



**Nature Conservation Group
Fareham Borough Council
Council Chamber**

24th June 2010

Chair – Dylan Todd, NE

Nature Conservation Group Distribution List Update

KM asked the group to check that their details were correct on the Nature Conservation Group distribution list. Please see list appended to the agenda for members of the group and a record of who attended the meeting.

Nature Conservation group finances and reserve allocation – Paper 1 (supplied with agenda)

KM presented the group accounts for 2009/10 and a forecast for 2010/11. The group is forecast to make a loss next financial year of up to £4700. This is because there have been two group members that are unable to maintain their contribution. As the group has a reserve of nearly £8700, this loss can be absorbed. This will bring the reserve down to less than £4000. It is recommended that this reserve is not touched this year as it may be required to keep the group running in 2011/12. Group members are asked to consider ways of bringing more money into the group considering the dire financial outlook. It would help to invite more members e.g. sailing/recreational groups, BP & ESSO, funding bids.

Action: All to check distribution list and to consider further finances for the group, including new members

Current Nature Conservation Group Project Updates

Update on Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project

See appended Progress Update.

The group felt that a charge should be made if commercial third parties required project data in advance of public outputs. KM wishes to develop a credible charging structure and it was recommended that she contacts HBIC for advice. DT will also ask for advice at NE. HWT advises that staff time is recharged for the provision of evaluated data. It may also be appropriate to link charges to the cost of the various models such as the ABP Mer model cost. KM also to discuss this question at the project group meeting on 8th July.

Action: KM – discuss methods of recharging for evaluated data with HBIC and DT. Raise at Project Meeting on 8th July.

The group recommended that KM included a £10k contingency to the project, as it is still unknown how much the mitigation phase may cost.

Action: KM Include £10k contingency in project costs

Wader Roost Strategy

Debbie King from HWT provided and update. In summary: This is a 4 year project now reaching its final phase. In February Footprint Ecology completed the mapping analysis to characterise sites. A project meeting in May reviewed the content of a final strategy document. This document is shortly to be circulated (end of June) to planners and ecologists for consultation. A flyer will be

produced to advertise the work. The next update is due in 5 years time.

Alien Species Project

Ken Collins from Southampton University presented this project. Ken's team are cataloguing alien species on the NOC website and will be ensuring that this data can be uploaded to the Solent Forum Solentpedia site. Initially, the catalogue will list presence only and will provide links to other data if available. Active surveys have taken place and the carpet sea squirt mentioned at the last meeting, had declined (possibly seasonally) and could only be found as small indistinct patches. Pacific Oysters have been found at Hamble Point. Jolyon reported finding some in Portsmouth Harbour. The group felt it would be good to provide location & status information about Solent Aliens and to establish a reporting tool which could be advertised to coastal & sea users.

HWT Seagrass project (phase 2)

The whole project has been running since 2006, to further understand, map, monitor and raise awareness. An inventory of extent of habitat has now been finalised. Further money of £48k has been secured in addition to the £2k from the Solent Forum and £4k from NE, from Esmee Fairbanks, and therefore the project can run for another 2 years. A survey season is about to begin on spring tides between now and October. New beds have been found in Chichester Harbour and Portsmouth Harbour (by EA when assessing affects of clam dredging on extent and abundance). Next survey planned is in Langstone Harbour. All data will be sent to the balanced seas project, to help consider MCZ designations.

The assessment of the effects of clam dredging appears to have revealed that tram lines exist and that density around the edges of sea grass extents has become sparser. In addition, evidence of trampling has been found by had pickers of clams.

Future project ideas, to start once more money is available and current projects near completion.

The group agreed that further projects should not be progressed at present due to lack of funds and because there are sufficient projects underway at present. Gordon Watson's SAC project (£1000) is favoured and all being well will be the next project to go-ahead. It is hoped that this project can be commissioned in Feb 2011.

Action: KM – Put this on agenda for meeting in Feb 2011..

