

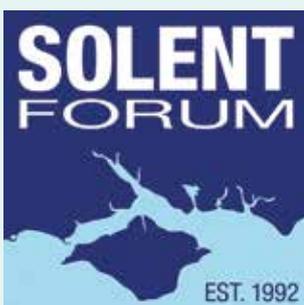
# Solent News

The newsletter of the Solent Forum

Issue 41: Winter 2016/17

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*Solent Forum Members are invited to dinner on HMS Warrior on 11 May 2017*

## Solent Forum's 25th Anniversary Celebrations

This year marks the Solent Forum's 25th anniversary. In recognition of this event the Forum is holding two weeks of celebratory events with its members in the week commencing 8th May 2017.

Full details of these celebrations can be found on the Solent Forum website; bookings are now being taken for a number of events including an evening meal for Solent Forum members on the 11th May on HMS Warrior and a conference on 10th May entitled 'Solent Matters: Shaping up for another 25 years'.

The 'Solent Matters' conference will provide organisations who operate in the Solent with an overview of the issues in this complex coastal and estuarine area, and the planning and management currently ongoing and required for the future. The Forum will show case work that has been conducted since its inception, and encourage a forward look for the next twenty five years. The conference is aimed at Solent Forum members, as well as user groups, NGOs, marine businesses, consultants and agencies involved in coastal planning and management.

The Forum is actively looking for further ideas for events to be held during this two week period. Find out more at: [www.solentforum.org/networking/celebrations/](http://www.solentforum.org/networking/celebrations/) or contact Karen McHugh on 01962 846027.

The conference booking form can be downloaded at [www.solentforum.org/networking/celebrations/Solent\\_Matters\\_Conference/](http://www.solentforum.org/networking/celebrations/Solent_Matters_Conference/). There is a reduced early bird booking fee until 28 February 2017.

The conference is sponsored by Fugro Emu, BMAPA, University of Portsmouth and Southern Water. The venue is Southampton Solent University's new conference centre 'The Spark'.

# News from the Forum

## Chairman's Column



**Peter Barham**

In 2016 we saw dramatic changes politically with the Brexit referendum, and while we do not yet know the outcomes of all this change, we do know that there will be significant impacts in many areas of life. Government will need to decide what happens to EU legislation and many people will be especially interested in what this means for the Habitats, Birds and other environmental Directives which have led to the designation of very well protected sites around our coasts and protection of the marine environment. A number of options are open to Government, and it may be that the most likely is that protected sites will simply be covered by UK legislation such as that set out in the Marine and Coastal Access Act, but as I say, at present, this is all just speculation.

While we await the outcome of all the discussions surrounding Brexit, it will be important to have as much certainty as possible and therefore we welcome the South Marine Plan which the MMO has been consulting on. This plan is the second that the MMO has prepared, and follows on from the East Coast Plan which was published some time ago. The South Plan aims to be more concise and user friendly while giving more direction on how the marine area should be managed.

Clearly different people may want different things from the Plan, so if you have a view it is important that you respond to the consultation with your views. The Solent Forum has written a general response putting forward how we believe this plan can best serve all our members.

Alongside the uncertainty that Brexit brings with it, 2017 will also be a memorable year

as we will be celebrating 25 years of the Solent Forum; we are planning a number of events which are discussed more in this newsletter. The last 25 years have seen many significant changes in the way that our coasts and seas are managed, and the Solent Forum has played a major role in making sure that people as well as statutory bodies have a role in how this happens. We will continue to emphasise the need for wider involvement in discussions about marine management and how it is carried out; the work of the Solent Forum will therefore continue to grow and be of major importance locally in the coming year. In line with this we will be looking for new members to join us and have their say, and Karen and her team have been working to update the members services and the Solent Forum website to achieve this.

## Conservation Advice Workshop

Natural England (NE) and the Solent Forum will be hosting a workshop on NE's new conservation advice packages on 2 March 2017.

This workshop was requested by members of the Solent European Marine Sites (SEMS) Management Group at their meeting in September 2016. It was put forward as an action for NE to deliver. The Solent Forum agreed to assist with the delivery of the workshop in its capacity as the SEMS Secretariat.

Its aim will be to help users and businesses across the Solent understand how to use the new NE conservation advice packages, when considering new development, maintaining infrastructure and the management of activities. It will include presentations and discussions on how to use the packages using real life examples from around the Solent. It will focus on the Solent European Marine Sites.

Published conservation advice packages can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/conservation-advice-packages-for-marine-protected-areas>. Currently there are two published packages in the Solent; the Portsmouth Harbour Special Protection Area and the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation.

Please email the Solent Forum Office at [info@solentforum.org](mailto:info@solentforum.org) for more information.

## Natural Environment Group (NEG)

The Natural Environment Group, for which the Solent Forum provides the secretariat, met in November 2016. This group takes forward actions from the Solent European Marine Sites annual monitoring and looks to assist with and further other environmental work taking place around the Solent.

At the last meeting the Group received a talk on the River Hamble Harbour Authority's 'Management of estuarine sediment for habitat retention and restoration' study, had an update on national Marine Protected Areas work and learnt about the progress made on the projects that received NEG funding in 2016.

NEG will be doing a call for the next round of environmental projects to fund in spring 2017. Find out more at [http://www.solentems.org.uk/natural\\_environment\\_group/NEG\\_Projects/](http://www.solentems.org.uk/natural_environment_group/NEG_Projects/). The group will next meet on 27 April 2017 and will allocate funds for 2017/18 at this meeting.

# Forum News

## Professor Mike Clark Award

The 2017 Professor Mike Clark Award is open for applications from students at local universities. Projects should have a coastal theme and a focus on the Solent coastal or marine region, and are usually part of a degree or postgraduate course. They can relate to any aspect or feature such as marine industry, recreation, conservation or physical processes.

Students' dissertations are made available to members of the Solent Forum and they are also invited to give a short presentation on their work at Forum meetings. Recent dissertations that have been awarded funding are:

- A critical evaluation of stakeholder engagement in adaptive management: a case study of East Head, Chichester Harbour by Rebecca Creed, University of Portsmouth.
- Survivorship, growth and reproductive potential of protected broodstock flat oyster, *Ostrea edulis*, populations attached to existing floating structures within the Solent by Luke Helmer, University of Portsmouth.

