk)).



## South Coast Marine Plans

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has submitted the draft south coast marine plans to government for final review before they are submitted to the Secretary of State to approve for public consultation. Public consultation should commence by spring 2016.

Other work which continues and is supporting the development of the plans are the sustainability appraisal, habitats regulations assessment and impact assessment.

Alongside the plans the MMO are also preparing an implementation and monitoring plan. This will set out how the South Marine Plans, once adopted, will be assessed and will help make sure that they are working.

At past MMO workshops, a number of common questions were asked about how marine planning will be implemented. The MMO has now published its initial reference guide for how the South Marine Plans can be used, view at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-plan-user-guide>.

The Solent Forum Chair and officers will be meeting with the MMO in January to explore how the Solent Forum can assist with plan implementation.

## Litter Free Coast and Sea Campaign

Litter Free Coast and Sea is a campaign to reduce beach and marine litter and improve bathing water quality along the Dorset and East Devon coastline. The project has been active since 2011, and has expanded to include tackling bathing water quality and preventing litter from reaching the sea in addition to organising community beach cleans. It has run several campaigns and projects raising awareness of issues including microplastics in cosmetics, balloon and sky lantern releases, and a Christmas campaign to stop fats, oils and grease being poured down the drain which could eventually affect bathing water quality.

The campaign also engages businesses through an accreditation for food and drink outlets, which is helping to reduce detrimental inputs on water quality at bathing beaches. This is currently being extended, opening the award to more types of business such as coastal holiday parks, hotels and attractions.

It is also involved with local schools and is progressing with a toolkit which will allow teachers and educators to incorporate issues surrounding marine litter into lesson plans, such as degradation times. Visit [www.dorsetforyou.com/litter-free-coast](http://www.dorsetforyou.com/litter-free-coast) for more information.

# Environmental Quality

## Marine Biosecurity Planning

Defra and partners have produced a new guidance document on Marine Biosecurity for preventing the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species (INNS) in England and Wales.

INNS, also known as alien, non-indigenous or exotic, are species or subspecies that occur outside their natural range and are introduced into new habitats by human action. There are approximately 2000 non-native species in Great Britain, and about 300 of these are invasive. While the majority of INNS pose little or no risk, some can cause significant impacts to our native biodiversity through competition and disease and to our economy, as they are often costly to control or eradicate.

In marinas, INNS can cause increased biofouling on hard structures such as pilings, moorings, ropes, chains and boat hulls. Problem species may include a marine tube worm called *Ficopomatus enigmaticus*. This species is known to colonise hard structures such as buoys, tyres, fenders and any plastic or smooth surfaces in marinas where there is an inflow of freshwater. Due to its calcareous nature, the growths can scratch boat hulls and foul or clog intakes and moving parts.

The document provides guidance to a wide range of marine users such as the owners, operators and users of harbours, visitor moorings, mooring associations, boatyards, marinas, ports and slipways when developing a site-based biosecurity plan for INNS. The guidance also covers the development of a biosecurity plan for time-limited operations in the marine environment, such as a construction project or a major recreation event. The document aims to help the site operator encourage, promote and facilitate good practice, by both staff and users of the facility or event.

View the document at: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/> under the 'projects' tab.

## EC Bathing Water Directive Update

At the end of 2014, the 1976 Bathing Water Directive was repealed and replaced with the 2006 Directive. This has now been fully implemented with the final changes to the new system introduced in 2015.

Bathing waters are beaches, lakes or ponds that are used by a large number of bathers and have been designated under the Bathing Water Directive. The bathing season runs from 15 May to 30 September each year. The Environment Agency is responsible for monitoring the water quality.

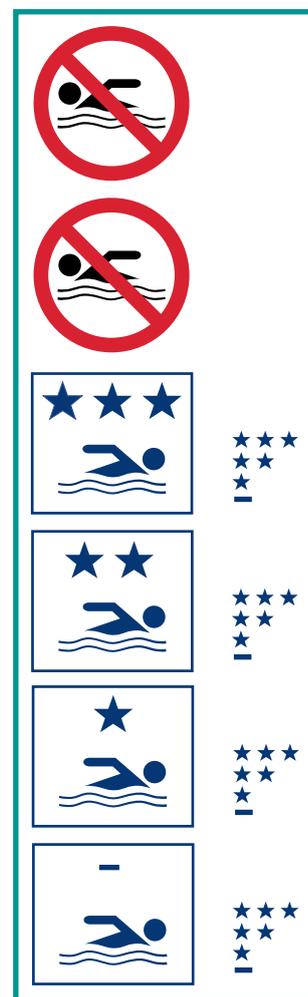
The weekly results are available on the Environment Agency's bathing water data explorer, which shows numerical sample results for each bathing water, with an indicator icon to show whether the sample is of acceptable water quality or has fallen below the minimum level. Local councils are required to provide public information showing that the area is a bathing water and to give information about water quality and potential pollution sources.

