

Chairman's Report

Financial Year 2010/11



The Friends of Chichester Harbour is a registered charity founded in 1987. The charity is managed by elected members of the Executive Committee in accordance with the rules of its constitution.

Aims & Objectives

To help maintain and improve Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its amenity area, to protect the countryside and wildlife, and to promote education in relation to this area.

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 aims and objectives, 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 on issues that might adversely affect Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Our achievements in 2010/11

I am pleased to report that your charity is in a healthy state. Our membership levels continue to show a positive trend; our work parties are very well attended and despite the challenging environment we have been able to support the Conservancy with increased levels of finance for conservancy projects. During the year we introduced 'Friends only' events which proved to be popular and we are continuing to develop this programme. To help raise public awareness of the Friends work we have given a number of illustrated presentations throughout the AONB and provided articles and photographs for local newspapers and village magazines and we see the need to increase this activity

The Treasurer's Financial Report is set out on the reverse of this evening's agenda and will be presented by the Treasurer Richard Evans after this report.

We have been and still are applying a consistent finance policy – we try to build reserves up a little year on year particularly as we receive very occasional legacies or large donations.

When a large project, like The Stables Eames Farm, requires our financial support the Executive Committee feel justified to draw down on those reserves accordingly. The short fall last year results from the large grant to the Eames Farm project. As a matter of financial prudence this year we aim to allow our reserves to build up a little so that we can respond to any future larger scale funding request.

Over the period of this report we financed, partly financed, or provided practical help for the following projects by the Harbour Conservancy:

Assisting public enjoyment of Chichester Harbour:

Chichester Harbour News & Guide – an annual publication with information and interesting articles about the harbour.

Chichester Harbour Guided Walks & Activities Programme – an annual publication detailing organised activities over the ensuing 12 months. The number of people attending these activities for this period was 2,182. Activities included the successful Earth, Air and Water art-based events.

Photographic Competition – we funded prizes for the winning photographs. This competition refreshes the Conservancy’s material available for publicity. 300 photo entries in 2009.

Get Afloat Fund – 10 trips were run in this period to help disadvantaged children and adults take a boat trip onboard the “Solar Heritage”

10 pairs of robust, waterproof binoculars were purchased for use on board Solar Heritage.

‘Terror’ - We paid for the annual maintenance of the restored Oyster Boat ‘Terror’ which operated throughout the summer for sailing trips in the harbour, 39 such trips were achieved in the period of this report.

A fascinating web-based project helping to celebrate 40 years of the Conservancy by capturing people’s memories was funded. The project is still being added to and will provide a long-lasting legacy.

Two short harbour films were produced on ‘Why Chichester Harbour is so Special’ and the ‘Work of the Conservancy’

Maintaining and improving the Harbour and AONB environment:

5,700 saplings were planted as part of the woodland and hedgerow planting scheme to enhance the farmed landscape of the AONB. In total 780 metres of hedgerow, 2.5ha area of woodland.

Additionally 4,500 were planted at Maybush Copse Chidham as part of the creation of a new woodland.

Funding was provided to create two osprey nesting platforms on Thorney Island. All relevant consents have now been received and the platforms will be installed this winter.

Habitat maintenance was carried out regularly at Fishbourne meadows and in the stream. The southern marsh orchid count in Fishbourne Meadows for this season was an encouraging 500.

Scrub clearance at Thorney Island, North Common and Sandy Point Hayling Island was another regular feature during the period for our working parties.

Hedge laying was carried out in The Dell, Chidham.

Coppicing by our work parties helped in the traditional style management of Salterns Wood.

Ragwort & invasive weed control at Gutner Point and Ellanore Farm encouraged a wider diversity of flora.

Our work parties cleared bramble at Eames Farm to improve meadow land.

Maintaining and improving public access to Chichester Harbour:

We funded vital footpath improvement works to a busy section of footpath at Rookwood where flooding and erosion threatened to restrict public access.

We part funded reconstruction of a section of shoreline footpath on Thorney Island including reinforcement of the sea defences.

Two pathway boardwalk sections were laid by our work parties at Chalkdown and Horsepond.

550 metres in total of footpath were repaired or improved.

Phase 1 of a condition assessment of shoreline footpaths was carried out – identifying sections of shoreline paths most at risk.

The Friends continued their programme of placing cycle posts adjacent to favourite walks.

Providing education for young and old:

Support for education has been wide ranging, including:

Continuation of the successful and popular Junior Conservancy with 6 local schools Harbour Creekies – we funded transport to aid the public attend these popular presentations about the AONB.

Development of an after school wildlife club for 6-10 year olds at Chidham School.

Continuation of the successful Streamers project with Chidham and Fishbourne Schools where pupils monitored local streams.

Continuation and expansion of the Wild and Wonderful Club for 7-9 year olds.

Creation of a new Harbour History session from primary to secondary level, looking at the rich diversity of history within the AONB.

Major projects

The largest donation from the Friends was for the conversion of a redundant stable block at Eames Farm, Thorney Island. The Friends provided a vital contribution towards the work which created a rural education centre within one of the largest areas of coastal grazing marsh in the AONB.

Thank you:

Thank you to all our many volunteers, our list is long, the work parties all of which were very well attended with cheerful volunteers. Thanks to the Executive Committee especially those with major responsibility - Val and Richard Evans, Membership Secretary and Treasurer respectively, Ian McIntyre for doing a fantastic job as Newsletter Editor, Nigel Roper Vice Chairman for his support particularly during my periods of absence and Chris Punnett for providing the committee with excellent secretarial support. Cartoonist Roger Smith who adds his artistic and humorous touch to our newsletters, the stuffing and distribution parties led with great efficiency by Dave Lees and Catherine Jones. Thanks also to our hand deliverers who save us a great deal of money in postage costs allowing more funding to go to

environmental projects. We owe a huge thanks to Alyson Griffin who created our website and acts as our Website manager.

Finally and most warmly our thanks to the Harbour Conservancy staff who give us an enormous amount of moral and practical support. They politely and cheerfully accept our interruptions to their busy working day answering queries or giving guidance. The Harbour Rangers who help us make our work parties enjoyable events. We are indebted, as ever, to Alison Fowler, the AONB manager, who always makes time to keep us well briefed and informed.

Most of all thank you to you our members for your outstanding support and generosity.

Bernard Clarke

Chairman

October 2011