Details of the Professor Mike Clark Award, including examples of recent successful projects and an application form, can be found at [http://www.solentforum.org/services/Professor\\_Mike\\_Clark\\_Award/](http://www.solentforum.org/services/Professor_Mike_Clark_Award/). Invitations for this year's funding will be sent out in January 2017.

## Beneficial Use of Dredgings (BUDS)

There has been a strong desire amongst Solent Forum members to develop a project that finds solutions to the many barriers which are preventing the effective use of dredged material to augment Solent intertidal sites and, hence, to provide other benefits associated with such restoration work (especially enhanced coastal protection). The Solent Forum's role will be to launch the first phase of the project and facilitate future communications.

A BUDS Project Group has been formed and Terms of Reference agreed. A project brief for phase one has been developed and, subject to funding, will be put out to tender in January 2017.

The project aim is to:

*'Bring about beneficial use of dredging within one or more Solent sites, using an incrementally phased approach to scope and cost sediment sourcing and sediment receiver sites, building a system of protocols and guidance.'*

This work will build on a wealth of existing information including work by the River Hamble Harbour Authority, the University of Southampton and at Lymington Harbour.

The Project Group is mindful to ensure that this important work does not replicate previous studies and that the budget is used to further the delivery of beneficial use projects.

It will only be possible to make real advances in the Solent if the benefits of the re-use of dredging material are really understood and costed, and these benefits are aligned to objectives of regulatory bodies and coastal managers.

Please see [www.solentforum.org/services/buds/](http://www.solentforum.org/services/buds/) for more details.

## Solent Forum Website Updated

The Forum now has an updated website which is different in both design and structure.

The previous website evolved over the last 15 years and contained lots of information which needed restructuring to make it easier to navigate.

The new structure is simpler, and we hope you will find it easier to use. We rationalised all of the existing information and archived material that is no longer current.

If you are unable to find what you are looking for on the site or have any comments, please let us know. During January and February we will continue to improve both its content and look.

Key points to note about the new site are:

- The Forum's data catalogue of research and reports known as DISC has been renamed 'Solent Information Database' and can be found under the LIBRARY AND FORUM PUBLICATIONS directory.
- Solentpedia is no longer a stand-alone site. It has been brought into the main Solent Forum site and the pages can be found under THE SOLENT directory.
- News about the Solent is contained under the LOCAL NEWS section in the SERVICES and PROJECTS directory.
- The Solent European Marine Sites website remains the same for now; it will be re-designed at a later date.

View at [www.solentforum.org](http://www.solentforum.org). Please send any comments to [info@solentforum.org](mailto:info@solentforum.org).

# Coastal Management

## Saltmarsh Recharge Trial Enters Final Season

In 2014, Lymington Harbour Commissioners were granted a marine licence to undertake a three year trial to beneficially use 19,380 tonnes of mud dredged from the river to recharge an intertidal area in a bay within 'Boiler Marsh' where the saltmarsh has been lost through erosion. To achieve this, dredging barges navigate close to the marsh where they directly discharge their loads.

The plan is to create an unconfined intertidal reef within the bay that will provide shelter to the marsh from wave action or a source of sediment to feed the marsh in the immediate vicinity. It is hoped that by reducing the amount of wave energy reaching the marsh in this area, this will slow down erosion.

Following the placement of 2,380 tonnes of sediment in November 2014 and a further 6,900 tonnes in November 2015, work commenced in October 2016 to place the final 10,000 tonnes permitted for this trial. Once the sediment has been placed, the Commissioners will liaise with environmental regulators on the results of monitoring work to measure the changes in intertidal mud levels and the recolonisation of benthic invertebrates in the replenished areas.

Subject to the results of monitoring, it is hoped to apply for a long term licence to substantially increase the amount of mud that can be beneficially used in this way, with the ambition of prolonging the life of the saltmarsh and delaying the need for some future phases of breakwater construction.



*Photo courtesy of Lymington Harbour Commissioners*

## More Rangers on the Coast this Winter

The Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership of local authorities and conservation bodies, is implementing mitigation measures to ensure the additional recreational visits generated by new housing do not impact on the Solent's Special Protection Areas. The main mitigation measure is a team of rangers who aim to reduce bird disturbance by influencing the behaviour of visitors. This winter, there is a bigger ranger team; three on the mainland coast and one on the Isle of Wight's north coast. You can see their news at: [www.facebook.com/srmp\\_rangers](http://www.facebook.com/srmp_rangers) or [www.twitter.com/srmp\\_rangers](http://www.twitter.com/srmp_rangers).

The Partnership's first monitoring surveys are taking place this winter; they are counts of vehicles parked at access points to the coast, counts of visitors and recreational activities at selected coastal sites, and a study of the effect of the rangers' presence on peoples' behaviour. Further surveys are planned over the next few years to build up a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the mitigation measures.

The SRMP is adopting a new brand for its external communications, 'Bird Aware Solent'. It succinctly describes the Partnership's role and is an easy mnemonic.



## Future of the Natural Environment

The Environmental Audit Committee has published a report on 'The Future of the Natural Environment' after the EU Referendum inquiry.

Issues addressed include the future of funding for biodiversity and agri-environment schemes, the likely changes in the devolved administration, and the role that managed rewilding can play in conservation and restoration.

The Committee is calling on the government to introduce a new Environmental Protection Act during Article 50 negotiations to maintain the UK's environmental standards.

The MPs looked at the legislative, trade, and financial issues and make recommendations for action to secure the future of the natural environment. They call on the government to allow full parliamentary scrutiny of its plans for the future of environmental legislation after Brexit.

The Committee notes that the EU provides the UK with key environmental legal protections. Merely copying EU legislation into UK law will not be enough for up to one third of the UK's environmental protections.

View at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environmental-audit-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/future-of-the-natural-environment-after-the-eu-referendum-16-17/>.

# Environmental Quality

## Decade-long Study of Beach Litter finds Rise in Plastic Litter

Researchers from the University of Exeter and Plymouth Marine Laboratory have studied the findings from beach litter surveys carried out over a ten year period by volunteers for the Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch programme. They found that some types of litter increased significantly over the period, and recommend that urgent action should be taken to tackle them.