The first set of official classifications, using the 2012 - 2015 data set must be displayed on bathing water signs during the 2016 bathing season, together with "advice against bathing" if the classification is poor. Where water quality is poor, the sign will also have to show the reasons why. Information on the causes of pollution and measures in place to tackle them will be provided by the Environment Agency before the 2016 season.

A total of 97.1% of England's bathing waters have met the new minimum standard and 63.6% met the very highest Excellent standard.

The report setting out the 2015 results from monitoring bathing waters, including those around the Solent, can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bathing-waters-in-england-2015-compliance-report>.

The new classifications signs can be viewed and downloaded at <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-bathing/signs.htm>.



# Fisheries

## Management of Commercial Fishing Activities within the Solent European Marine Sites

The Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) is tasked with the sustainable management of coastal sea fisheries resources in the Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight areas. As a relevant and competent Authority, Southern IFCA has a duty to manage commercial fishing activities so as to secure compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.



*Photo courtesy of SIFCA*

Southern IFCA has committed to reviewing the impacts of commercial fishing activities upon European Marine Site (EMS) features by the end of 2016. To date the Authority has followed a risk-prioritised, phased based approach. Where activities are not compatible with the conservation objectives of sites, regardless of intensity, management

has been introduced in the form of spatial closure byelaws. In January 2014 Southern IFCA introduced two byelaws to protect reef and seagrass areas covering nearly twenty five percent of the District's waters from the effects of bottom towed fishing gear and hand gathering activities (<http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/byelaws>).

Site level assessments for the Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) have indicated that additional mitigation measures are necessary to protect other Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) features from the impacts of certain bottom towed fishing gear types. Furthermore, the SEMS Management Group 2015 Monitoring Report flagged fishing activities to be a high risk activity.

Based on existing evidence, Southern IFCA has identified a series of mitigation areas covering locations and periods of high feature sensitivity. Through consultation with the community, starting in January 2016, the Authority will develop effective management measures that best meets the needs of the sites and their users. Individuals wishing to engage with Southern IFCA during this process are invited to contact the office (01202 721373 or [enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk)) for further information or to arrange an appointment with officers. A consultation document can be found at [www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk).

## Portsmouth Capital Dredge – Oyster Mitigation Project

As featured on the BBC's Countryfile programme, Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) has been working with partner organisations to mitigate the impacts of capital dredging within the approaches to Portsmouth Harbour on the local native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) population. The project, funded by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) as a condition of their marine license, involved two native oyster relocation pilot studies.

The first aspect of the project, through the support of Portsmouth shellfish merchants, involved a scheme to buy-back native oysters caught within Portsmouth Harbour during the 2015 oyster season. This supply was complimented by additional oysters removed by two locally chartered fishing vessels from the vicinity of the capital dredge route, mainly on Hamilton Bank and Spit Bank. The native oysters obtained were then relocated in one of two ways; they were either re-layed in high density brood stock areas within local harbours, or placed in brood stock cages that can be fixed to the underside of pontoons or marinas.

The aim of the project is to mitigate the impacts of capital dredging activities and improve the local understanding of potential techniques that could be employed to enhance the Solent's native oyster population. The success of these approaches will be monitored by Portsmouth University.



*Photo courtesy of SIFCA*

This project has been supported by a number of partners including Southern IFCA, Portsmouth University, Land Rover BAR, MDL Marinas and the Blue Marine foundation and it forms part of a long-term Solent oyster restoration project.

# Marine Industries

## £5m Cruise Terminal Upgrade Announced

A multi-million pound project to upgrade Southampton's cruise facilities is set to take place this winter.

ABP Port of Southampton and Carnival UK have joined forces to invest £5m in improvements to the QEII Cruise Terminal for the benefit of all Carnival cruise brands. The work is vital in ensuring the city retains its title as the UK's top cruise port and continues to provide the very best customer experience as passenger numbers continue to grow.

The improvements, which will be undertaken in two phases in 2015/16, will include the installation of a state-of-the-art ship-to-shore walkway to replace the existing walkway which was initially installed for Cunard's Queen Mary 2. This investment will ensure a greater range of cruise ships can utilise the terminal with brand-new technology, improving passenger flow and experience.

The terminal upgrade will also include improving the existing check in, baggage and passenger x-ray areas, installing a new 46-person lift and re-organising the passenger drop off area.

The first phase of the work started at the QEII terminal in Autumn 2015 and is due to be completed in Spring 2016. The second phase, which includes the installation of the new ship-to-shore walkway, will be finalised in Winter 2016.



## Robotics Innovation Centre Opened

A £3 million centre to develop new technology for the emerging marine robotics sector was officially opened by Science Minister, Jo Johnson, in November 2015.

The National Oceanography Centre's (NOC) Marine Robotics Innovation Centre will be a hub for businesses developing autonomous platforms, with novel sensors that will be used to cost effectively capture data from the world's oceans.

