



Solent Protection Society

Registered Charity No. 236539

News

Protecting the Solent and its Environment for Future Generations

Autumn 2011

Chairman's Letter

These are interesting times in the Solent, with the potential to continue to keep your Council busy. In the west the appeal by Wightlink, which concerns the Lymington ferry terminal and indirectly the effects on the salt marshes took place in October. Whilst we were not professionally represented, Council Members were in attendance each day.

In the east, the financial difficulties of Bembridge Harbour means that it is now run by Administrators, and the Council recently held its September meeting at Bembridge Yacht Club following a tour of the harbour.

In the centre we have the prospect of two biomass plants on the water's edge. The one at Southampton, which will be in the docks, will soon start a second round of public consultation, and the other, up the River Medina above the Folly, has not yet reached that stage.

Outside the Solent the major news concerns the large Navitus Bay wind farm lying to the south west of the Isle of Wight, which is in an advance state of planning. The Council await with interest details of the land connections, which may well be in the Solent.

The common thread of these last three proposals is the possible resulting increase in commercial traffic in the Solent generally and in the western Solent in particular. The wind farm, being situated to the south west of the Island, is of concern as it may cause an increase in coastal traffic through The Needles. The Council is trying to persuade the Marine Management Organisation to monitor current traffic levels in order to have a sound basis on which to make any necessary future decisions.

The Council is comprised of a maximum of 25 persons and currently we have 21 members. Half our Council members are people with a particular expertise in their field and about half join us to monitor and present to the Council changes, problems or developments that are proposed for the area in which they live. Presently we lack representation in the east and would be glad to recruit members from Portsmouth or Chichester. If you feel that you could spare a morning once a month or if you know someone who you would like to recommend to the Council, please let me know. It is usual for potential Members to attend as guests for a short while to enable them to confirm their interest in our work, before committing themselves.

We would appreciate any help that you, the members, can give in ensuring that the Council receives this necessary infusion of new blood, and of course, the membership of the Society will only hold its numbers or grow if you recruit your friends to become members. This year saw a successful members' day at Buckler's Hard. We are now working on ideas for next year. If you can come to the AGM on December 5th at the Royal Southampton Yacht Club, we would be glad to hear your suggestions. In particular the geographical split between the Mainland and the Island makes it hard to appeal to all members, and we would like to hear from members on the Island.

We look forward to seeing as many of you as are able to join us at the AGM and we thank you for your continued support for the Society.

*Jeremy Clark
Council Chairman*

Bembridge Harbour

Solent Protection Society is a founder member of the Bembridge Harbour Trust, a registered charity which aims to buy Bembridge Harbour and to hold it in perpetuity for the benefit of the local communities.

Further to our report on Bembridge Harbour in our last newsletter, members of Solent Protection's Council visited the harbour in September to see the area which the Bembridge Harbour Trust is working hard to try to purchase. Since then, Michael MacInnes, Chairman of the Trustees has issued the following statement...

(Please go to the back page to read the statement)



Marine Conservation Zones

In order to contribute to the protection and recovery of the richness of our marine wildlife and environment, the UK Government is committed to establishing, by 2012, a strong, ecologically coherent and well managed network of marine protected areas, that is well understood and supported by sea users. In England this network will include the following types of Marine Protected Area:

Sites of European and International importance:

- Special Areas of Conservation designated under the EC Habitats Directive;
- Special Protection Areas designated under the EC Wild Birds Directive; and
- Ramsar Sites designated under the Convention on Wetlands

Sites of national importance:

- Marine Conservation Zones, as specified in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009; and
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest, designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).

Marine Conservation Zones will be aimed at conserving and promoting the recovery of:

- The range of marine biodiversity in our waters;
- Rare or threatened habitats and species;
- Globally or regionally significant areas for geographically restricted habitats or species;
- Important aggregations or communities of marine species, particularly biodiversity 'hotspots';
- Areas important for key life cycle stages of mobile species, including habitats known to be important for reproduction and nursery stages;
- Areas contributing to the maintenance of marine biodiversity and ecosystem functioning in our seas; and features of particular geological or geomorphological interest

The Solent Protection Society has contributed towards the work on recommending the areas for designation for MCZ status. This has been part of a project for South East England known as "Balanced Seas". We attended a Local Group concerned with the Solent which provided advice on the recommendations being developed by a Regional Stakeholder Group. The final recommendations have now been submitted to Natural England

and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee who will provide their own statutory advice. The final recommendations, with the advice of NE and JNCC and also the independent Science Advisory Panel, and also the Impact Assessment which is currently being prepared will be presented to Defra in January 2012. The Minister will decide which of the recommendations will go forward to the three month public consultation. The information and input received during the public consultation will contribute to the decision by the Minister on which sites will be designated.