Data for 2.4 million items of litter collected through over 73,000 volunteer hours during the period 2005-14 were studied.

The researchers found that, while overall quantities of litter recorded by volunteers showed no statistically significant change over the decade, several types of litter had increased. These include small plastic fragments, plastic food packaging, wet wipes, polystyrene foam, balloons and large fishing nets.



Chessel Bay LNR, image courtesy of Lindsay McCulloch

There were clear variations in litter levels between regions. The beaches of the southwest and south Wales were observed to have the highest abundance of litter items, whilst beaches to the north and west of Scotland had the lowest. The southwest and south Wales exhibited the highest levels of fishing litter and food and drinks packaging, while the east showed the highest numbers of wet wipes.

The majority of material was identified as being of land-based origin, mainly from public littering.

The research is published in *Science of the Total Environment* at [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969716325918](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969716325918).

## Microplastics Consultation

The government is seeking views on the UK's proposed ban on the use of plastic microbeads in cosmetics and personal care products. Proposals are to ban the manufacture and sale of products containing microbeads which may harm the marine environment. The consultation also seeks to gather evidence on the extent of the environmental impacts of further sources of potential marine plastic pollution, to inform future UK actions to protect the marine environment.

The Environmental Audit Committee recently undertook an inquiry on the environmental impact of microplastics in the marine environment. Its report included a number of recommendations for the UK Government to address key sources of microplastic pollution.

Microbeads (small particles of plastic) are a common ingredient in many cosmetics and personal care products such as face scrubs and toothpastes, and may be used in other products and processes including industrial blasting where abrasive materials are propelled under high pressure to remove surface deposits such as paint. They are washed down the drain but are too small to be completely filtered out in sewage treatment systems, so a proportion is washed out into the marine environment.

Government action aims to create a level playing field for industry, tackle inconsistency, provide consumer confidence and stop new products containing tiny pieces of plastic ending up in the marine environment. This will contribute to the UK government and devolved administrations' vision of "clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas" as set out in the UK Marine Policy Statement.

The consultation should be of particular interest to associations and bodies concerned about the status of the marine environment. View the consultation at <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/marine/microbead-ban-proposals/>.

# Fisheries

## Chichester Harbour Small Fish Surveys

Fish surveys are important for monitoring juveniles of commercially important species, and furthering understanding of ecosystem health, particularly within Marine Protected Areas. Surveys were conducted in Chichester Harbour, part of the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation and Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area, with support funding from the Solent Forum's Natural Environment Group. The surveys were conducted in partnership with Chichester Harbour Conservancy, with the help of nineteen people from nine organisations.

Three sites were surveyed in June and July and again in September, using both a seine net and beam trawl. All fish were identified to species level, with fifty of each species in each sample measured. Conspicuous non-fish species were also recorded to develop an understanding of associated communities within the sampling areas.

In total, there were 1,983 fish of 25 species. Bass and sand smelt were jointly the most abundant, followed by common goby and sprat, with these four species comprising ninety percent of the total abundance. Three species found this year had not been previously recorded on this survey.

The average Simpson's Index of Diversity was 0.715, higher than in 2013 or 2014. The index is a scale of 0 to 1, from no diversity to infinite diversity. This year, there was two thirds of the average abundance found in 2010-2014, with particularly low abundance in June/July. A similar reduction in abundance was also seen at other sites surveyed by Sussex IFCA. Appreciable inter-annual variation of most species is expected and the reasons can be complex. Continued monitoring is essential to help inform these trends. More information is available at: <http://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/research-and-science>.



## Restoring the Native Oyster to the Solent

Between 1972 and 2006 the Solent supported Europe's largest self-sustaining native oyster fishery. In 1978, 450 vessels were involved in oyster fishing between Weymouth and Chichester and at least 700 fishermen relied on oysters for a substantial part of their income. At its peak the fishery landed up to 840 tonnes a year, equivalent to 15 million oysters.

However, since the early 1980s the oyster population has declined. By 2013, the annual harvest had dropped from 200 to 20 tonnes over five years and the fisheries authorities were forced to close the fishery to protect the remaining stock. As well as losing a traditional fishery, the loss of native oysters has damaged the Solent marine ecosystem and contributed to water quality issues. Oyster beds contribute substantially to inshore shallow biodiversity and provide protection and nursery grounds for juvenile fish and other species. Removal of oyster beds can lead to increased nutrient levels, stronger algal blooms and greater risk of lower oxygen levels, all potentially damaging to fish and shellfish stocks.



*Image courtesy of the Blue Marine Foundation*

The Blue Marine Foundation is working with a number of partner organisations on a long-term project to restore the native oyster beds of the Solent. In 2016, 10,000 oysters were placed in protected man made structures at marinas as part of a five year plan to introduce 10 million oysters as part of an innovative re-seeding programme. The program is using a combination of marinas, seabed sites and 'ranching' areas across the Solent as part of a coordinated strategy to help regenerate the native oyster population. For the future of all users of the Solent, recreational and commercial, restoring the native oyster provides an opportunity not just to improve biodiversity but also water quality and overall ecosystem health. To find out more please visit: [www.bluemarinefoundation.com](http://www.bluemarinefoundation.com).

# Marine Industries

## Port of Southampton Port Master Plan

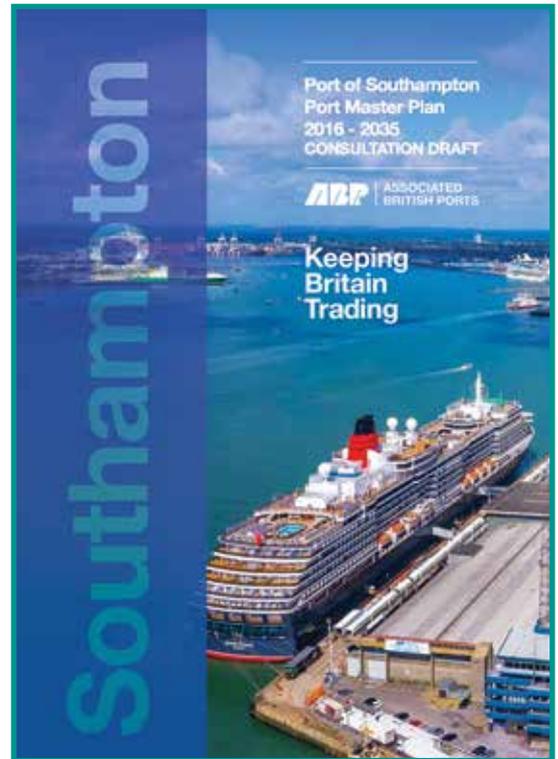
The Port of Southampton has published a consultation document setting out a 20-year Master Plan for the Port covering the period from 2016 through to 2035. The Plan sets out a strategy for growth and the steps needed to allow the port community to continue to be a successful gateway to the world.