Marine Autonomous Systems offer to transform the work of many sectors, including environmental monitoring. For example, they will improve data collection for weather and climate prediction, for defence, and for the emerging needs of offshore energy and other industries.

The Marine Robotics Innovation Centre has been operational since the summer of 2015. Planet Ocean Ltd, ASV and SeeByte Ltd have already moved into the centre, which provides office and testing facilities along with access to specialist instrumentation.

The NOC has been working with leading people from industry and academia in the development of vehicles, battery design, and operational procedures. Advance training for PhD engineers, coordinated by NOC, has also recently been announced.

## Underwater Noise Monitoring Network

Underwater noise in the marine environment is the focus of a new UK-wide research partnership to monitor the 'soundscape' in UK waters.

The Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) has teamed up with Marine Scotland Science and the University of Exeter to analyse underwater noise data from subsea sound recorders located around the UK coast.

Sources of noise in the ocean include shipping, seismic exploration, and construction activity, such as port extensions or offshore wind farms. There is concern that rising levels of underwater noise pollution worldwide may have an impact on marine life by interfering with communication, causing changes in behaviour, and raising stress levels.

For the first time ever, marine scientists will work together to produce an initial baseline assessment of background noise levels in UK coastal waters, including seasonal and annual patterns, as well as spatial differences.

The work, funded by Defra and Marine Scotland, will help to inform the development of a UK-wide noise monitoring strategy, as part of the UK's commitment to the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), which seeks to attain Good Environmental Status in European seas by 2020.

# Recreation & Leisure

## Work Begins on the Solent Stretches of the England Coast Path

Natural England is busy implementing the England Coast Path. Once completed, it will enable people to walk around the whole English coast, and preliminary work has now started around the Solent. The coast has been divided into stretches and work on the three that adjoin the Solent; Highcliffe to Calshot, Portsmouth to South Hayling and South Hayling to East Head has now begun. Work on the Calshot to Gosport stretch is expected to begin in 2016/17 and on the Isle of Wight in 2017/18. More detail can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-in-the-south-of-england>.

As well as a long-distance walking route, in some places there will be a 'coastal margin'. This means that, often for the first time, there will be secure public rights to use popular coastal areas such as beaches, sand dunes and cliff tops.

If the Path is affected in the future by slumping, erosion or similar changes, the new arrangements will allow for it to 'roll back' in a sensible way, securing people's right to walk around the coast.

Where existing rights of way along the coast meet their need, Natural England will simply adopt them. It can also create new sections of trail where necessary, for example, where there are currently gaps, or the route is dangerous. Houses and gardens will remain private, major ports and industry will be respected, and appropriate protections are built in from the outset for sensitive species and habitats.

Natural England will write to owners and occupiers of land likely to be affected, offering them the opportunity to discuss with them options for route alignment on their land and discuss issues such as what wider land should be accessible, and where the path should be able to 'roll back'. This will include, should they want it, an opportunity to 'walk the course' with them when they visit the land. They will also offer to talk as necessary to any other people with legal interests in land that may be affected. There will be public drop in sessions throughout the area in early spring 2016, which will be an opportunity to talk to the Natural England team about coastal access issues.



*Stretch of coast near Lyminster. Photo courtesy of Natural England*

## Lepe and Royal Victoria Country Parks to Benefit from £3.3 Million

Improvements valued at £3.3 million are set to transform two of Hampshire's popular country parks in the New Forest and Netley. A sum of £2.7 million has been agreed for a new visitor centre at Lepe Country Park in the New Forest, and up to £600,000 for improved car parking and visitor facilities at Royal Victoria Country Park in Netley. They are the first Country Parks to benefit from Hampshire County Council's Country Parks Transformation Programme.

Lepe's unique location on the New Forest coast attracts visitors from a wide radius. It is also well known for its historical features, including a recently renovated cold war observation post, and the remains of apparatus used to launch a floating harbour during the D-Day landings. The new visitor centre planned for the site will provide modern facilities for growing numbers of visitors, including a bigger café, improved toilets and information services, and enhanced outdoor play facilities and trails.

Royal Victoria Country Park is popular for its waterfront location and its iconic listed Chapel, more than 100 years old, whose tower can be seen for many miles across Southampton Water. The Chapel is all that remains of the once vast Netley Military Hospital. About £1.7 million has been awarded from the Heritage Lottery Fund to ensure visitors are able to access the Chapel and learn about its fascinating history. Following £1.1 million already provided by the County Council to match fund this project in March 2015, this latest investment of up to £600,000 will now improve the car parks, catering facilities, trails and play areas for pre-school children.

# Recreation & Leisure

## Vital Cycle Link opens up New Forest National Park to Southampton and Waterside

Communities on the east of the New Forest can now access the National Park car-free thanks to a missing section of cycle path which has just opened.

The 2km off-road path joining Marchwood to Totton means cyclists no longer have to use the dangerous Bury Road and cope with large number of lorries travelling to and from nearby industrial estates.