The purpose of these Local Groups is to provide advice on which areas should be recommended for designation as an MCZ but the process was hampered because at this stage the level of protection and the form of management had not been decided. The management required in MCZs will be identified on a site-by-site basis and there will be consultation with the users of the area. Activities in a MCZ will only be restricted if they damage or disturb the designated species or habitats. Many activities will be able to continue. There will be no blanket bans except in the smaller Reference Areas where extraction and deposition, as well as any human activities that cause damage or disturbance that cannot be mitigated, will be restricted. These Reference Areas provide a key opportunity to demonstrate the unimpacted state of a broad range of marine features.

Within the Solent area, there are three sites which have been recommended as MCZs, on the north coast of the Island as well as Fareham Creek in Portsmouth Harbour and a large area east of the Isle of Wight from Bembridge down to Sandown Bay. The three areas on the north coast of the Island are from the Needles to Fort Albert, from Yarmouth to Cowes and from Norris to Ryde. There is also a small rMCZ to the east of the Island shown as area 28 on the accompanying map.

The matter is now in the hands of scientists and administrators to decide which sites will go forward to formal public consultation in the middle of next year. The Solent Protection Society remains concerned at the difficulties in publicising the recommendations and their potential restrictions in a way that the general public will understand and respect. There are no obvious boundaries at sea and there are unlikely to be proposals to use buoys or other means to enable a yachtsman to know whether they have crossed a boundary into an MCZ.

The Council will study the proposals contained in the consultation with interest.

Solent Protection Members' Outing To Buckler's Hard

On 8th June over 40 members and guests enjoyed a day out at Buckler's Hard and the Beaulieu River.