The Port plays a key role in 'Keeping Britain Trading' providing a strategic hub and gateway to global markets for business from all parts of the UK. It handles over £71 billion of international trade every year, over one quarter of the UK's seaborne trade with non-EU countries by value and it is the leading UK port for exports to international markets of £40 billion per annum. Port activity contributes £1 billion to the UK economy every year supporting 15,000 jobs across the region.

The Master Plan has regard to the nature of the port, operations, wider policy and guidance and sets out key objectives and strategy for growth including:

- Strategic planning for the medium to long term - providing assistance to planning bodies, transport authorities, network providers and other stakeholders in preparing their own development strategies;
- Setting out the future development and infrastructure requirements needed to maintain and enhance the role of the Port as a major international deep-sea gateway; and
- Informing port users, employees and local communities as to how development is envisaged in the coming years.

The draft Master Plan sets out the potential need for the Port to be able to expand prior to 2035, it doesn't, however, seek to set out either locations for expansion or possible layout of any development options. Once the Master Plan has been published, the Port will embark on an exercise to assess possible future demand in further detail. See [http://www.southamptonvts.co.uk/Port\\_Information/Commercial/Southampton\\_Master\\_Plan/](http://www.southamptonvts.co.uk/Port_Information/Commercial/Southampton_Master_Plan/).



## Energise Solent

Energise Solent is the energy strategy for the Solent region. Created by Future South, the initiative is part funded by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and backed by the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership. The initiative is made up of 14 separate streams of work, from district heating to community renewables, and has the long term self-sufficiency of the region, the tackling of fuel poverty and the reduction of carbon emissions at its heart.

To raise the profile of the marine renewables supply chain in the Solent, Energise Solent has launched a Solent Marine Renewables Supply Chain Project to spotlight and promote Solent businesses.

The Project is being developed by local council and industry experts with an understanding of marine renewables, including Greentech South, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Marine South East, the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, SSE and Portsmouth University. The project will draw together local supply chain companies, and help them to promote and advertise their skills to attract buyers to the Solent.

The project is led by Ben Earl, the Water Efficiency Manager for Southern Water. He is also the Future South Board sponsor for the Solent Energy Strategy. To find out more please email [Ben.Earl@southernwater.co.uk](mailto:Ben.Earl@southernwater.co.uk).

## Marine Data Exchange

Over 500 new surveys have been added to The Crown Estate's Marine Data Exchange (MDE) since 2015, delivering a twenty two percent increase in total available data.

The additions mean that sixty percent of all survey work completed by The Crown Estate's offshore renewable energy customers, is now freely accessible via the platform.

The MDE's over 100 terabytes of data have also now moved into the Cloud, making access to information, including big files, quicker and easier. Searching for and downloading data has been simplified, and a saved searches facility is available, meaning that users can opt to receive alerts when new information is uploaded.

View the MDE data at [www.marinedataexchange.co.uk/](http://www.marinedataexchange.co.uk/).

# Coastal Defence

## Sustainable Shorelines: General Guidance

Chichester Harbour Conservancy has published new guidance for building and maintaining sea defences, called 'Sustainable Shorelines'.

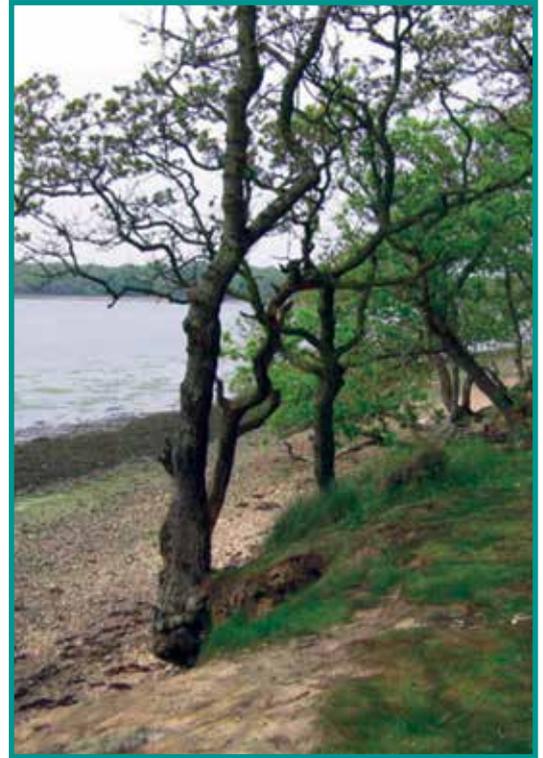
The document, now available to download from the Conservancy's website, was co-written with expert coastal engineers at Royal Haskoning DHV, and was specifically prepared for use in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Chichester Harbour is the largest natural estuary in south east England and forty three percent of the AONB is fully submerged at high tide. In recognition of its high environmental value, the Harbour is designated as a Ramsar site for its wetlands, a Special Protection Area (SPA) for its birdlife, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for its habitats, and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its flora and fauna.

As a result, all proposed developments on or near the foreshore are scrutinised by the Conservancy, Natural England and the Local Planning Authorities, to ensure any potential adverse impacts are minimised.

Residents and developers are urged to consider the guidelines before submitting a planning application at a shoreline location and to discuss their intentions with the Conservancy and Natural England at the earliest opportunity.

View the Guidance at [www.conservancy.co.uk/page/planning/365/](http://www.conservancy.co.uk/page/planning/365/).



*The wooded shoreline was identified in the Management Plan as one of the special qualities of Chichester Harbour.*

## Hill Head Sea Defence Project Phase 2

The aim of this project is to develop, design and build a cost effective sea defence option, at Hill Head in Fareham, which maintains amenity and leisure access along this frontage for the lifetime of the structure.