The work was paid for with £195,000 from the New Forest National Park Authority's £2m cycling fund from the Department for Transport, with Marchwood Aggregates Ltd contributing £120,000 for construction and materials.

New Forest District Council gave £25,000 from its 'section 106 agreement' planning levies and £10,000 came from an anonymous benefactor. The Barker-Mill Estates provided the land and Hampshire County Council managed the project and connected it to the road. The smooth surface of the two metre-wide path means cyclists can travel in both directions and the path is suitable for all types of bikes.



*Photo courtesy of the New Forest National Park Authority*

The Marchwood Cycle Route project is part of the New Forest Family Cycling Experiences programme managed by the New Forest National Park Authority. It is funded by the Department for Transport's Cycling Ambition (Cycling in the National Parks) fund. This capital fund aims to improve the quality of the cycling experience in the New Forest National Park.

## Langstone Kayak Leaflet

Kayaking is a watersport which several relevant authorities from the Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) have reported is increasing in recent years. In Langstone Harbour it has become a very common sight to see people in canoes and kayaks exploring the harbour creeks and channels. Kayaking is good exercise and can be a great way to watch wildlife. For the uninitiated however it can hold dangers, and participants can inadvertently cause disturbance to the birdlife and habitats that the SEMS aims to protect.

In response to the increase in these watersports observed in Langstone Harbour, the Harbour Board have produced a leaflet aimed at enhancing the experience of kayakers who visit the harbour, and building environmental awareness. Produced with assistance from the Portsmouth Canoe Club and RSPB, it provides important safety information along with trails kayakers can follow and harbour features they may see en route. Importantly, the leaflet also illustrates sensitive environmental features within the harbour, enabling kayakers to enjoy watching wildlife but at a distance great enough to avoid causing damage and disturbance.

Supplies of the leaflet, which has been printed on waterproof paper, have been given to sailing clubs around the harbour, local water sports shops, and tourist information centres. Copies will also be available at popular launch sites around Langstone Harbour and from the Harbour Office. If you would like a copy please email [environment@langstoneharbour.org.uk](mailto:environment@langstoneharbour.org.uk).

## Love Where You Sail Survey

As part of The Green Blue's Love Where You Sail initiative, in partnership with the Environment Agency and local harbours and marinas in the Solent area, boaters are being encouraged to complete a quick online survey to share their behaviours and attitudes towards the disposal of black water or sewage from boats.

In concentrated amounts and in poor flushing areas, black water from boats can cause a number of problems, including gastroenteritis from contaminated shellfish, and toxicity for marine life from the nitrogen and phosphorus in human waste and chemicals in toilet disinfectants and deodorants.

Since 2013 through the Love Where You Sail initiative, The Green Blue, the Environment Agency and local marinas and harbours have been encouraging the recreational boating sector to think about how and where they discharge their black water. Gathering data on how behaviours and attitudes are changing in the sector is an important part of the project.

The Love Where You Sail 2015 survey is aimed at larger boats with on board toilets. To start the survey go to <https://www.research.net/r/LWYS15>.

# Conservation

## Seal Monitoring in Chichester and Langstone Harbours

In 2009, the Solent Seal Tagging project estimated that the Common Seal population in the Solent was between 23 to 25 individuals, having gradually increased from a few individuals in 1994. This study also revealed that Common (or Harbour) Seals in the Solent primarily “hailed out” in Chichester and Langstone Harbours, and that they mainly foraged within these harbours, along with Portsmouth Harbour and the Isle of Wight.

This year, Louise MacCallum from Langstone Harbour Board, teamed up with James Parkin and John Arnott from Chichester Harbour Conservancy, to conduct combined monthly counts of the Common and Grey Seals at low tide. Counts took place at the two respective seal haul out sites between June and September in order to monitor the population size. The greatest number of Common Seals counted across both harbours was in September 2015, revealing a total of 22 adults and eight pups.



*Photo courtesy of John Arnott*

Studies in Scotland suggest that the number of individuals present at haul out sites during the moulting period will generally represent sixty to seventy percent of animals within a population, and therefore a rough estimate would indicate that between 43 to 50 individuals are currently present in the Solent. The UK population is thought to be between 33,400 and 56,000, meaning the increasing Solent population could represent anywhere between 0.08% and 0.15% of the total UK population. Five Grey Seals were also counted during September and the origin of their breeding population is currently unknown; the nearest known breeding populations are in Brittany and Cornwall.

## Portsmouth Harbour Formal SPA Advice

Natural England has published its formal conservation advice for Portsmouth Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA). It fulfils Natural England's responsibility under the Habitat Regulations, to give advice on how to further the conservation objectives for the SPA, the activities that are capable of affecting the qualifying features and the processes which they are dependent upon.

Portsmouth Harbour is a large industrialised estuary. Together with the adjacent Chichester and Langstone Harbours, it forms one of the most important sheltered intertidal areas on the south coast of England. Portsmouth Harbour SPA is composed of extensive intertidal mudflats and sandflats with seagrass beds, areas of saltmarsh, shallow coastal waters, coastal lagoons and coastal grazing marsh.

