

# Solent Forum Annual Report: 2008 - 2009

The Solent Forum is an established coastal partnership that promotes and delivers integrated coastal zone management around the Solent coast. Established in 1992, it considers and provides advice on strategic coastal matters and facilitates communication and information exchange amongst its membership. Its work is steered by a group of funding partners who guide the work of the Forum Officers.

This report sets out what the Forum has achieved in the 08/09 financial year and what it will deliver in the 09/10 year. The long term aims and objectives of the Forum are set out in its Business Planning 2007-2010 document, together with the 2007-2010 Action Plan. Both documents can be downloaded from the Forum's website at [www.solentforum.org/publications/business\\_plan/](http://www.solentforum.org/publications/business_plan/).

The Forum has two categories of work that it undertakes; core service work that is ongoing each year and specific project work that runs for a defined time period.

The Forum also hosts regular events as part of its core service and develops other events to support project work and disseminate information on important coastal issues.



## Solent Forum Aims

The Aims of the Solent Forum are to:

- Facilitate more integrated planning and management of the Solent
- Assist the agencies and authorities in carrying out their duties
- Provide a 'voice for the Solent'

These aims are supported by seven objectives that show how the Forum will deliver integrated coastal zone management in the Solent.

## Solent Forum Members

The Forum has a wide ranging membership with organisations from all coastal sectors. Members include professional bodies such as local government, harbour authorities, industry, user groups, trade associations and NGOs. The Forum is not open to individuals, local residents associations or issue specific lobby groups. It is politically neutral.

Membership benefits include:

- Up to date information on coastal management issues;
- Access to the Solent News and Meetings Calendar Services;
- Free attendance at the biannual Solent Forum meetings and reduced entry to other Forum events;
- An increased understanding of how to manage the Solent's resources and set priorities;
- Use of the Solent Forum network to communicate to other authorities, organisations and user groups;
- Opportunity to undertake partnership work and influence the direction of future Forum work;
- Opportunity to join Solent Forum Subgroups: Nature Conservation, Recreation, Water Quality, SEMS.



*Photo courtesy of the Isle of Wight Council*

## Solent Forum Objectives

The Forum's Business Plan monitors its progress against an agreed set of seven objectives; this Plan sets out in detail how the Forum will deliver them. Below is a summary of the work that the Forum undertakes to deliver its objectives.

### **1. To facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison**

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings, STAR Calendar Service, Strategic Opportunities Workshops, Coastal Directories.

### **2. To raise awareness and understanding of the members' roles and aspirations; and the human and natural processes and influences in the Solent**

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings.

### **3. To promote the national importance of the Solent**

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, input to national and European coastal policy making, Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP).

### **4. To improve the information base and co-ordinate research**

Relevant Forum work: Annual dissertation prizes, Solent News Service, Forum websites, Strategic Opportunities Workshops, State of the Solent, Solent Disc, Recreation Audit, Wader Roost Strategy, Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project, Solent Habitat Information Sheets.

### **5. To provide a broadly based consultative Forum**

Relevant Forum work: Forum meetings, Solent News service, Members and Community Directories, joint consultation responses, e.g. for the Marine and Coastal Access Bill, delivery of sub-groups.

### **6. To raise awareness and understanding of major proposals for development and other changes likely to materially affect the Solent**

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum websites, Solent Forum meetings, Strategic Opportunities Workshops.

### **7. To contribute to policy development, plan making and strategy formulation**

Relevant Forum work: Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP), Solent Forum meetings, Solent News service, Coastal Partnerships Working Group attendance, Strategic Opportunities Workshops, State of the Solent and Indicators.

## Solent Forum Core Work

- Biannual Forum meetings
- News service - biannual newsletter, (Solent News) monthly updates and special alerts
- Calendar of coastal events - Save Time and Resources (STAR) service
- Maintaining two websites - solentforum.org and solentpedia.info
- Provision of Solent Disc - a metadatabase of Solent research and reports
- Servicing of subgroups - water quality, nature conservation, recreation and Solent European Marine Sites
- Administering Solent Water Quality Awards
- Annual dissertation prizes to encourage Solent research
- Maintaining a Solent indicator dataset and publishing State of the Solent reports

## Solent Forum Project Work

### Project Progress for 2008/9

The following projects have been progressed during the 08/09 financial year. Forum projects have differing timescales and many are scheduled to run into 09/10.