The existing gabion basket and concrete bagwork seawalls are unsuitable defences for an exposed coastal location, and the seawalls have reached the end of their serviceable life and cannot withstand exposure to storm wave action.

Increased storminess over the last three years has contributed to beach erosion and seawall deterioration. Doing nothing risks the loss of the much loved promenade and beach huts in the short term and Cliff Road and residential properties in the long term.

The preferred option is to build a sheet pile wall with concrete capping beam, widen the promenade by approximately 1.5 metres (5 feet) improving public access along the frontage, straighten out the "kink" in the promenade and increase the wall height by 0.6m (2 feet).

Please visit <http://www.escp.org.uk/news/Hill-Head-Phase2> for more details.

## National Flood Resilience Review

In September 2016, the government published a policy paper 'National Flood Resilience Review'.

The review looked to:

- Understand the risks of river and coastal flooding from extreme weather over the next 10 years.
- Assess the resilience of key local infrastructure (such as energy, water, transport and communications), and identify ways to protect it better.
- Improve how we respond to flood incidents, including through new temporary flood defences.

The review began with a reassessment of the current river and sea flood risk to test the accuracy of the understanding of that risk. Until now, the Environment Agency assessments of fluvial flood risk have been primarily based on historical records of river levels and flows during previous floods rather than on Met Office modelling of extreme rainfall.

View the document at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flood-resilience-review>.

# Recreation & Leisure

## Evidence and Management for Marine Recreational Activities

Natural England is asked for advice on recreational activity impacts both within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and on protected habitats and species outside of designated sites. It is working to develop a clearer understanding of which sites suffer from significant recreational disturbance impacts, and to have a programme for initiating management of these activities. It has recently commissioned a study to help with this goal called 'Evidence and Management for Marine Recreational Activities' that will be undertaken by ABPmer.

The study focusses on impacts relating to intertidal/seabed abrasion, visual disturbance and noise disturbance for the following activities:

- motorised recreational vessels (powerboats, yachts)
- hovercrafts
- motorised personal watercraft (jet ski)
- towed watersports (e.g. waterskiing)
- wildlife watching (from land or sea)
- sailing vessels without engines (e.g. dinghy)
- non-motorised landcraft (sand yachting, kite bugging and landboarding)
- coasteering
- motorised vehicles (e.g. quad bikes, scramble bikes, cars)
- boardsports (e.g. surfing, kayaking, kite surfing)
- paddlesports (e.g. paddle boarding)
- diving and snorkelling
- general beach leisure (including rock-pooling and swimming),
- light aircraft
- drones



The outputs of the review will include published guidance notes on the potential impacts, risks and management of different activities and a detailed toolkit including case studies to help guide future work engaging with recreational users on the management of MPAs. During the review ABPmer will be approaching a range of stakeholders directly for their feedback and they will also be circulating a general call for evidence on the impacts (or lack of impact), of the above activities on the marine environment, potential options for managing the activities and the effectiveness of management options.

If you would like to get in touch with the project team please contact the Project Manager, Caroline Roberts, at ABPmer by email at [croberts@abpmer.co.uk](mailto:croberts@abpmer.co.uk). The study will be carried out between November 2016 to March 2017.

## England's Coast Path: Solent Stretches Update

The Highcliffe to Calshot, Portsmouth to South Hayling, South Hayling to East Head, East Head to Shoreham stretches of the path achieved great success at the drop-in sessions early in 2016, attracting hundreds of people. The Natural England stretch leads have spent the time since meeting with landowners, key stakeholders such as NGOs and Harbour Authorities, as well as with local communities. They are now at a stage where they are drawing on this engagement and deciding on the alignment of the England Coast path, which will be shared with local landowners and stakeholders over the winter.

The newly started stretches of Calshot to Gosport, led by John Truswell and Portsmouth Harbour, led by Gemma Marchant, have been gathering information from local councils and statutory stakeholders. These stretches will soon progress to Stage 2, at which point they will again be booking a series of drop-ins for local communities along Southampton Water and Portsmouth Harbour. People will be notified in the next few months.

The Isle of Wight Stretch, led by John Taylor, will commence in April 2017. For more information please email John. Taylor2@naturalengland.org.uk or call 07843672664.

# Conservation

## Volunteers Required for Secrets of the Solent

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) are several months into the development year of a new project, 'Secrets of the Solent'. 'Secrets of the Solent' is supported by National Lottery players through the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project aims to raise awareness about the fascinating local marine life and habitats including seals, seahorses, stalked jelly fish, seagrass meadows and chalk reefs.

The project further aims to reduce the pressure on marine biodiversity by working with the public and sea users to encourage sustainable behaviours. These include reducing the amount of plastic we use and ensuring it is correctly disposed of, picking sustainable options when selecting seafood, protecting vital habitats such as seagrass beds and making sure that we do not disturb coastal wildlife such as nesting or feeding birds.



*Photo courtesy of Amy Marsden*

For the project to be a success the Trust needs your support. No previous knowledge or skills are required, just enthusiasm for our local seas. Volunteers will be provided with resources and training to enrich their knowledge of the marine environment, develop their skills and take part in practical conservation. HIWWT aim for some of these volunteers to go on to lead events as Marine Champions.

'Secrets of the Solent' includes an exciting programme of events including guided walks, presentations on local wildlife, biological surveys, advocacy work, beach cleans and more. For more information about the project or to sign up as a volunteer please visit: [www.hiwwt.org.uk/SecretsoftheSolent](http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/SecretsoftheSolent).

## Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment

Natural England has published 'Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) - The national survey on people and the natural environment - Visits to coastal England'. This report presents the results of an analysis of the MENE findings from the first six years of fieldwork from March 2009 to February 2015 regarding visits to the coast.

Between March 2014 and February 2015, adults resident in England made 3.12 billion visits to the natural environment, ten percent of these visits (313 million) were taken to the coast. For around two-thirds of these 313 million visits, the main place visited was a seaside resort or town (202 million visits), while other visits were taken to more rural places on the coastline (111 million).