The site's conservation objectives apply to the SPA and the individual species and/or assemblage of species for which the site has been classified. The objectives are to ensure that, subject to natural change, the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive.

Access the new Advice at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-conservation-advice-for-special-protection-area-portsmouth-harbour-uk9011051/portsmouth-harbour-spa-site-information>.

## Solent Birds Studies Releases APP

The Solent Bird Studies project has recently released its smartphone app and website for recording sightings of internationally important bird populations around the Solent. In just two months, more than 4,300 bird records have been submitted by over 100 app users, capturing data for 50 different species.

The data collected will help with understanding the network of high tide roost sites and inland feeding areas within the Solent and how important these are for the conservation of the overwintering bird populations.

The data will also help guide the development of future coastal defence projects and habitat creation and enhancement opportunities across the Solent. All the records are freely available to download from the website [www.solentbirds.org.uk](http://www.solentbirds.org.uk).

The app is very simple to use and contains a catalogue of bird photos, descriptions and calls to help distinguish the many species. Its ability to record data in the field also allows the project team to work directly with the public to obtain these important results, and in doing so embraces citizen science.

# Heritage

## First World War Shipwreck Models

Exceptional diving conditions this summer allowed archaeologists to capture amazing photographs of First World War shipwrecks and record the sites in stunning detail thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding. These photographs have been used to create online 3D models of entire wrecks allowing divers and non-divers alike to take a 'virtual dive' and explore a world beneath the waves.

In November of 1917, while on war service, Admiralty Steam Drifter John Mitchell collided with steamer SS Bjerka and sank approximately 15 miles south of Christchurch, Dorset. It has remained on the seabed for nearly 100 years, slowly breaking apart, one of more than 1,000 vessels that sank off the south coast during the First World War. The Maritime Archaeology Trust has unveiled a 3D digital model of the wreck, created from hundreds of photographs taken during a dive on the site during extraordinarily good diving conditions last June.



*John Mitchell at sea (image courtesy of the Port of Lowestoft Research Society Collection) and the MAT's online 3D model (courtesy of the Port of Lowestoft Research Society Collection)*

With over 1000 wartime wrecks along England's south coast alone, the conflict has left a rich heritage legacy and many associated stories of bravery and sacrifice. These underwater memorials represent the vestiges of a vital, yet little known, struggle that took place on a daily basis, just off our shores. Through a programme of fieldwork, research, temporary exhibitions and outreach, the project aims to engage communities and volunteers and to provide a lasting legacy of information and learning resources relating to First World War wrecks for future generations

The newly available online 3D model can be found at <http://www.maritimearchaeologytrust.org/>. Information about the John Mitchell and its loss (and the 3D model) can be found at <http://forgottenwrecks.maritimearchaeologytrust.org/index.php/forgottenwrecks/casestudywrecks/john-mitchell>.

## South Parade Pier Receives Funding

Portsmouth's iconic South Parade Pier has received a welcome £50,000 boost following a successful bid to the government's Coastal Revival Fund.

Funding will contribute towards repairs and replacement of the pier's roofs, which are now at an 'end of life' condition. These urgent works will ensure all roofs are watertight and support the wider restoration of the Grade II listed pier.

The funding application outlined the importance of the pier to the city's heritage; it began life in 1875 as a jetty for the Isle of Wight, and by the early 20th Century was welcoming four steamers a day.

Following a fire in 1904, which destroyed the original structure, it was redesigned as a pleasure pier, with pavilion theatre, bar and lounge. Its construction represented innovation in its time and the pier remains one of the very few to have a concrete deck.

The funding will be spent by 31 March 2016.

## CITIZAN

The Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network (CITiZAN) has been set up in response to the dynamic threats to our coastal heritage. It is a community archaeology project, actively promoting site recording and long-term monitoring programmes led by volunteers.

The project is establishing an infrastructure and network of volunteers with the skills, commitment and support to record, monitor and promote the significant, fragile and threatened archaeological sites around England's coast, foreshores and tidal estuaries.

CITiZAN South West are surveying the eroding remains at Headon Warren on the Isle of Wight, particularly the remains of Hatherwood Battery, in collaboration with the National Trust. The battery was built in the 19th century to protect Alum Bay. However, due to ongoing soil erosion the site was abandoned in 1903, although it was later re-used by the Royal Navy from 1940-1943. Headon Warren also contains several round barrows which are being affected by erosion. This site is now owned by the National Trust and CITiZAN are working with them to train volunteers to record and monitor the archaeology.

Find out more at <http://www.citizen.org.uk/>.

# Harbours and Business

## Boskalis to Undertake Portsmouth Dredge

The UK's Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has awarded a £31m contract to Boskalis Westminster for capital dredging works on the approach channel to Portsmouth harbour.