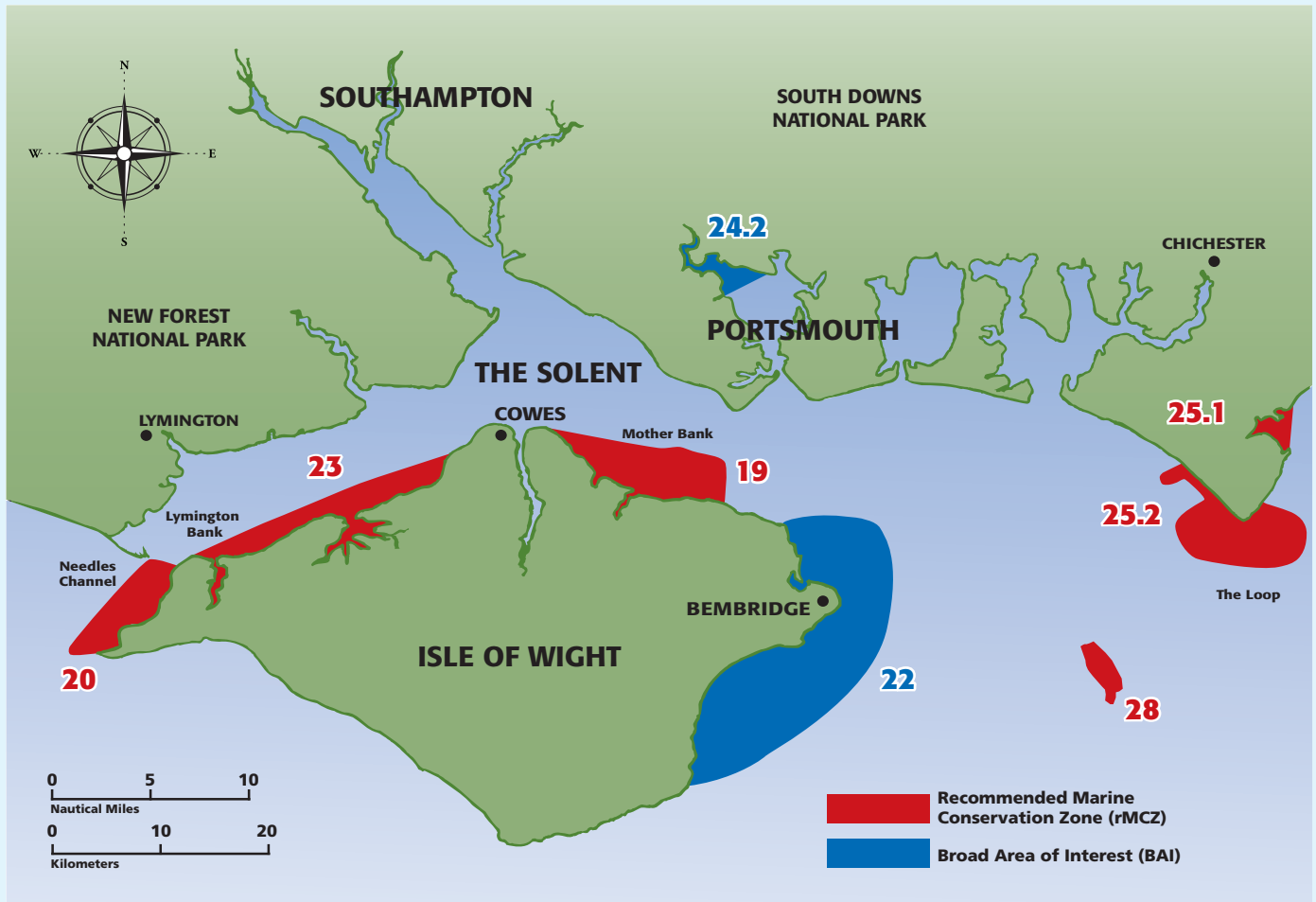


After meeting up at the Tea Shop at Buckler's Hard the group walked down to the Beaulieu River where we boarded the Oliver B river boat for our cruise. The Captain gave us a guided commentary, pointing out the places of historical and ecological interest on the Beaulieu River and the abundant wildlife that inhabits its banks.

After the cruise we arrived back at the Master Builder's Restaurant where we enjoyed a delicious lunch, followed by a tour of Buckler's Hard village and the Maritime Museum. Our guides were 'Mr & Mrs Adams' characters from 18th century Buckler's Hard, who told us all about life in the village in those days and the building of ships for Nelson's fleet.

It was a very enjoyable day and we hope that even more members will join us for our outing in 2012.

Recommended sites for Marine Conservation Zones in the Solent



19 rMCZ Norris to Ryde

This site contains some of the best seagrass beds in the Solent and a substantial area of undersea mud, rich in worms and bivalves. Wootton Creek has an important population of the rare Tentacled Lagoon Worm, providing an additional replicate for the population in the Thames.

20 rMCZ The Needles

This landmark area is hugely rich in marine wildlife, due to the mix of current-swept and sheltered seabed habitats supporting rare species such as Stalked Jellyfish and Peacock's Tail seaweed, which is found only in the Isle of Wight, Dorset and Devon.

22 BAI Bembridge

Perhaps the most diverse area of all, whose seagrass beds, rocky ledges and reefs provide particularly productive habitats for a large range of species, such as seahorses, lagoon worms, Stalked Jellyfish and rare seaweeds.

23 rMCZ Yarmouth to Cowes

This site contains good examples of a variety of rocky outcrops, boulder beds and chalk formations that host rich communities of small burrowing animals, as well as the rare Lagoon Sand Shrimp. Newtown Creek contains important Native Oyster beds and Bouldnor Cliff is of significant geological interest for its fossilised trees and relic peat and clay formations.

24.2 Portsmouth Harbour

The north-east corner of Portsmouth Harbour has healthy Native Oyster beds and may provide a suitable location for their protection.

25.1 rMCZ Pagham Harbour

This site is particularly important as the only place where Defolin's Lagoon Snail occurs in the project area, and only one of three places where this species is found at all in the UK. It lives in salty water caught between shingle. This site is also home to the rare Lagoon Sand Shrimp and the Starlet Sea Anemone.

25.2 rMCZ Selsey Bill and the Hounds

This well known rocky and reef area includes the famous Mixon Hole, thought to be a segment of an ancient river gorge, its steep clay walls with numerous ledges and crevices providing home to a rich diversity of marine wildlife.

28 rMCZ Utopia

This area south of Selsey Bill, known as Utopia, is a unique outcrop of rocky boulders. It is proposed for protection of the rare and fragile sponges, colourful sea anemones and other marine invertebrates that grow over it profusely.

Lymington/Yarmouth Ferries

The “new ferries” on the Lymington/Yarmouth service are no longer new, having been introduced in February 2009. Since then, they have been operating safely, albeit controversially.

