

Virtual Boating & Water Quality event – 20 October 2020 – notes

A range of organisations signed up for the event, 49 in total, including the Environment Agency, Port/Harbour Authorities, Marina's, Natural England, Water Companies, Coastal Forums, NGO's, Sailing Clubs, and British Marine. This CoP mainly covers the Solent, Poole, and Sussex Harbours.

The recording can be found here:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/YD16aJIFUTf_h2FTwE5U6zIJQ7aVGPWmEi8Ybylur4yK13pPflf88t_t3Svtntl.4x44RBaaPUh_wg0w

Presentations are available to view at the link below:

http://www.solentforum.org/services/Current_Protects/Boating

Background

The growing CoP has come together to improve boating behaviours and improve on-board/shore facilities for sewage disposal. This in turn will reduce the risk of contamination to shellfisheries, bathing waters, nutrients impacting wildlife, and improve the health of the natural environment.

Regulation and policy is currently not strong enough or able to bring about cultural change and the provision of adequate facilities. However, leadership from the top is essential, and through collaboration and partnership, and utilising the breadth of knowledge, experience and networks, we can tackle this complex and challenging issue. There is a consensus amongst the group that we must encourage people and businesses to take the right action and make things better.

Key points

Baltic Seas Action Plan - Sweden Environmental law for recreational craft - bans waste water discharges to the sea. Finland – outlets from tanks must be sealed. Sweden has 300 pump out facilities. Only 27 listed around the UK. Marinas have to provide pump outs and not charge boaters – grant funded scheme. No income for maintenance. Canals and Rivers Trust have a successful policy and network of pump outs – we can learn from this.

The '**Love your Harbour**' campaign material is freely available on the Litter Free website:

www.litterfreecoastandsea.co.uk (click on the 'current campaigns' tab to download). The animation can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v87tjAil-Kk>. There was a 'soft launch' over the summer due to Covid-19 but it was promoted by some of the CoP and received very positive feedback. CoP advised to re-launch the campaign next Easter, although a reminder while people are doing maintenance work over the winter would be useful too.

The presentation includes useful things to consider when running behavioural campaigns to ensure it has the right impact, positive messaging, and promotes good behaviours. Using social media reaches thousands of people at very little cost – but messages must be short and punchy. Having an influential figure head to champion campaigns is also beneficial.

Mobile pump out facility by boatfolk – innovative, flexible, minimal set up/running costs, easy to operate, no odour, option to donate to a wildlife charity, great feedback from customers. What's not to like about this solution? Follows the first rule of behaviour change - make it EASY. It's also useful to have a static pump out for very large boats.

Could a vehicle based on shore facility with sufficient pipework be a solution?

Communication options

The Green Blue website is a great way to share information, encourage sustainable management and good practice. Please use or signpost the Pump Out Directory:

<https://thegreenblue.org.uk/resources/boat-user-resources/marine-facilities/>

MARINAS/BOATYARDS/HARBOURS please register your pump out, Elsan disposal, recycling, water points and hazardous waste to be on the map using the our online registration form:

<https://thegreenblue.org.uk/resources/boat-user-resources/marine-facilities/registration/>

Potential to link up with the Water Leaders 'Valuing Water' Sub-group.

Better **data and information** is required to understand: options/usage of on-board facilities; the limiting factors for provision and usage of waste water disposal facilities; the barriers to boaters; and commercial interest.

Litter Free, The Green Blue, EA and NE will consider the option to hold a survey to gather this information on everyone's behalf. It would require everyone to support where possible so we reach a large customer base.

What can we learn from the Canal and River Trust about their policies, management and maintenance regimes for the pump-out network?

Info on sewage collecting systems for leisure boats in Sweden/Finland:

<https://www.vattencentrum.se/content/uploads/2018/02/technology-assessment-for-sewage-collecting-systems-for-leisure-boats.pdf>

Static pump out facilities

Demand for accessible facilities, and interest in healthy seas is growing. Facilities do need to be operational and cost effective (on both sides). More data and information is required to understand issues and barriers to use. Need to be tactical about where they are located, and ensure that Harbours/Estuaries are not over populated with them. If boaters don't want to fit or use holding tanks – we need to focus on improving facilities on jetties/shore. Reward and incentive schemes may be useful.

There is a wider evidence base that 'free at the point of use' is the way to go i.e. if there's a charge include it alongside other annual costs.

The **top 3 priorities for the CoP** to focus on over the next 6 months:

- Promoting good practice through communication and engagement

- Improve waste disposal facilities
- Collecting data and information

The other options closely followed behind were: Influence national and local regulation and policy; and share information and resources.

Who else do we need to engage with?

- The Yacht Harbours Association
- Boat maintenance companies (installation/maintenance)
- Event organisers
- Yacht/Sailing Clubs
- Boat manufacturers
- DEFRA/ Marine Management Organisation/Local Authorities – policy
- Training centres
- Berth holder association reps.