The works are in anticipation of the first of the British Royal Navy's new Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carriers. HMS Queen Elizabeth is being commissioned in 2016. At 280m long and with an 11m draught, the two 70,600 tonne displacement vessels will be the largest warships to be based at Portsmouth in its eight century history as a Royal Navy base.

Dredging works will be part of a £100m package which includes upgrades to the jetty, provision of high voltage power for the ships when berthed, installation of nav aids within the channel and the design and production of QEC-specific gangways.

Boskalis will also dredge the inner harbour area and berthing pocket, making them both deep and wide enough for the QEC vessels.

The work is due to be completed in summer 2016. Boskalis will deploy medium sized trailing suction hopper dredgers and backhoe dredgers to remove some three million metres cubed of clay, sand and gravel. The works will be conducted using specialised dredging methods and continuous monitoring to meet stringent environmental requirements.

## Preparations Under Way For Victoria Marina, East Cowes

The developers of the new Victoria Marina waterfront in East Cowes on the Isle of Wight have begun preparations for the commencement of the project following the recent completion of the outer breakwater by Cowes Harbour Commission.

Arrangements are now being put in place to secure the developers' contribution towards the funding of the remaining phase of the harbour infrastructure works, including the extension of the Shrapne breakwater and the dredging of the new eastern access channel.

The long-planned redevelopment of the former GKN Aerospace site and the waterfront to the north of the Red Funnel terminal is one of the final, major, remaining pieces in the £200m East Cowes Masterplan incorporating part of the Solent Gateways project. The scheme will contribute significantly to the long term vision of the Isle of Wight Council, East Cowes Town Council and the Homes & Communities Agency for this area of East Cowes, which aims to promote regeneration and economic growth in the town and improve the Island's links to the mainland.

The project has been made possible by the completion of the outer breakwater, and will comprise a new marina and major shoreside development, to be named Victoria Quay in recognition of the area's historic royal connections.

Development Partners Camper & Nicholson's Marinas and Westcourt Real Estate are working with architects Conran & Partners on drawing up plans for various renovation, conversion and new-build works. This will see the creation of new residential and hospitality properties alongside the regeneration of the Columbine Building and Victoria Barracks, arranged around the new marina and within an extensively landscaped setting.

Under the plans for the Victoria Quay development, the Columbine Building, famous for sporting the world's largest Union Jack, will undergo a phased refurbishment and will house a variety of marine-based operations under the overall tenancy of Camper and Nicholson's Marinas. It will also provide office space for a number of other local and international businesses.

## Sea View 2027 - Southampton Water

The Seaview 2027 initiative seeks to agree health indicators to maintain or improve the Solent's water quality. Since last year's workshop, the Defra organisations who run the initiative (Natural England, Inland Fisheries & Conservation Associations, Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation) have worked to:

- Build a picture of all the main 'health indicators' for the Solent, by clarifying the statutory drivers, their current and likely target status.
- Build a similar picture on a Southampton Water scale.
- Map the structures, land use, sub-tidal and inter-tidal habitats around Southampton Water, to understand their condition and potential for environmental improvement.
- Work with the Sussex Marine and Coastal Forum to share the framework for adoption.

In 2016 Seaview is setting up a user group for Southampton Water. It wants to ensure that it captures all the views and knowledge of people and organisations that have concerns and interests. Please contact Peter Taylor for details at email, [Peter.taylor@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.taylor@environment-agency.gov.uk).

# More News

## Little Terns Make a Welcome Comeback to Chichester Harbour

Little Terns in Chichester Harbour have made a welcome comeback in 2015, with seventeen chicks fledging in July. This is the best result since the mid 1970's and follows many years of poor breeding seasons.

During the 1860's, the Victorians constructed a dam across the Thorney Channel, with the intention of claiming the landward mudflats for agricultural use. Although the structure failed to deliver its desired purpose, it became one of the most important nesting sites for seabirds in the Solent.

The first records for nesting Little Terns in Chichester Harbour are from 1959, with an average of 21 nesting pairs between 1964 to 1985 and an average of two nesting pairs between 1986 to 2014. The reduction of breeding pairs is thought to be due to the host of pressures that are experienced by Terns throughout



*Photo credit Paul Adams*

the country. These pressures include more frequent and severe summer storms combined with rising sea levels, erosion of shingle nesting sites, and human disturbance of nesting birds. Chichester Harbour Conservancy works alongside water users in Chichester Harbour to reduce disturbance to these vulnerable nesting sites as well as wader roosts.

The Conservancy manages several sites in the Harbour and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds manages Pilsey Island. Both organisations independently monitor these important sites for seabirds, but this year they joined forces to erect electric fencing and monitor Little Terns when they started to nest.

## Chichester Harbour Oyster Management

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority has created regulatory management to promote a sustainable native oyster fishery within Chichester Harbour, and to protect a designated marine conservation site. Measures were developed over several years in conjunction with oyster fishers and other stakeholders in the Chichester Harbour Oyster Partnership Initiative, in order to create a management plan and regulation that works for the community, the economy and the environment.