Project	Objective	Status as of March 09
<b>Marine Habitats Sheets</b>	To finalise the Solent Habitat Information Pack with a series of factsheets on the marine habitats found in the Solent.	Complete. Hard copies distributed and electronic copies available on the Forum's website.
<b>Recreation Audit</b>	A review of the recreational use of the Solent coast and levels of participation.	Ongoing. Commenced Dec 08. Due to finish summer 2009.
<b>Solent Circles</b>	Develop new interpreted walks around the Solent coast based on existing rights of way.	Ongoing. No progress made in 08/09.
<b>Wader Roost Strategy</b>	The project will help inform the long-term availability of secure high-water feeding and roosting sites for Waders in the Solent, taking into account the likely human and natural changes.	Data collection report by the HWT completed. Funding from EA and PUSH granted for further characterisation of wader roost sites.
<b>State of the Solent</b>	The Forum maintains an indicator set to monitor aspects of the Solent. Data from this forms the State of the Solent reports.	Ongoing. Annual datasets have been updated. The data will be checked and reviewed during 09/10.
<b>Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP)</b>	This project will begin preparing and scoping the need amongst local Solent stakeholders for a Solent scale Marine Planning System.	Ongoing. The project commenced in Feb 2009 and will run for 18 months.
<b>Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project</b>	This is led by the Nature Conservation subgroup and will assess the impact of activities and development on Solent European Habitats.	Ongoing. Commenced in 2008 and expected to run into 2010. Phase 1 completed (desk research).

### Project Development for 2009/10

The following projects will be progressed by the Solent Forum during 09/10. Some commenced during 08/09 and are being carried forward.

Project	Objective	Timescale
<b>Towards Solent Marine Planning (SoMaP)</b>	This project will begin preparing and scoping the need amongst local Solent stakeholders for a Solent scale Marine Planning System.	The project commenced in Feb 2009 and will run for 18 months. This is the priority project for 09/10.
<b>Recreation Audit</b>	A review of the recreational use of the Solent coast and levels of participation.	Research will finish in summer 2009 with the data published in the Autumn.
<b>State of the Solent</b>	To monitor trends on all aspects of the Solent.	The indicator dataset will be updated in summer 09 in preparation for the next State of the Solent report in 2010. Data will be uploaded to the Forum's website.
<b>Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project</b>	This is led by the Nature Conservation subgroup and will assess the impact of activities and development on Solent European Habitats.	Phase 1 is complete. Phase 2 (primary research) and phase 3 (evaluation/mitigation) will take place during 09/10.
<b>Wader Roost Strategy</b>	The project will help inform the long-term availability of secure high-water feeding and roosting sites for Waders in the Solent, taking into account the likely human and natural changes.	Further work will be undertaken to characterise wader roost sites, with an official launch of the Water Roost Strategy in 2010.

## Solent Forum Meetings and Events

Meetings and Events for 09/10		
Meeting	Attendees	Date
Solent Forum	All Solent Forum membership	Spring 09, Autumn 09 and spring 2010.
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Quarterly throughout the year.
Solent Water Quality Awards 09/10	Local authorities who apply for the award.	Water Conference to be held in 2010.
Solent European Marine Sites Management Group	Members of the Management Group	Summer 2009.
Subgroups - recreation, nature conservation and water quality	Invited members of the various groups.	The groups decide their own schedule and will meet 2-4 times per year.

## Delivering the Business Plan

### Resources

As a voluntary initiative the Forum is reliant on contributions from its membership, in particular its steering group members, to fund its core work, prepare project work and deliver events. Ongoing core funding is critical to the long term future of the Forum. The Forum tries to ensure that events are self-funding and bids for appropriate funding streams for specific projects such as Towards Solent Marine Planning.

It also offers its skills and services to the Solent's coastal community for other specific coastal work, for example, it provides the secretariat for the Solent European Marine Sites Management Scheme.

### Monitoring and Review

The Forum reviews the business plan every three years and produces an annual report to update its members on progress in the interim. This 08/09 annual report shows the progress in the current 2007 to 2010 Business Plan. The Forum's steering group signs off its annual report and agrees the work programme for the following year at the start of each financial year. Annual reports and the Business Plan are available on request from the Forum Office or can be downloaded from [www.solentforum.org/forum/business\\_plan/](http://www.solentforum.org/forum/business_plan/).

## Further Information

For more details on any of the work undertaken by the Forum, please visit the Forum's website or contact the Solent Forum Office. More information on the Solent and coastal issues in general can be found on the Forum's Solentpedia website at [www.solentpedia.info](http://www.solentpedia.info).

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The following organisations fund and steer the work of the Solent Forum:

Associated British Ports, British Marine Federation, Environment Agency, Fareham Borough Council, Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Natural England, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority, Portsmouth City Council, QHM Portsmouth, RSPB, Solent Protection Society, Southampton City Council.

