

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT  
FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/9  
[www.friendsch.org](http://www.friendsch.org)

The Friends of Chichester Harbour is a registered charity founded in 1987. The charity is managed by elected members of the Executive Committee (whose names are set out in the notice and agenda for the Annual General Meeting) in accordance with the rules of its constitution.

## MISSION

The mission of the charity is to help maintain and improve Chichester Harbour and its Amenity Area, to protect and preserve the countryside and wildlife, and to promote education in relation to the harbour.

## PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Executive Committee confirms that it has had regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on Public Benefit. It has conducted the affairs of the charity in accordance with its Mission Statement, for the benefit of both present and future generations of the public.

## ACTIVITY

The Friends have three main streams of activity – financing projects, providing work parties and being represented in harbour governance. Where there is a clear consensus we also bring our membership lobbying power to bear in issues that might adversely affect Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

## ACHIEVEMENTS

I am pleased to report that your charity is in a very healthy state. Recent initiatives to increase membership have brought the membership to record levels, about 2,700 individuals plus 17 Corporate Members and 11 Group Members. We have introduced Standing Orders to try and hang on to all! This has been resisted in the past for fear of losing the generous donations most add to their subscription each year. So please include a donation in your Standing Order if you are able. Our priority, however, is to get as many people as possible to take an interest in the harbour. In line with this objective we keep the basic subscription at a level affordable by all £5.

Attendance at work parties has been high. Friends funding given to Harbour Conservancy projects has been at a record level, just under £30,000 for the last financial year. The Friends have provided committee members to the Conservancy Harbour Advisory Committee, the Chichester Harbour Trust, Save East Head Campaign and the Solent Protection Society. Members have been active in Parish Councils, Residents Associations and Societies around the harbour.

Income, at £62,000 was slightly below income for the previous year ending March 31st 2008 at £66,000 - but this was as a result of legacies being significantly lower this last year whilst other income from subscriptions and donations was substantially up.

The total expense of running the Friends was reduced from £5,500 in 2007/8 to £4,500. At the end of the year we carried forward reserves of £97,000 compared with the reserves carried forward from the previous year of £69,500. We have adopted a policy, which recognises that some of those reserves are designated as being held against longer term potential funding requirement.

We have transferred financial accounting from long hand written ledgers to digital computer based. We have also moved the membership database from a dedicated PC held only by the Membership Secretary to the Harbour Office server. This allows more flexible use of the data, better analysis of the data and greater security of information. We have started multiple communications directly from the database to members through email addresses. All this has involved a considerable amount of reprogramming and 'setting up'

work. We are very much indebted to Val Evans, our Membership Secretary, Richard Evans our Treasurer and Lucy Oldrini in the Harbour Office for the great number of hours of work and computer expertise involved in achieving this.

We are currently carrying out an overhaul of our newsletter hand distribution system.

We have financed either partly or wholly the following during this period:

Assisting public enjoyment of Chichester Harbour :

Harbour News – an annual publication with a wealth of information and articles about the harbour

Activities programme – annual in April. Gives all organised Harbour Conservancy activities for the ensuing 12 months

Photographic competition – cash prizes for photographs taken in the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Farm open day – walks and tour of a local farm

Portable T loop system for users of hearing aids on guided walks or in the classroom.

Portable Bird Song identifier for use on guided walks or in the classroom

Maintenance of the restored Oyster Boat Terror operated throughout the summer for public trips in the harbour.

Maintaining and improving public access to Chichester Harbour :

Shoreline footpath maintenance

Dell Quay footpath improvements

Placing cycle posts adjacent to favourite walks

Maintaining and improving the Harbour and AONB environment :

5885 saplings planted for hedging and tree replenishment

Fencing at Fishbourne Meadows

Wildfowling maintenance of Fishbourne pond and other sites

Providing education for young and old :

Two ponds constructed at Dell quay for educational observation of marine plants and life

Junior Conservancy- providing discussion forums for schools to debate an environmental topic in a mock of District Council meetings

Earth, Air and Water event for schools with instruction at the Education Centre and an exhibition of results

Production of a book on Water Voles

Harbour Creekies – funding for transport to aid attending presentations

Get afloat fund - providing access on the water for disadvantaged adults and children

Improving our scientific understanding of the harbour environment :

Greenshank migration story – ringing and tracking the Greenshanks migration pattern

Harbour Seal Survey – tagging and tracking the seals movements and habits

Making the case for future statutory funding :

Valuing Chichester Harbour

A coastal footpath audit of condition and improvement required

We have lobbied :

Chichester District Council to oppose the proposed Burns Shipyard development  
Havant Borough in response to their Local Development Framework consultations

Details of our responses can be seen on our website [www.friendsch.org](http://www.friendsch.org) "Finance, Projects & Lobbying" page.

As ever we are greatly indebted to John Davis and his staff who give us an enormous amount of moral and practical support. It is always a pleasure to work with them. Alison Fowler and her deputy Nicky Horter are invaluable to our operations and give a lot of their time from busy desks to make sure our charity is used to maximum effect in the care of the harbour.

Thank you to all our volunteers. The work parties thanks to high attendance have achieved a lot of work in all weathers during this period. Our thanks to the newsletter editor, Ian McIntyre for producing a high standard newsletter throughout the year and cartoonist Roger Smith also to the stuffing parties led by Dave Lees.

Finally, thank you on your behalf to the Commodore of Chichester Yacht Club for extending the facilities of his club to us this evening and to all the sailing clubs who so readily provide facilities for us throughout the year.

Martin Rhodes OBE  
Chairman