Under a new permit byelaw, the harbour has been split into three management units in order to manage sustainable dredging. The oyster season is closed when a pre-determined Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE: kg per hour per 1m dredge width) harvest threshold is reached, to ensure a sustainable population remains on the ground. In 2015, Zone 1 in the east of the harbour was closed to fishing to protect broodstock and sensitive habitats. Zones 2 and 3, encompassing Thorney and Emsworth Channels respectively, were opened on a staggered basis, with Thorney opening after Emsworth was closed once the harvest control threshold was reached.

Detailed evidence collection by IFCA officers was needed to inform these management measures. A pre-season stock assessment was conducted, to ensure the catch rate was above the pre-determined threshold and that the fishery could open, and this revealed a similar catch rate to that found during the 2014 and 2013 stock assessments. CPUE then needed to be monitored throughout the season, with catch information collected hourly from sentinel vessels, and twice a day from all vessels exploiting the fishery. This enabled officers to monitor when the pre-determined threshold had been reached and the fishery needed to be closed.

In addition to their research supporting oyster fishery management in 2015, Sussex IFCA have been working with partners including Southern IFCA, Natural England, the National Oceanography Centre, the Environment Agency and Cefas to better understand the effects of oyster dredging on protected habitats. Pre- and post-season grab, video and side scan sonar surveys have all been conducted. Results from this research will help support the sustainable management of the oyster fishery.

# More News

## New Anchorage Park Coastal Defences

The Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership (ESCP) are pleased to announce that the new coastal defences at Anchorage Park, Portsmouth, are open for the public. The new defences offer one of the highest standards of coastal flood protection in the country, outside of London. The footpath, along the top of the bank is complete and open, and offers an improved surface for pedestrians and cyclists.

Public exhibitions were held towards the end of construction, to show residents in-depth information and behind-the-scenes photos and videos of the work taking place. Over 150 people came; each person was given an information pack to take away. The scheme received 100% public support with very positive feedback. The completed defences form the first phase of the wider North Portsea Island scheme, which is being developed from Tipner in the west through to Milton in the east.



*Photo courtesy of ESCP*

The ESCP for Havant Borough Council have also successfully carried out a short beach nourishment campaign along Hayling Island in autumn 2015. The campaign involved dredging circa 6,200m<sup>3</sup> of shingle from the approach channel to Chichester Harbour, where the shingle material that had naturally built up could otherwise have caused a navigation risk to local mariners. This material was then pumped ashore onto the beach at Eastoke, in front of the Nabb Car Park, Southwood Road, Hayling Island, maintaining the coastal flooding and erosion protection to the properties of the Eastoke Peninsula.

## Solent Seagrass Project

Seagrasses are the only group of true marine flowering plants, they favour sheltered conditions, and the Solent's sandy shores and muddy harbours provided ideal conditions for them to establish and thrive. Seagrass beds are recognised in Biodiversity Action Plans, EU Habitats and Birds Directives, and international conventions as extremely ecologically important. They provide food, shelter and nursery grounds for a wealth of species including wildfowl, seahorses and commercially and recreationally important species such as bass. As they grow, they provide the oxygen and stabilise sedimentary habitats, reducing coastal erosion and providing a significant carbon sink.

Unfortunately, seagrass habitats are vulnerable to anthropogenic damage and loss, through physical disturbance, pollution and reduced water clarity. Since 2006, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) Solent Seagrass Project has surveyed and mapped the extent of seagrass beds, provided training and produced resources for raising awareness and enabling public recording. The project, which is co-funded by HIWWT and Natural England, produces an annual inventory of regional seagrass beds. The 2016 edition, which will include data collected in the 2015 field season, will be available in PDF format early in 2016. An active GIS data layer (MapInfo and ArcGIS format) of the information included in the inventory will also be available.



*Photo courtesy of Amy Marsden/HIWWT*

The inventory is used for management decisions by Natural England, by the Environment Agency for Water Framework Directive monitoring and by local IFCAs for fisheries management in European Marine Sites. It also informed the stakeholder process which identified four local recommended Marine Conservation Zones including seagrass. For more information or to request a copy of the inventory and/or GIS data, please contact Amy Marsden at email [Amy.Marsden@hiwwt.org.uk](mailto:Amy.Marsden@hiwwt.org.uk).

# News & Snippets

## Solent Protection Society Annual Update

Planning matters are regularly considered by the Solent Protection Society. These include the application for redevelopment of Bembridge Harbour where local members of the Council visited the parts of the Harbour affected by the application and made submissions to the planning authority. Another planning application in which the Society is having an input, is the redevelopment of Thorns Beach House, Thorns Beach, Beaulieu, where there are concerns about the impact on the seascape. An application, which will be receiving the attention of the Society in the coming months, is the redevelopment of the Red Funnel Terminal in East Cowes.