To settle this controversy, two matters need to be resolved: first, planning permission for necessary improvements to shore works at the Lymington terminal; second, planning permission for recharge and habitat creation works at Boiler Marsh, just to the east of the Lymington River estuary. These matters were the subjects of planning applications made by Wightlink in November 2010 and June 2011. Wightlink has now lodged appeals against the failure of the New Forest District Council and the New Forest Park Authority to determine these applications. These appeals were heard at a public inquiry held between 11th and 20th October.

Solent Protection Society, while welcoming the application for upgrading and modification of the shore works at Lymington and supporting the principle of the beneficial use of dredged material to restore or improve the salt marshes, objected to the applications on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence to explain why Boiler Marsh had been chosen, or on the effects of the propulsion system on the river channel. These objections were taken into account by the Inspector conducting the public inquiry, together with a number of other aspects of the ferry operation.

In order to contribute to the science at the inquiry, the Society retained the services of Professor Kenneth Pye of Reading University who is an expert in the field of sediment transfer. He was retained by others to appear at the Inquiry, but Council felt that, by asking Professor Pye to fully acquaint himself with the matters surrounding our comments to the planning authorities, he would be better able to add to the science and facts at the inquiry.

It is to be hoped that the outcome of the inquiry will be such as to sustain this important service between Lymington and Yarmouth.

Get Involved

If you, as a member, would like to become more closely involved in our response to the various national and local pressures that relate to the Solent, please contact either me or the Secretary and we will arrange for a Council Member to contact you and talk through our present work and discuss how you can help. We would greatly value your input.

*Jeremy Clark
Council Chairman*

Solent Pollution

Several events have raised the question of the impact of pollution on the Solent. This note summarises the content of a larger paper discussing the topic. One can consider there are three basic questions:- what is pollution, what are the potential sources of pollution in the Solent and who is responsible for preventing and controlling possible pollution incidents?

Pollution can arise from various sources and would include the following:

- Air pollution which could be particulates or gases and should include noise;
- Land pollution which could result in damage to the shoreline, intertidal zone, seabed or water;
- Water pollution, toxic or not.

These potential sources of pollution can originate from very many sources some of which are in the following list in no particular order:

- **Oil pollution**
- **Collisions and groundings**
- **Nuclear pollution**
- **Toxic Sewage**
- **Agricultural and other runoff**
- **General rubbish**
- **Spills from marinas**
- **Waterway blockages**
- **Ship tank washings etc**
- **Ship ballast water dumping**
- **Ship discharge of grey and black water**
- **Noxious smells**
- **Dangerous gases**
- **Airborne particulates**
- **Aircraft exhaust**
- **Noise**
- **Fire from many sources**

There are many places which could be pollution sources. These included sewage works, various facilities servicing leisure, ferries and major shipping, various industrial complexes be they large or small, infrastructure such as pipelines, side effects from land and air transport.

The large and varied pollution sources means there are many organisations that are responsible for policing these activities, either with legal backing or as codes of practice. The list presented in the full document is quite large and includes bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Port Authorities, various Defence organisations, and DEFRA.

The production of the document is an ongoing project with further work being planned to consider the completeness of the identified hazards and establishing further facts about issues such as the emissions from Fawley and plans for dealing with incidents. Proposed developments will also be monitored. Assistance has been given by ABP and advice and comment will be sought from other bodies where possible.

Isle of Wight Wind Turbines

The need to make a significant increase in the generation of electricity from renewable sources is recognised internationally, at European level and within the U.K. At present only about 3% of the energy used in the U.K. comes from renewable sources. In the UK, the Committee on Climate Change has advised the Government that this figure should be increased to 15% by 2020.

Many people consider that the answer is not to be found in wind turbines, but in nuclear or tidal energy. But nuclear power plants have the disadvantage that they cannot be demolished, and the development of the technology of tidal energy is believed to be at least ten years behind that of wind power.

There is a very real danger of a rise in sea levels having a catastrophic impact on the Solent as we know it, if we do nothing to increase the proportion of our electricity that is derived from renewable sources, and at present wind power is the only option available.



The Isle of Wight is popular with Wind Farm developers, because to be viable Wind Farms need sites where the profile of wind is favourable. An additional attraction is the existence on the Island of the global Research and Development facility for Vestas, the Danish company which is in the forefront of wind turbine development. Acting against these attractions are the very high proportion of the Island which is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the existence of ThWART, The Wight Against Rural Wind Turbines, an action group which has for years campaigned actively against wind turbines on the Island, particularly in the West Wight.