Compared to visits to other types of place, visits to the coast are more likely to take place at weekends (40 percent), especially Sundays when around a quarter of visits are taken (23 percent). In contrast, the distribution of visits to urban green spaces is more evenly spread over the week.

In both 2015 and 2013 the most frequently mentioned barriers preventing people from visiting the coast more often were being too busy at work or home and the weather. In 2015, as in 2013, the most frequently encountered access issues continued to relate to litter, the behaviour of other users and path conditions.

View the report at <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6587923334430720>.

# Marine Protected Areas

## MPA National Reporting Framework

Currently there is no single location where Marine Protected Area (MPA) information is stored. The MPA National Steering Group is undertaking a piece of work to steer the development of Natural England's Designated Sites System (DSS) to contain this information.

The DSS will act as a central location to store information such as condition of sites, conservation advice, key risks, current management, and key management activity. It will report on the effectiveness of MPA management across the country.

Currently the system is still in the test stage, and the first batch of management information is now ready for upload. This batch includes Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority and Marine Management Organisation byelaws; and the condition assessment for Plymouth Sound and Estuaries Special Protection Area.

The next step is to establish a process for gathering the remaining management information such as local authority byelaws. In the long term it is vital that this information is kept up to date and important that links are made to existing reporting mechanisms.

Access the DSS at <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>

## Solent and Dorset Coast pSPA

Natural England is responsible for recommending potential Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in English waters (out to 12 nautical miles) to Defra for classification. As part of that recommendation, upon reviewing information from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) breeding seabird data within the Solent and Dorset Coast, it has identified a marine area and species that need to be considered for protection. The recommendations, which have been out to public consultation, propose a new marine designation for three species of bird; common, sandwich and little tern.

The recommendations include the sub-tidal areas not currently encompassed in the existing SPA's. It will have its landward boundary at mean low water (MLW) where it abuts any existing SPA where terns are already a feature. Elsewhere the landward boundary will be mean high water (MHW) so as to afford the birds protection within the intertidal areas; for example at Portsmouth Harbour.

A preliminary assessment of the potential economic impacts of classifying the Solent and Dorset Coast pSPA has been completed. This concluded that the costs imposed by the new classification were relatively low, existing SPAs already cover important foraging areas for breeding terns.

See more at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/solent-and-dorset-coast-potential-special-protection-area-comment-on-proposals>.

## Tranche 3 Marine Conservation Zones

Defra has now embarked on Tranche 3 (the final tranche) of the marine conservation zone designation programme. The aim of this tranche is to complete the Blue Belt, an ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas around England. Through this process, Natural England's role will be to provide evidence-based scientific advice. Most of the site options will come from the 2011 Regional Projects, however, a small number of additional sites and boundary amendments have also been proposed to ensure the goal of ecological coherence is met.

The final list of sites and features to be formally considered will not be announced until the formal consultation period begins in late summer/autumn 2017. However, in the coming months, Defra and Natural England and JNCC will work together to ensure that these sites meet certain criteria and evidence standards. Natural England and JNCC will deliver their pre-consultation advice to Defra in February 2017 and post-consultation advice on any additional evidence and submissions received through the formal consultation. Defra will use this advice, along with socio-economic information to make their final decisions. Sites will be designated in 2018 (within one year of the start of the public consultation). More information on Defra's approach in Tranche 3 can be found at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/492784/mcz-update-jan-2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/492784/mcz-update-jan-2016.pdf).

There are three proposed sites in the Solent: Yarmouth to Cowes, Norris to Ryde and Bembridge and Sandown Bay. If you would like more information on any of the Dorset, Hampshire and IOW sites under consideration or the broader process, Natural England are holding 'community drop-in' sessions in March 2017.

- Chesil Beach Visitor Centre, Portland – 21 March 2017 14:00 – 19:00
- Riverside Community Centre, Newport, IOW – 22 March 2017 14:00 – 19:00
- Studland Village Hall, Studland – 29 March 2017 13:30 - 18:30

These events will provide an opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and receive more information.

# Harbours and Business

## Sea Trials Commence on Vessel Efficiency MOVE Project

Sea trials have begun on two Falmouth based pilot vessels which will provide data for the Innovate UK funded 'Monitoring for Operational Vessel Efficiency' project (MOVE). MOVE is an Innovate UK project under the 'Managing Energy on Marine Vessels' Competition.

Rising fuel costs, emissions regulation and concerns about carbon emissions are severe challenges for marine vessel operators and their supply chains. The MOVE project is developing a novel solution to all three, initially targeting the commercial work boat sector. MOVE technology will allow operators to optimise vessel performance by maximising cost-effectiveness through improved selection of propulsion and generation systems. Additionally, it will enhance emission planning and enable better targeted maintenance.



*Vessel Arrow. Photo courtesy of David Barnicote.*

MOVE is developing and validating an easily-fitted system to measure and record the instantaneous power and torque outputs from the vessel's engines, in conjunction with more standard monitored data (engine speed, vessel speed and heading, fuel consumption). Although technology already exists to gather this data, it is often time consuming and expensive to install. The project is refining this to provide a device which can be quickly retro-fitted or removed making the system commercially more attractive for vessel owners. MOVE technology will be deployable on a wide range of marine engines including main propulsion and auxiliary power.

To ensure the technology is developed and valorised to meet market demand, the project is facilitating the 'MOVE Interest Group'. Membership of the Interest Group is free of charge, find out more at <http://groupspaces.com/MOVEInterestGroup/>.

## New Straddle Carriers Delivered

DP World Southampton has strengthened its straddle carrier fleet by taking delivery of nine brand new Kalmar machines, with a further eight on order. The terminal operator is also purchasing two new super post-Panamax quay cranes, ready for delivery in 2018, which will improve its capability allowing it to simultaneously handle three of the largest container vessels afloat.

The straddle carriers arrived fully assembled onboard the vessel MV Eendracht direct from the manufacturing plant in Gdynia, Poland.

This investment in DP World Southampton's operational fleet comes after the operator took over an extra 11.2 acres of land at the north east edge of the terminal, creating extra ground space to store containers and bringing the size of the terminal to almost 100 hectares.

DP World's investment plans for Southampton include a total of 17 new straddle carriers which will modernise the fleet and two new additional super post-Panamax cranes with an outreach of 24 containers.