Last year the Society made a donation of £1,000 towards a research project sponsored by Southampton Solent University, which was to investigate zinc contamination in the Hamble River associated with use of zinc sacrificial anodes on boats. It is likely that the Society will make a further contribution for the second year of this valuable research.

An interesting new project in which the Society has become a participant is the scheme being promoted by the Blue Marine Foundation to bring back to the Solent a viable oyster fishing industry. At the invitation of Blue Marine, the Society sits on the project working group.

The Society has received a number of invitations to give presentations to local organisations about its activities. It has redesigned its website and produced a new brochure which is available from the Secretary for anyone interested in joining. Email [secretary@solentprotection.org](mailto:secretary@solentprotection.org) for a copy.

## Snippets

- UK offshore energy support vessel operator, Seacat Services, has placed an order for four new vessels with local boat builder South Boats on the Isle of Wight.
- Dubai-based DP World has acquired the remaining 49% stake in DP World Southampton from Associated British Ports (ABP) which has made the operator the sole owner of the business. The operator has also agreed with ABP to extend its license agreement for DP World Southampton for a further 25 years until 2047.
- Decades' worth of data revealing the health of our seas and marine wildlife, will be made freely available to the public for the first time, following the launch of a new 'Data Hub' by the Centre of Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences (Cefas). See <https://www.cefas.co.uk/cefas-data-hub/>.
- Cowes Harbour Commission (CHC) submitted (on 17th December 2015) a formal response to the Isle of Wight Council's Medina Valley Area Action Draft Plan Consultation. The CHC response highlights that in the Commission's opinion the draft Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Medina Valley provides insufficient protection for existing commercial marine sites with good water access, to meet both current and future needs.
- Cowes Harbour Commission is pleased to announce the appointment of Jonathan Kidd who has taken up the new position of Assistant Harbour Master at Cowes.
- Holes in a section of Southsea's promenade and flood defence barrier have now been filled in, but the area is still set to be closed off for some time. Leftover granite rocks from work being done to improve the sea wall in the north of the city have been used to plug gaps created after a bout of torrential weather over the Christmas weekend.
- Portsmouth International Port is celebrating 40 years of ferry travel in 2016, with special events planned for June 2016 to mark the momentous time in 1976 when the maritime city got its first official ferry terminal. To help tell the story of the early days of Portsmouth International Port, managers are looking for photographs and memories from passengers and staff who were there four decades ago.
- Jo Johnson MP, the Minister of State for Universities and Science, has formally opened two world-leading research and teaching facilities at the University of Southampton. The Minister officially opened the new experimental fluid dynamics building on the University's £140m Boldrewood Innovation Campus. The building hosts world-class research infrastructure including an anechoic wind chamber, advanced fluid dynamics experimental facilities and a 138-metre towing tank, which will be used across a range of disciplines including aerospace, civil engineering, infrastructure and maritime engineering.
- The biggest container ship in the world, the MSC Maya, made its maiden call at Southampton on 15 December. The 395.4m vessel, which can carry a world-leading 19,224 containers, is just the latest giant container vessel to call at the port in recent weeks.
- Developers Hammerson have announced that the WestQuay Watermark development in Southampton has reached a construction milestone, with the commencement of work on the structural steel frame for the £80 million dining and leisure hub.

# Solent News

## Solent Oyster Regeneration Project with Landrover BAR

Bespoke research pontoons have been built by MDL marinas and installed alongside the Land Rover Ben Ainslie Racing (LABAR) main pontoon, for a University of Portsmouth research project on novel subtidal oyster micro-hatcheries. The University is currently working with the Blue Marine Foundation to regenerate the Solent Oyster fishery.

The Solent's native oyster population (*Ostrea edulis*) was affected by a combination of disease, habitat destruction and overfishing. This University/LABAR research pontoon will be used to test the feasibility of using subtidal oyster cages containing mature broodstock in Portsmouth and Langstone Harbours, as sources of oyster larvae to support the wild population of oysters found naturally across the Solent.

The data collected over the next three years will be used to inform the design of similar oyster cages that will be attached to existing marinas across the Solent.

## 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.

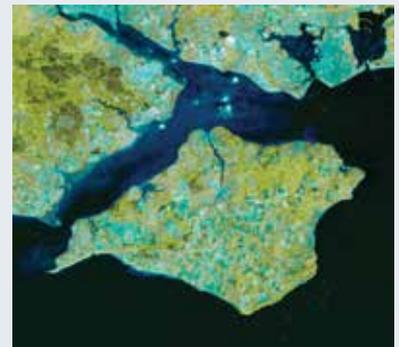
The Solent Forum members meet twice a year and will next meet on 16 March 2016.

Solent News is prepared and edited by the Solent Forum Officers. It is a biannual publication and issue 40 will be produced in summer 2016.

To find out more about the publication, how to submit articles or be included on the mailing list, please visit [www.solentforum.org/publications/solent\\_news](http://www.solentforum.org/publications/solent_news).

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The following organisations steer the work of the Solent Forum.