The Solent Protection Society is, of course, concerned with the Solent. So Wind Farms proposed on sites on the Island which have little or no impact on the Solent are of academic interest only. These include Ventnor Golf Club, where an application for planning consent for a wind farm is under consideration, and Cheverton Down, where Cornwall Light and Power hold a planning consent for a single wind turbine on a site within the AONB. This site is important, because, although there is an existing consent for a single wind turbine, its size is too small to be viable commercially, and Cornwall Light and Power applied for planning consent for a much larger scheme.

Their application was refused, and the refusal recently upheld on appeal. This was of passing interest only to Solent Protection because although the proposed wind turbines may have been visible in certain parts of the Solent, and they were to be large,

they would be at such a distance, and the arcs of visibility so small, that they would have little or no impact. But the appeal decision is important in establishing the principle that wind farms in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are unacceptable.

More important to the future of the Solent are the Wellow wind farm proposals. Although much of the Island is designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, there is a significant area in the West Wight with a favourable wind profile about three miles from the coastline, which is not included in the AONB. A planning application for six large wind turbines here was refused a few years ago, and the company making the application announced that they did not intend to appeal this decision.

However, Infinergy Ltd., a subsidiary of KDE Energy of the Netherlands, in 2010 announced its intention to make a revised planning application on a site in Wellow different from, though close to the site for the rejected scheme. This new scheme is for five turbines which would have a maximum generating capacity of 12.5 Megawatts. They would be grouped close together, and the maximum blade tip height would be 100m. above ground level, rather less than that proposed for the refused scheme.

They would undoubtedly be highly visible from large areas of the Solent, and would have an impact on it, but their grouping would reduce their impact. Although ThWART members are, of course, actively opposed to the planning application, the wind turbine industry is a major employer on the Island, and it is believed that approximately half the population of the Island is in favour of the proposal. In fact when the planning application was made, there were more letters in favour of the proposal than opposed to it in the local paper, and roughly half of the 1,200 comments sent to the LPA during the consultation period were in favour.

The current position is that the Local Planning Authority has required Infinergy Ltd. to provide a revision of the Environmental Impact Assessment which accompanied the application, and this is now awaited. The accompanying photograph provided by Infinergy Ltd. shows the effect of the proposed wind farm on the view from Lymington.

John Power

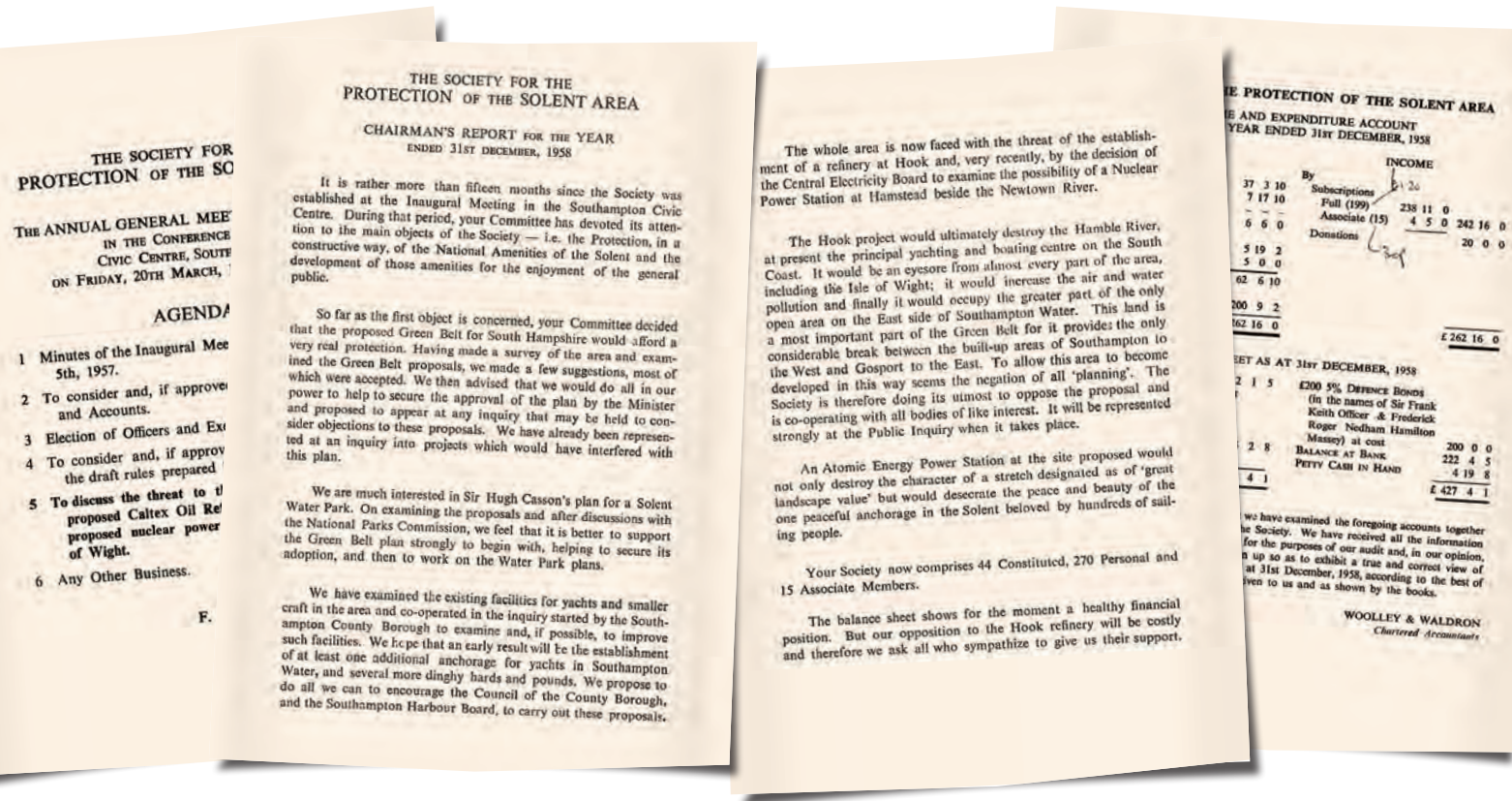
Grants, Donations and Conservation Awards

