

Solent Water Quality Conference 2010



Solent Water Quality Association

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The Solent Water Quality Association (SWQA) was set up by the Environment Agency and the Solent's local authority Environmental Health Officers in 1992. It was originally called the Solent Water Quality Conference. The objective of the Association is to protect and improve the quality of coastal waters for recreation, human use and biodiversity. The Solent Forum has provided the secretariat services for the group since 2002; the group is now run as one of the Forum's topic subgroups. Its core members include the environmental health departments of the eight local authorities, the harbour authorities, the Environment Agency and Southern Water. Other stakeholders are co-opted to the group as needed.

The Association's terms of reference are as follows.

- To support and complement the work of Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and other agencies in protecting and improving the quality of recreational water and the coastal environment.
- To promote the improvement of environmental standards applicable to all waters of the Solent including rivers.
- To receive and consider the results of monitoring water quality in the Solent and to make recommendations where appropriate.
- To liaise with the Environment Agency and Southern Water Services and other relevant agencies on a regional basis, concerning the water quality and the coastal environment in the Solent and adjacent waters.
- To consider the problems surrounding the environmental impact of effluent and sludge discharges and other environmental pollutants, on the recreational use of the Solent and adjacent waters and its flora and fauna.
- To publicise the Standing Conference and the substance of its discussions.
- To sponsor and support research into water quality in the coastal environment.

Solent Water Quality Awards

The Solent Water Quality Award scheme was launched in 1992; to provide a simple and readily understood indicator of satisfactory water quality at bathing beaches and, where feasible, in recreational waters around the Solent.

The Award is given where the water reaches or exceeds the mandatory standards specified in the EC Bathing Water Directive. Award sites are monitored every week by the Environment Agency during the bathing season, which runs from May to September. The results displayed are based on the bacteriological standards for bacteria (total coliforms, faecal coliforms and faecal streptococci) contained in the Bathing Water Directive.

The Solent Forum administers the Awards and posts details of the Award winning sites on its website at www.solentforum.org/forum/sub_groups/Water_Quality_Group/.

Award winners 2010

Chichester

- West Wittering
- Bracklesham Bay
- Selsey

Fareham

- Hillhead

Gosport

- Lee on Solent
- Stoke Bay

Havant

- Hayling Beachlands

Isle of Wight

- Colwell
- Cowes
- Gurnard
- Ryde
- Sandown
- Seagrove
- Shanklin
- St Helens
- Totland
- Ventnor
- Yaverland

New Forest

- Calshot
- Christchurch Bay
- Milford on Sea

Hampshire CC

- Lepe

Portsmouth

- Eastney Boathouse
- South West Beach
- Victoria Pier

Proposals for award changes 2010 – 12

The Solent Water Quality Group propose making changes to the Solent Water Quality Awards. The primary reason for the change is the revision of the EC Bathing Water Directive which will require more stringent standards by 2015. It will have four standards, poor, sufficient, good and excellent. The current Bathing Water Directive has two standards, mandatory (slightly lower than sufficient) and guideline (similar to good). To date the Solent Water Quality Awards has measured applications against the mandatory standard.

The Group proposes that in 2010 the Awards for standards in 2009 will remain the same, but that in 2011 the Awards will be judged against the higher Bathing Water Directive standard of 'guideline' to prepare for the new revisions in 2015. In 2012 it is proposed to switch to the new system with judging criteria being against the 'good status'. An additional option is to have a two tier system where applicants may achieve either the 'good' or 'excellent' standard. It is also proposed that the Environment Agency and Southern Water logos are incorporated onto the award plaques to illustrate their work in supporting the increased standards. The Group is also looking at the feasibility of designing some one-off interpretation boards to explain the Water Quality Awards.
