



Editorial

WHO DOES WHAT?

It may be timely to bring everyone up to speed on the organisations involved in supporting the harbour - a sort of 'Who does What'. The Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC) has the primary role in managing the harbour and surrounding land. It has 15 members representing Hampshire and West Sussex County Councils, Chichester District Council, Havant Borough Council and the Conservancy Advisory Committee.

Since 1971 the Conservancy has been legally obliged to consult the Advisory Committee (AC) on the management of the harbour and the amenity area. The AC has on it representatives of the various interests in the harbour and AONB, Peter Henshaw represents the Friends.

The Chichester Harbour Trust came into being in 2002 as an independent charity, with the object to 'acquire land, sites and buildings within the Chichester Harbour AONB and its setting of landscape, environmental, recreational or historic value and to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the natural beauty and wildlife of the area for the public benefit'. The Friends are represented by the Chairman as a Trustee.

The Friends of Chichester Harbour (FCH) was created in

1987 as a charity. Our objectives are 'for the benefit of the public, to maintain, repair and improve Chichester Harbour and its amenity area; to protect and preserve the countryside and wildlife along its coast; and to advance the education of the public in relation to the Harbour'.

The serious erosion of East Head, which necessitated the construction of the rock berm in 1999, has led to the formation of an East Head Working Party, which includes members of the Advisory Committee, the Conservancy, West Wittering Estates, West Wittering Parish Council and Chichester Harbour Federation. There is also an East Head Steering Group which includes representatives from Chichester District Council, the National Trust, English Nature and the Conservancy. The purpose of the steering group is to reconcile the interests of those represented so as to find an acceptable solution to the problem. A fund raising committee will be set up as soon as the long-term solution to East Head is agreed, since it is probable that private finance will have to be found.

It is hoped that planning permission will soon be granted for the short-term measures to reinforce the berm, so that the work can be carried out during the next suitable tide.

David Rolph, Chairman

MORE TREES, BETTER PATHS

Three times more trees than usual have been planted in the Harbour this winter, reports Peter Henshaw, our representative on the Conservancy Advisory Committee. Nearly 15,000 trees and shrubs have been planted, mainly at Westlands Farm, Itchenor, Bosham, Cobnor and Thorney Island. As usual, Friends' working parties played their part. As the plantings were on good agricultural land, it is thought (and hoped) that losses could be as low as 5%.

Peter also reports that a full hydrographic survey of the harbour is being carried out by the Channel Coastal Observatory, paid for by central government and local coastal authorities. The work will consist of bathymetric surveys of all subtidal areas of the harbour, and aerial photography. The results will be passed to the UK Hydrographic Office and in due course amendments made to Chart 3418 covering the harbour. We hope to report in a future issue on some of the changes that have been found.

Two important sections of the footpath between Itchenor and East Head have been repaired and improved by the Conservancy. The section opposite Bosham Channel was part funded by the Friends. The second section at Rookwood has been re-treated as part of the HLF programme. The new cycle path is due to be completed in late August this year.

Friends tree planting at Itchenor



If you see this plaque, you know we have been hard at work! The Conservancy have produced them on our behalf, and they are being put up on all the sites where our volunteers have been at work, or where we have provided funds to support harbour conservation work.



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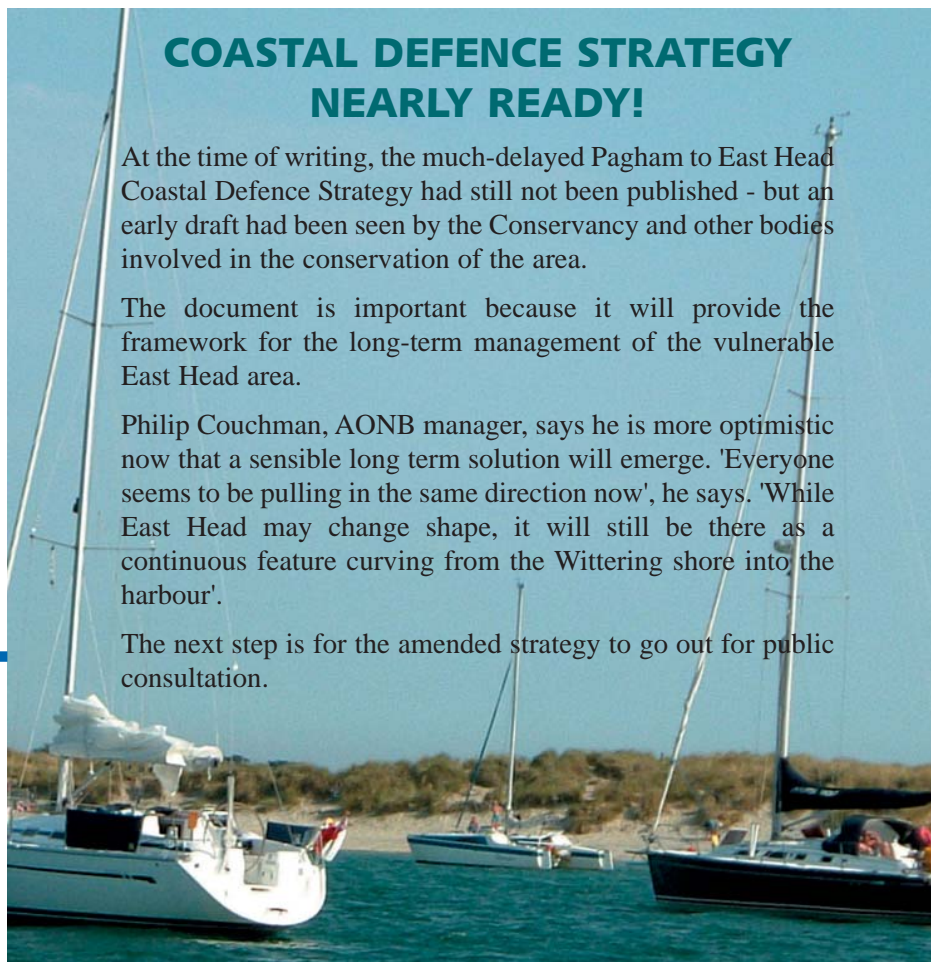
COASTAL DEFENCE STRATEGY NEARLY READY!