## Cowes Harbour Project Update

Negotiations continue towards finalising the 'Harbour Infrastructure Funding Agreement' (HIFA) between Cowes Harbour Commission (CHC), the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), and the developer of the HCA's Victoria Quay marina in East Cowes; this will enable delivery of Phases 2 and 3 of the Outer Harbour Project, the Eastern Channel dredge and Shrape extension.

Despite the best efforts of all parties the HIFA is not yet in a position whereby it can be approved by the respective parties' Boards.

Furthermore, some of the complex matrix of commercial and legal agreements for the wider East Cowes regeneration development, which must be completed by the HCA and their developers as pre-conditions to the HIFA, whilst being well advanced, are not yet fully resolved.

The intention now is to re-schedule the Eastern Channel dredging and construction of the Shrape extension to commence after the 2017 summer season.

# More News

## River Hamble Harbour Authority Investments

The River Hamble Harbour Authority's continued investment in the estuary has seen the recent completion of three more projects.

- Improvements to the public slipway at Warsash have made the facility much more user friendly for towing and launching.
- Warsash pontoon extension has increased the available space for visiting boats, and significantly increased the number of tender billets available, including creation of improved tender billets to enable easier embarkation for those less able.
- A feasibility study of sediment management and saltmarsh restoration within the Hamble examined the historical pattern of decline of saltmarsh and the many additional factors that contribute to continued decline, many of which are also applicable to the wider Solent area. The study investigated the locations, methods and means by which sediment could be managed to improve local habitats. It has enhanced the knowledge base of the subject area and provides much information which is of immediate application to the work of the River Hamble Harbour Authority, regulating authorities, landowners and those providing berthing facilities. Whilst it does not recommend a large scale project to reuse dredge arisings within the estuary, it outlines the potential for small scale options predominantly involving sediment retention measures. The report is available at [www.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour](http://www.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour).



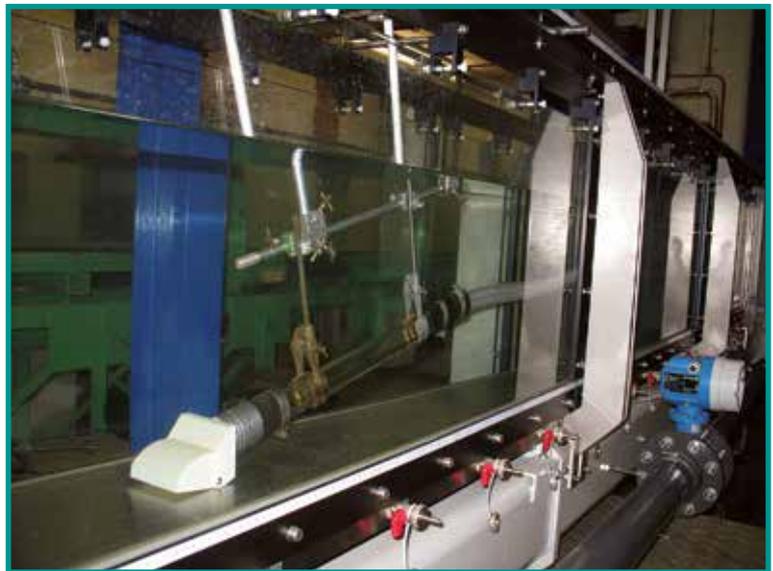
*Photo courtesy of River Hamble Harbour Authority*

## Reducing By-Catch in Dredging

Fauna Friendly Developments (FFD) Ltd is a startup company focused upon changes to dredging design to reduce the by-catch of fish and shellfish from trailer suction dredging. During 2015/16, FFD Ltd worked with the University of Brighton on a successful project to test the feasibility of a patented low impact 'draghead'.

The 'draghead' is similar in function to a suction attachment to a vacuum cleaner that removes seabed material either for the purposes of sand or gravel production or for channel deepening or maintenance.

An enhancement to the 'draghead' of the dredging system has been designed that allows normal dredging operation while modifying the flow field such that the less dense organic material on or above the seabed, particularly fish and shellfish, is safe from the suction action. It draws from existing technology used in the fishing and aquaculture industries. Following receipt of grant funding from the EC and Innovate UK, the feasibility of the conceptual design has been proved using physical modelling in a hydraulic flume with engineering staff at the University of Brighton. The work was undertaken as part of the Greengrowth platform (<http://about.brighton.ac.uk/business/green-growth-platform/>).



*Photo courtesy of FFD Ltd*

Prototype development is the company aim for 2017, and they have secured support from a locally based marine aggregate dredging company, to test a prototype on their soon to be commissioned new dredger. A controlled trial of the enhanced 'draghead', compared with an existing draghead design, will be used to demonstrate the reduced by-catch of fish and shellfish. The Environmental Industries Commission has endorsed the research.

# More News

## New Visitor Centre Approved for Lepe Country Park

The New Forest National Park Authority has approved plans at Lepe to provide more modern facilities for visitors. This includes landscape works, better car parking and a new elevated visitor centre which will offer uninterrupted views of the Solent, as well as counter threats of climate change and coastal flooding.



Hampshire County Council is contributing £1.85m towards the project, with £850,000 from the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Fund. The works will include:

- A new visitor centre built on concrete piles to avoid future coastal flooding. The new glass fronted centre will include a bigger café with a choice of seating for visitors to enjoy panoramic views of the Solent; a family area; an area which can be partitioned off to create a space for groups, and new indoor toilets in addition to the existing ones on the beach.
- A new family friendly sensory garden at Lepe Point. This wheelchair and pushchair accessible area will include nature ponds, picnic area, wildlife houses and boardwalks overlooking the marshes. Much of this work is being done by the 200-strong Friends of Lepe volunteers.
- More equipment in the play area, a wildflower maze to encourage wild play and den building for older children and teenagers.
- Improved interpretation, signage, maps and trails to highlight the importance of the coastline at Lepe and the best areas to explore the New Forest National Park for families, dog walkers, windsurfers and kayakers.
- A redesigned beach front car park for improved pedestrian access and better defined parking bays at both the beach front and cliff top car parks.

Work is due to start on site in early 2017 and be completed during spring 2018. The Country Park will be open as normal throughout this period, and the existing café will remain until its replacement is ready. All planned works have been approved by Natural England to avoid disturbance to the park's wildlife.