Natural England SPA condition Assessment

DT had sent the group the Natural England SPA condition assessment in advance of the meetings and asked for any questions to be brought to this meeting.

The group discussed the fact that apart from in the Eastern Harbours, declines in bird numbers were not attributed to local site pressures, and that national or international solutions would need to be found.

KM asked the group to suggest any future NCG agenda items on SPA or even BAP condition.

Action: Group – consider future agenda items on SPA or BAP condition

Update on clam dredging in Portsmouth Harbour

DT provided an update on the situation: Ne have been trying to find a way of preventing damaging clam dredging to the Solent and particularly the harbours. In Portsmouth harbour, QHM had threatened to issue a local notice to mariners if a voluntary agreement not to dredge in sensitive seagrass areas within Portsmouth Harbour failed. The voluntary agreement was largely successful, however one individual has continued to dredge, but it has not been possible, so far, to take forward a prosecution as its difficult to link specific clam dredging activity to the damage

caused. QHM, on legal advice, has decided not to introduce a Local Notice to Mariners as he would not be able to enforce.

NE have now turned to the new MMO, as they may be able to apply an emergency byelaw providing an interim prohibition, with a fixed penalty notices for up to £50,000.. In the meantime Defra's long-term solution would involve the new IFCA's (due to be vested April 2010) preparing a byelaw to ban bottom trawlers from eelgrass beds throughout the Solent European marine site.

Bait Digging

Hoping to amend the current Special Nature Conservation Order (SNCO) regulating bait digging and covering personal use as well within Fareham Creek. This is controversial as those genuinely digging for personal use will be affected in Fareham Creek. The Angling Trust is likely to oppose this and are threatening judicial review. Evidence of damage is likely to be requested. This links with work that Gordon Watson has proposed, but has not been funded. Graham Horton dealing with this.

Oil Spill

The Fawley (Esso) oil leak off the Meon shore has been contained and the response was successful. The spill involved around 20 barrels. The shingle from the beach is to be cleaned and returned shortly. Fareham Borough Council re-opened the beach. The shellfish beds remain closed until CEFAS issues the all clear. Jolyon has observed oil on the seagrass beds; it is to be confirmed whether this is not the oil from this recent leak, early observation suggest it is not. Esso will need to continue to monitor with the point of contact at Esso being Graham Neil. There may be an opportunity for Esso to join the Forum/contribute the the NCG for monitoring/PR.

Action: KM – contact Esso(Graham Neil) to find out if they have an interest in the SF (this to be done after speaking to Dylan as NE first need to agree a monitoring programme. .

SEMS Review

The Management Group have agreed to undertake a review and a consultant is now sought to undertake the main tasks as set out in this brief.

A two stage review process/methodology is proposed:-

- Information gathering (including face to face visits to each RA) leading to a discussion of key findings and initial ideas with the Management Group;
- Preparation of proposals, consultation with the Strategic Advisory Group and then finalisation by the Management Group

It is anticipated to take 6 months

The project will be managed by Hampshire County Council. A sub-group (of the SEMS Management Group) will steer and provide guidance on the work. This is proposed to comprise Hampshire County Council, Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee, Natural England, a representative of the Harbour Authorities and a representative of the Local Authorities

It is anticipated that it will cost in the region of £14,400.

NE are contributing £10,000 and Nature conservation subgroup £1000.

The remaining £3400 will be divided between the Relevant Authorities (largely based on the bands of funding contribution that each RA provides for the SF to undertake the SEMS secretariat duties). £2,550 of this has been secured, 1 RAs (EA) have indicated that they are not able to fund and we are awaiting replies or in discussion with the remaining 10 (currently being chased)

Relevant Authorities will still be required to contribute their annual payment to the Solent Forum (in addition to any payment for the review process) to undertake secretariat duties (which pays for 1 day a month of officer time). However it is recommended that the annual monitoring which would normally take place in May 2010 is suspended until the review is complete. The Solent Forum will still be required to undertake other secretariat duties and assist with the review process as necessary (e.g. organise Management Group meetings, provide information, facilitate final approval by the Management Group) however they would not be able to undertake the review with the current funds provided.