At the time of writing, the much-delayed Pagham to East Head Coastal Defence Strategy had still not been published - but an early draft had been seen by the Conservancy and other bodies involved in the conservation of the area.

The document is important because it will provide the framework for the long-term management of the vulnerable East Head area.

Philip Couchman, AONB manager, says he is more optimistic now that a sensible long term solution will emerge. 'Everyone seems to be pulling in the same direction now', he says. 'While East Head may change shape, it will still be there as a continuous feature curving from the Wittering shore into the harbour'.

The next step is for the amended strategy to go out for public consultation.



HARMONIOUS SUMMER IS FORECAST

With thousands of people afloat on the harbour on busy summer days, the Conservancy have taken several initiatives to promote harmony on the water.

Their latest move has been to publish three useful booklets, which will be given to all harbour-registered boats and visiting sailors as well.

One sets out some do's and don'ts - know the collision regulations, check the weather, don't create excessive wash, and so on.

Another, by sailing journalist Mark Rushall, explains why boats manoeuvre in the way they do when racing, and answers some of the questions most often posed by power boat owners, such as 'why do I always have to change course for sailing boats?'

Non-boating members who would like a copy of the booklets can obtain them from the Harbour Office or on-line at www.conservancy.co.uk.



PROTECTION FOR EAST HEAD

Planning permission for the short-term protection of East Head is expected to be given shortly, probably in June.

When the Conservancy have the go-ahead, they will recycle some 13,000 metres of sand and shingle from the northern tip of East Head back to the Hinge. This will be placed on both sides of the rock berm, which has been very effective in stabilising the situation during the past winter.

The long-term solution will follow from the recommendations of the long-awaited Pagham to East Head Coastal Defence Strategy.

GENEROUS DONATIONS

The Friends are very grateful for the receipt of two large donations: £17,000 in the form of a legacy from a supporter of our work, and £10,000 to help to protect East Head for the future.

This generosity helps us to do even more to protect and improve the harbour we all appreciate so much.

Our membership continues to increase: we now have 2025 annual members, and no fewer than 250 people who have signed up for Life Membership.

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Tackling the Weighty Problem of Marine Litter

Scientists say glass bottles can last for up to one million years

Litter - if it's a problem on land, it's even worse at sea. It can kill marine life, injure children playing on beaches, and leave an unsightly mess at the high tide mark on some of our best beaches.

And the problem is getting worse. The Solent Protection Society estimates that the number of items of litter per square kilometre has risen by over 82% in 10 years. Their report for 2002 shows that a staggering 241,285 items of litter were recovered in the Solent, weighing 15,450 kg - the equivalent of three large buses.

Not surprisingly, the Harbour has a litter problem too - if you walk down the west side of Thorney Island after a series of westerly winds, you can't miss the lines of broken bottles, plastic food containers and rusty cans along the shoreline.

Fortunately, there is an effective system in the harbour for keeping litter under control. There are 33 'harbour watchers' keeping a keen eye on land and sea, and reporting back to the Conservancy on litter, broken stiles, damaged footpaths and other hazards. And the Friends help Conservancy staff by regularly cleaning up the shoreline round the harbour.

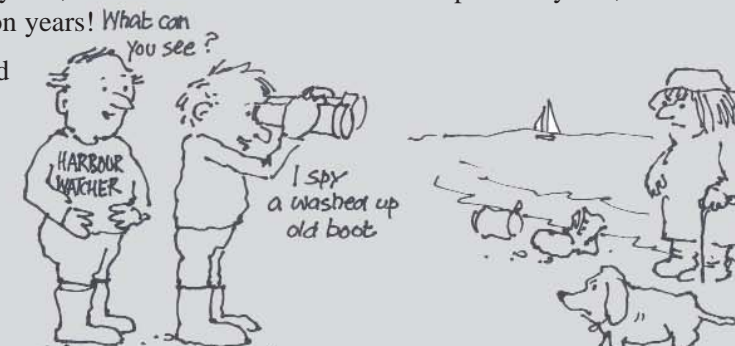
Ignoring the laws on litter at sea can be expensive. A shipping company was fined £10,000 with £5,000 costs last September for dumping a large plastic bag in the Solent, just off the Isle of Wight, the Solent Protection Society reports.

