



1999

Spring News

Protecting the Solent for Future Generations

Portsmouth and its adjacent Harbours

Portsmouth is the most densely populated city in Britain with the fewest open spaces. It is flanked by the Harbours of Portsmouth and Langstone, both designated as areas of conservation. Land access is restricted to three bridges in the north and this, coupled with narrow roads and lack of open areas for parking, exacerbates the familiar traffic problems. Nonetheless the Government is insisting that the City builds 4,000 new houses or have their budget capped. Such developments have, by law, to be commercially viable privately funded investments giving a good financial return. It is therefore hardly surprising that the City continually advances schemes for developments on its green fringes. We have recently learned that the infamous Tricorn building is to be demolished for a new development and look forward to seeing the plans for what is to replace it, together with those for the new business/shopping areas for Commercial Road and Southsea.

But, in short, the pressures on Portsmouth, and for that matter Gosport and Fareham, lead to uncoordinated and piecemeal

development. The need for a comprehensive plan for the whole area together with a Harbour Management Plan, including the Millennium proposals, seems absolutely crucial. We have expressed these views to all of the local authorities concerned and will continue to monitor developments for the effects they will have on the harbours and waterfront.

The Gun Wharf

The Millennium Commission has now asked for a business plan for the Spinnaker Tower,

seemingly because the Commission believes that it may become very profitable, and are therefore concerned about providing large sums for commercial profit. The saga continues!! Meanwhile, plans for the large block of housing facing the sea in the south of the Gun Wharf site have been withdrawn. These were rather "cliff like" buildings that flanked the Vulcan building as seen from the sea. New designs are being solicited. The Water Cannon part of the project has now been abandoned.

The Winter's Tale!

The Winter of 98/99 has not produced any new matter of particular concern. Rather it has been a period of steady progress on all fronts. We have continued to watch, with some dismay, the emergence of plans for the piecemeal development of Portsmouth Harbour and its environs. Briefings by Southern Water Services have updated us on the progress being made in the handling of wastewater and the cleansing of discharges into the Solent. Associated British Ports' exhibitions in Oct/Nov of their proposals for Dibden Bay kept our eyes on that particular subject, while the post Christmas storms drew our attention once again to the vulnerability of East Head. The publication in December of the Western Yarmouth Management Plan reminded us of just how much attention is being given throughout the Solent to preserve and protect it for the future. We touch upon these matters together with others in this "NEWS".

Conservation Award 1998



In the Autumn the Chairman led a party of six members of Council to Newport to present our Conservation Award to the Steve Ross Foundation for the Arts, for the meticulous and sympathetic restoration of the former Rope Store building now restyled The Quay Arts Centre. The Centre provides a central focus for the arts with excellent facilities, including lecture room, exhibition space, a theatre, shop and restaurant as well as office accommodation. The society has agreed to contribute toward the cost of landscaping at the lower end of Quay Street, which is on the opposite bank of the Medina from Quay Arts, when this is undertaken. The funding crisis which came to a head at the end of last year appears to have been resolved and the Society very much hopes that the Centre will now enjoy the support and success it deserves.



Water Matters

Since last Autumn members of Council have made two visits to Southern Water Services. The first, at the end of last year, was to the new sewage sludge treatment works at Millbrook which were commissioned at the end of January. The second visit was to the Headquarters at Otterbourne, where Mr Geoff Morton, the County Director for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, welcomed us and introduced his team of managers, Messrs Elliott, Thomas and Caws, who briefed us on progress at Portsmouth, Pennington and Ashlett Creek, and the Isle of Wight respectively.

Millbrook Treatment Works

The works at Millbrook, one of seventeen to be developed in the Southern Region, receives sludge by pipeline or road tanker from outlying works. This is then mixed and treated, using the methane generated for the 400°C drying process, to reduce the sludge to a fine grained fertiliser. The fully automated plant runs continuously and is controlled by two operators. The output of the plant is very considerable. It is hoped that S.W.S. will find a sufficient market uninhibited by its source.