Once all (or at least 75% of) funding is secured a project brief will be sent out for tender (list of consultants and academics). Hoped that this can be within the next couple of weeks. If anyone from the NC group has any ideas of other consultants, then they can let us know.

SoMaP Meeting – separate minutes to be sent out.

Next Meeting 27th October at the NOC (10am)

Distribution List Name: SF Nature Conservation Group

Members:

	Attended meeting
HCC Bragg, Susan	y
RSPB Carrie Temple	
CCO Malogosia Gorczynska chris.cockburn@rspb.org.uk	
IWC Colin Pope	
HWT Debbie King	y
NE Dylan Todd	y
EBC Paul Howe	
EBC Rachel Hardy	
CHC Edward Rowsell	
EMU Manue Hooper-bue	y
FBC Tina Cuss	y
RHHA Fowler, Alison	
UoP Gordon Watson	y
HCC Coast	
HWT Dave Rumble	y
HWT Jolyon Chesworth	y
HCC Iain Warner	y
NFNPA Ian Barker	y
IOW Estuaries Sue Hawley (E-mail)	
HWT Jamie Marsh	
NOC Jenny Mallinson	y
Langstone Louise MacCallum and Nigel Jardine	y
NOC Ken Collins	y
CBC Lindsay Bates	
SCC Lindsay McCulloch	y
Soton Uni Malcolm hudson	y
NF National Park Paula Freeland	
PCC Peter Burrard-Lucas	
NT Pema Marriott	
QHM Roger Davies	
NE Richard Lemon	
CCO samantha.cope	
Soton Ini Simon Bray	
EA Tim Sykes	
West Sussex Rob Carver	

Amy Ruocco	y
Bernadine Maguire	y
Karen McHugh	y
David Pearce	y
Megan Marshall	y

Appendix A

Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project

Karen McHugh, Project Update June 2010.

Overall Progress

The SD&M Project seeks to assess the current impacts of visitor numbers and activities on the survival rates of internationally designated wintering waterbirds throughout the Solent coast and to establish the likely additional impact from the residents of the development proposed in the area. Phase 1 of the SD&M Project, a literature review, has been completed. Phase 2, is underway and has 4 parts:

- Bird Surveys assessing disturbance to overwintering birds (Pilot surveys carried out by Jon Cox Assoc. completed; further 09/10 survey work by Footprint Ecology due to be reported 8th July 2010 at the next Project Meeting)
- Visitor Surveys (surveys by Footprint Ecology complete, and due to be presented 8th July 2010 at the next Project Meeting)
- Household Surveys and Visitor Model to be conducted by Footprint Ecology. Work to start in July and final report due Feb 2011. Contracts yet to be formalised.
- Modelling the impact of disturbance on birds to be awarded to Richard Stillman. Formal agreement required and contracts formalised. Work to start July 2010 (if proposal agreed this week) and to be complete by May 2011 (if following Household Survey and Visitor Model timescale). Start-up meeting required early July.

Phase 3 can begin before phase 2 ends when it becomes clear that mitigation needs to be examined. Mitigation elements can be tied into the Modelling work and therefore a brief and timetable for the mitigation phase now needs to be written by the project group. A champion required for the mitigation phase: SCC have volunteered.

Project Meeting

Project Meeting at HWT in Botley on 8th July, where Phase 2 Bird Surveys and Visitor Survey work will be presented by Footprint Ecology. Project management and finance to be discussed. Mitigation phase 2 be furthered.

Third Party Interest

Enquiries from developers have been received from Adams Hendry (Tipner) and Terence O'Rourke Ltd (Whitely). NCG and Project Group to decide how to handle these queries.