In her current newsletter for Harbour Watch volunteers, Alison Fowler, the Conservancy's AONB Officer, reports that 275 bags of litter were collected inside the harbour last year. The most prolific items were plastics (bottles and containers especially), metal items such as drink cans, and perhaps surprisingly, paper.

Alison says the types of litter don't vary much from year to year - but that's not surprising when you realise that plastic bags can exist in the sea for anything from 20 to 1,000 years; aluminium cans can survive for up to 100 years, and glass bottles, the scientists say, can last for up to 1 million years!

Clearing it up is a very worthwhile project. If Friends would like to be involved in other voluntary activities such as Harbour Watch, a new volunteer pack is available from the Conservancy.

If you would like to join the next Friends litter clearing party, it will be at Rookwood on 14 July. Contact Nicky Horter at the Conservancy for details, and also to check whether there are any ad hoc litter clearing activities planned.



There are 33 harbour watchers keeping a keen eye on land and sea

TRUST ACQUIRES FOUR SITES

Four sites of significant conservation value were acquired by the Chichester Harbour Trust in 2004.

Their annual review, just published, shows that the charity is making steady progress and has already raised £370,000 in donations and pledges.

The four sites which have been offered to the Trust to conserve them for future generations are well scattered round the Harbour.

On the Wittering shore, the three acre Ellanore Spit is being given to the Trust on a 999 year lease. This important area of saltmarsh and shingle will be managed on behalf of the Trust by the Conservancy.

In Chidham, a two acre site known as the Dell is to be let to the Trust on a 125 year lease. This woodland area lies just one field away from the harbour's edge. It will also be managed for the Trust by the Conservancy with the help of local residents.

Also in Chidham, the freehold of the 4.5 acre Chidmere Pond is being leased for 999 years by the owners of the adjacent property but ownership of the freehold will allow the Trust to enforce a range of covenants designed to protect the unspoiled nature of this important site.

Earlier in 2004, a Fishbourne resident transferred to the Trust all rights to a reedbed and woodland site of about an acre at the top of Fishbourne channel.

The Trust has also played a leading role in establishing a contingency plan to acquire the undeveloped part of Thorney Island, should the Ministry of Defence ever decide to withdraw. We hope to write about this development in more detail in a future issue.

HELP OUR RECRUITING DRIVE

Ten new members were enlisted at the traditional boat building day held at Dolphin Quay boatyard in Emsworth - our thanks to the Conservancy staff who did this on our behalf.

These events are an excellent forum to spread more knowledge of the work we do.

If you can help to man our stands at the Dell Quay Festival of Sail on 8-10 July, or at the Emsworth Food Festival from 9-11 September, please contact Penny Wilson our new Secretary by phone or e-mail (address on back page).



Friends recruitment stall at the Traditional Boat Building Day



Ringed Plover, one of the birds that use Langstone Harbour

Wardens wanted for bird nesting sites

We are looking for volunteers to warden some important seabird nesting sites in Langstone Harbour. The Conservancy's conservation officer, Anne de Potier, says 'the birds use Chichester Harbour for feeding and we feel concerned about them as though they were based here'.

The sites are on oyster beds on the north-west corner of

Hayling Island, and are an important breeding area for terns, gulls and waders.

John Shillitoe, the Hants and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust's Summer Warden, says there is a shingle island in the tidal lagoon there where most of the birds breed. Little Terns have bred there, and the area is used by Common Terns, Black Headed Gulls, Ringed Plovers and Oystercatchers.

The bunds round the lagoon are also a high tide roost for many thousands of waders in winter.

'Once the terns have returned, we aim to have the site wardened as near full time as possible', John explains. If you can help, please contact him via JohnS@hwt.org.uk or ring 07947 162784.

BUY A THRILLER, HELP THE FRIENDS

'The Nemesis File', a novel set in and around Chichester Harbour, is being offered to the Friends at a reduced price, and the author will generously make a donation to us of £1.50 for each copy bought by members.

James Morley, the author, has raced and cruised boats in the harbour for most of his life. 'Like so many people, I fell in love with the harbour and its surroundings, and so it was natural for it to be the setting of my first novel', he says.

The central character in the book lives in Fishbourne, works at Birdham, and keeps a small sailing yacht at Itchenor. Chichester Harbour features in 10 of the 21 chapters, much of the action being at Itchenor and the central character's fictional sail making business. The climax of the story, described as a tense mystery thriller, is set in the waters of the Harbour entrance.

'The Nemesis File' is on sale from bookshops for £7.95, or £7 including postage direct from James Morley on 01420 5538688 or www.jimmorleybooks.com.



Jim signing books at the launch