## Project Kraken

Project Kraken has been set up to deliver an enhanced crime and counter terrorist vigilance capability within the maritime environment. People are asked to report any unusual or suspicious activity near the UK coastline and in maritime environments immediately, including:

- Crew who show signs of nervousness or a lack of awareness of maritime protocols and customs
- Vessels showing signs of unusual modification or minor damage
- Increased activity at isolated coastal locations or at unusual times of the day
- Attempts to signal to vessels offshore or guide them into an unusual location
- Strange patterns of payment, such as large amounts of cash
- People testing site security or an unusual interest in site structures and wharfs

If you suspect it, report it. Call 101 and quote Project Kraken, or email [project.kraken@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:project.kraken@hampshire.pnn.police.uk). See [www.hampshire.police.uk/internet/advice-and-information/general/project-kraken](http://www.hampshire.police.uk/internet/advice-and-information/general/project-kraken).

## New Helicopter Delivery

Hampshire's Coastguard base is to take delivery of the first of eleven new helicopters being given to five bases across the UK.

The £20m Leonardo AW189, built in Yeovil, Somerset is the first of two that will operate from Lee-on-the-Solent, near Portsmouth.

The aircraft will conduct training missions in the coming months before starting operational duties in April.

In the meantime the existing AW139 helicopters will continue to operate.

Bristow Helicopters, which operates the UK search and rescue helicopter service on behalf of HM Coastguard, has been flying training missions to prepare for the aircraft entering service.

The remaining nine AW189s will be in operation at Prestwick, Lydd, St Athan and Inverness by May 2019.

# News & Snippets

## New Audio Guide for HMS Victory

Visitors to Britain's most famous warship can experience the hellish maelstrom of Trafalgar as a new audio guide brings the battle, and HMS Victory, to life.

Tourists clambering aboard the legendary man-o'-war now receive a hand-held audio guide, the first time one has been used in the ship's nearly 100-year career as a museum.

The guide has been introduced as part of the revamp Victory is going through to restore her to her pre-Trafalgar appearance, preserve the ship and give tourists the full story rather than 'just' looking around an old warship.

Nine of Victory's ship's company have been chosen to bring the ship to life through the audio guide, including her 36-year-old captain, Thomas Hardy, an 18-year-old midshipman and Nelson himself.

## Bait Worms - a Valuable Marine Resource

Sea angling is an important coastal industry that has millions of participants world wide. However, something that has often been left out of coastal conservation and fisheries management is the bait that fishers use. A paper from Portsmouth University, 'Bait worms: a valuable and important fishery with implications for fisheries and conservation management' has been published in *Fish and Fisheries* and shows this to be an important global fishery in its own right that is also highly valuable.

The researchers encourage the assessment of the value and impact of bait worm fishing. Action is needed to ensure bait fisheries are sustainable, and environmental impacts are minimised.

The paper is available for a limited time as free access via the Wiley News Round up system at <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/PressRelease/pressReleaseId-128866.html>.

## Snippets

- In response to the threat of the introduction and spread of non-native species through ballast water, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted the "International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments" (the Ballast Water Management (BWM) Convention).
- Harbour maintenance dredging will be carried out in the early part of 2017 in Cowes at Shepards Wharf Marina and approaches, the Town Quay mooring basin, and the Royal Yacht Squadron basin. These maintenance dredge works were originally planned to take place in 2016 but have been re-scheduled for 2017 due to delays in completing the Marine Management Organisation consents process.
- Sussex IFCA is developing an online interactive map highlighting the diversity of marine habitats and species in Sussex coastal waters, see <https://sxbr.c.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=f164dbed934b4ff48d42ae3f76a9aad2>.
- ABPmer has published 'A Brexit Blueprint for Sustainable Seas'. See <http://www.abpmer.co.uk/media/1590/white-paper-brexit-blueprint-for-sustainable-seas.pdf>.
- The Humber Nature Partnership have produced a Humber Nature App. This free app presents information on nature sites around the Humber Estuary in the UK. It provides a description and video of each site along with images of wildlife and habitats in the Humber Estuary and has a quiz. Download at <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/humber-nature/id1108791253?mt=8>.
- Scientists at the National Oceanography Centre and the University of Southampton, have found that the majority of instances of coastal flooding around the UK in the last 100 years have been due to moderate storm events combined with high spring tides, rather than extreme storms.
- The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is funding six groups to deliver community led local development in England. These Fisheries Local Action Groups, FLAGs, will use the knowledge of local stakeholders to tackle fisheries issues at a local level.
- A new report, at the London Boat Show, by membership organisation British Marine, finds that the UK leisure, superyacht and small commercial marine industry is posting revenues not seen since the financial crash. See <http://britishmarine.co.uk/News/2017/January/New-figures-released-by-British-Marine-at-the-2017-London-Boat-Show>.
- In December 2016 two new funding opportunities were launched in the Solent as part of a national call for European Regional Development Funding proposals. £4m of European funding was made available to support SME business growth and competitiveness and a further £3m was made available to develop the low carbon economy in the Solent. See <https://www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds/sme-support-call-in-solent-rolling-call-oc29r16p0416>.
- The MMO has published a document called 'Approaches for monitoring the impact of marine plans'. It includes assessing the implementation and monitoring of the South Marine Plan. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/approaches-for-monitoring-the-impact-of-marine-plans>.

# Solent News

## South Marine Plan Consultation

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is consulting on the Draft South Marine Plan until 27 January 2017.

The plan consists of the Draft South Marine Plan, including the plan's vision, objectives and policies and the Draft Technical Annex which provides more detail to each policy. Supporting documents include the Draft Sustainability Appraisal and the Draft Habitats Regulation Assessment. See <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/mmo/draft-south-marine-plan-consultation/>.

After the plan consultation closes, the responses will be reviewed with the final draft amends being made in February. Depending on the outcome of this review, the MMO will look to adopt the Plan this summer.

## 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 15 March 2017.

Solent News is prepared and edited by the Solent Forum Officers. It is a biannual publication and issue 42 will be produced in summer 2017. 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/](http://www.solentforum.org/publications/solent_news/).

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The following organisations steer the work of the Solent Forum.