Over the last thirty years the Solent Protection Society has made grants, donations and contributions of over one hundred thousand pounds to many projects around the Solent (including some £24,000 contribution to the Solent Forum as a member). In addition over twenty awards have been made to projects, societies and companies to recognise their contribution to conservation in the area.

The Council welcomes suggestions from members about any project that may be worthy of financial support or recognition of a Conservation Award. If you have any suggestions please let us know.

Solent Protection Society's first annual report

Members may be interested to see a copy of the First Annual Report in 1958.



Bembridge Harbour (continued from page 1)

To all Founder Members

"Bembridge Harbour Trust – Sale Details Published"

We finally received the Sale Details late last Friday afternoon, 23rd September. These have been sent to all interested parties by the agents acting for the Administrators. We have also been given access to the Data Room (electronic document store) having expressed a specific interest to purchase.

We are now reviewing the information provided with a view to preparing a bid and organising a bid structure and the appropriate due diligence process. The financial information that has been provided is very much as we had expected. There is some new documentation on title and tenures that needs to be examined carefully.

The Administrators are seeking expressions of interest in the acquisition of the entirety of Bembridge Harbour Improvements Company Limited together with the majority of the freehold and long leasehold interests of Maritime & Leisure Investments Limited. Although the freehold of the section of the foreshore that is occupied by the houseboats is included in the sale, the 99 year leasehold interest in the entire area in favour of MLI is not included in the sale.

We have been told that the delay in releasing these sale particulars has been because the Administrators needed to send out the formal notice for the Creditors Voluntary Arrangement ("CVA") first. This was sent out around 13th September. It is quite an extensive document. The date of the CVA meeting is 30th

September when the unsecured creditors can vote on the proposal. With Handelsbanken the only secured creditor at £3,150,000, the estimated outcome for the unsecured creditors is no dividend.

There is obviously a lot for us to do now and I will keep you updated as matters progress.

Best wishes
Michael MacInnes
Chairman of the Trustees.
26th September 2011"

New Council member Alan Ferris



Born in Portsmouth, Alan Ferris has lived in Fareham for most of his life. Alan trained as a ships draughtsman at J. Samuel White in Cowes and was Senior Design Engineer for Marconi Space & Defence when he retired.

A member of Fareham Sailing & Motor Boat Club since 1957, Alan has served in many positions at the club, including Commodore. A former Vice President of Portsmouth & Langstone Sailing Association, Alan is now Treasurer of the Association as well as Treasurer to the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust (support group). He is a member of the RSPB and The Fareham Society.