Budds Farm

Underway at Portsmouth is the £27m project to create a 3 metre diameter, 8km long tunnel from Budds Farm to Eastney, via Kendalls Wharf and under Langstone Harbour, to convey wastewater from Portsmouth, Hayling and Havant to the new treatment at Budds Farm and to return the treated effluent to the sea, via the 5km long sea outfall. It is a considerable piece of engineering which has an overall cost of some £130m. Dealing with storm waters requires the construction of a building adjacent to Fort Cumberland and this is the subject of a planning enquiry scheduled for this summer.

Ashlett Creek

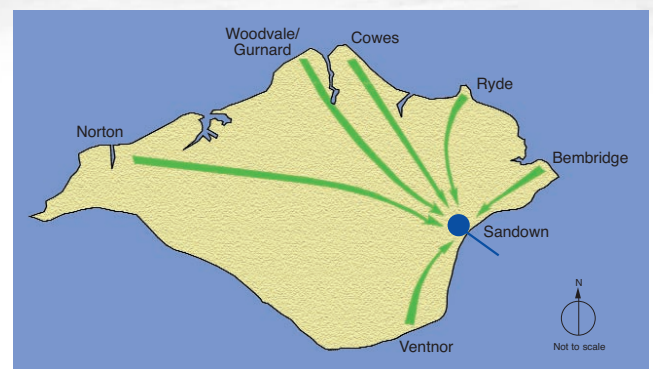
At Ashlett Creek a new works is under construction, within the existing site, to serve the 15,000 people living in the Fawley/Holbury area. Sludge from the site will be pumped to the new works at Millbrook via the Slowhill Copse pipeline, with the treated effluent being piped through a 1,000m long outfall into Southampton Water. The £5m project is due for completion by the end of this year.

Pennington

At Pennington extra works to prevent unpleasant odours are due for completion by the end of April. The provision of a longer outfall, which was provided for in the original design, is now on hold awaiting Environment Agency guidance. Southern Water say that if they were required to provide tertiary level treatment for any discharges into the Solent, to meet E.U. Shell Fish or Urban Waste Water Directives, then there would be no need for a longer outfall.

The Isle of Wight

Southern Water Services has launched "Seaclean Wight". Under this banner they propose to collect wastewater from the island's coastal towns which, in a clockwise direction are Norton (Freshwater and Yarmouth), Woodvale and Gunard, Cowes, Ryde, Bembridge, Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor, and divert the flows to a new wastewater treatment works, and sludge recycling centre (similar to that at Millbrook) at Sandown, where it will receive secondary treatment. It will then be pumped through a long sea pipeline in excess of 3km, into the deep water of the English Channel. Improvement in the handling of storm water is included within the project. The phased work which is well underway is planned for completion by the end of the year 2000.



Dibden Bay

During last October/November Associated British Ports held a series of public exhibitions of their proposals for the development of a new Container Terminal at Dibden Bay. The comprehensive presentation of maps, models, photographs and videos resulting from their widespread consultations was expertly done, as was the "Dibden Update" document which was circulated at the same time. Within ABP's design is the creation, along the shoreline as it was before dredgings filled in the original bay, of a mile long creek to accommodate the wildlife that will be displaced by the new terminal. Last autumn Dibden Bay was classified as a Special Protection Area

(S.P.A.) and also listed as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. These classifications place an international obligation on the U.K. Government to take steps to avoid any significant pollution, disturbance or deterioration of the habitats within the site. The RSPB's position is that ABP must prove an overriding public interest in terms of economics, viability and need and would object to the proposals as they currently stand. We continue to await the long promised Environmental Impact Assessment before concluding on the matter, but with the whole proposal likely to go to public enquiry there is a long way to run yet.

The Isle of Wight

While the main item of particular interest for the Island is the Seaclean Wight project which is reported elsewhere under Water Matters, there are number of other developments worthy of note:

Cowes

A formal planning application is expected shortly for the improvement of the Cowes waterfront between the Red Funnel pontoon and the Cowes Marina. Some land reclamation in front of the Harbour Commissioners offices is envisaged together with the enlargement of the Marina and the rebuilding of the Ferry Terminal further out into the harbour. A three-storey building is proposed on part of the Marina site to include new showers and toilets, conference rooms and, on the third floor, low cost hostel accommodation. It is hoped the work will commence in the autumn of this year for completion in 2000.

A planning application for housing development including a twelve-storey block between Denmark Road and Terminus Road, which aroused much local opposition and was quite out of keeping for the area, has now been withdrawn and we await the submission of plans for a smaller development.

Proposals have appeared in the local press for a new pontoon and pier off Cowes Parade in the position of the former Victorian Pier.

We shall monitor each of these proposals for the impact they will have on the waterfront.

Estuary Plans

The Western Yar Estuary Management Plan was published last December and given a wide distribution. It is well researched and workmanlike document which should be of great value to all concerned in the management of the estuary. The Isle of Wight Council has appointed Ms Jess Pennington as "Estuaries Officer" to manage this plan and to complete the similar document for the Medina Estuary. Thought is also being given to providing similar planning for Bembridge Harbour.

Newport Harbour

The Isle of Wight Council is considering how best to develop the former commercial harbour at Newport to tourist and recreational uses including the provision of a half tide cill at the northern limit of the harbour. The Society fully supports such a development and hopes that the Council will devise a comprehensive plan for the scheme and avoid a piecemeal approach.

East Head

The force 9 South Westerly gales in early January once again proved a testing time for the coastline at East Head. Very well aware of its vulnerability, last December the Chichester Harbour Conservancy reached agreement with The National Trust, English Nature and Chichester District Council on a scheme to defend East Head by inserting a hoggin spine at the Hinge, the narrowest and most vulnerable part of East Head. As the scheme would have more than exhausted the existing Safeguard East Head appeal funds, a further appeal was launched. Through the generosity of The John Coates Trust the Society was able to make an immediate contribution to the fund. However, harbour users and land owners invited to contribute to the defences made it clear that they expected a more robust solution, a view shared by the Society. In response to these views and encouraged by the preliminary recommendations of the consultants undertaking the work to develop a local coastal defence strategy, the Conservancy has



now decided to make its planning application on the basis of a rock barrier instead of hoggin. The Society together with the Chichester Harbour Federation, joint sponsors of the original appeal, support this approach and very much hope that a permanent solution will now be found for this long running problem.





Tall Ships

Two Tall ships have agreed to be based in Portsmouth and a number of Tall Ships events have been booked for the next two/three years, perhaps permitting a repeat of the commercially highly successful maritime event held last summer.

Portsmouth Light Railway

The light railway from Fareham to Portsmouth associated with, but not part of the Millennium scheme, is to be the subject of a public enquiry to take place later this year.

Lecture Programme

We would welcome the opportunity to speak to local organisations and clubs on "The Solent, Problems and Opportunities". If you would like to arrange such a talk please contact our Secretary Mrs Judy Davies.

Dell Quay

The demand for educational visits to Chichester Harbour has increased considerably over recent years. In responding to this demand, the Conservancy has been conscious that it has no classroom facilities to offer visiting school parties, and has thus decided to convert its former workshop building at Dell Quay for the purpose. The society is making a grant toward the costs of conversion.

Warsash

The Environment Agency, in conjunction with Hampshire County Council is undertaking a project at Warsash Harbour to promote good practice for dealing with waste from recreational boats at Marinas and Harbours.

Grants and Donations

During 1998 Council approved ten grants and donations totalling some £10,000 to aid projects and ventures around the Solent. Among these was a contribution toward the improvements being made to the viewpoint at Fort Victoria on the Isle of Wight, which looks northward towards Hurst Castle, which itself received a further grant toward the cost of the continued restoration of the Tudor Room in the castle.

Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (S.A.C.)

In the Autumn the Government having taken account of the views they had received regarding the designation of the Solent Maritime S.A.C., notified the European Commission that the redefined areas should now be included as a candidate S.A.C. (c S.A.C.) Formal designation will follow in due course which may take some years!

