



**Solent Forum Steering Group Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday 23rd June 2010**

**ABP VTS Building**  
**Dock Gate 4, Southampton**  
**Chair:- Prof. Mike Clark**

**1. Present**

Mike Clark – Geodata

Alan Inder - SPS

Mike Allgrove – PCC

Paula Freeland – NFNPA

Lindsay McCulloch – SCC

Tina Cuss – FBC

Ron Hancock – ABP

Lucy Sheffield - HCC

Roger Davies - QHM

Dylan Todd - NE

Amy Ruocco - SF

Kate Ansell - SF

Tim Kermode - EA

Karen McHugh - SF

Colin Pope – IOWC

**2. Apologies**

No apologies

**3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

Chairman MC thanked ABP for the room and refreshments. KM confirmed that outstanding issues from previous minutes would be covered in agenda.

KA confirmed that an article on Wightlink ferries will be going out in the next Solent News as previously raised by RH

**4. Presentations by Solent Forum Officers on Members Services and Projects**

KM ran through the dates of recent and planned sub-group meetings; Nature Conservation, recreation, Water Quality & SEMS. The next members meeting is 15<sup>th</sup> September in Ryde. Solent News is due to be published in July.

A discussion followed regarding SEMS review and consultations with different organisations. MC invited group to express any reservations about present interaction with SEMS and concluded there were no particular negative feelings about present role. KM advised not much happening this year due to SEMS being reviewed but that Rachel Gallagher (HCC) has an update and could be invited to next meeting to present. DT confirmed there will be a consultation.

KA reminded group that the Forum hosts the SEMS website. It hasn't been updated for quite a long time and is quite out of date. Agreed that site needs to be updated before any consultation takes place.

***ACTION: Karen to ask Rachel to present SEMS at next meeting***

***ACTION: Karen to start thinking about SEMS after SoMaP conference in September***

***ACTION: Karen to look at updating SEMS website***

Karen gave an update on the Forum's current work.

**a) SoMaP Conference**

The 18 month SoMaP project will be coming to an end in September with the conference to be held at Southampton City Cruise Terminal. A culmination of 5 regional stakeholder meetings and 9 or 10 specific workshops. Hoping to showcase an end-user system of the completed policy database at the conference. Speakers are now confirmed including someone from MMO, just waiting on EA to confirm. KM confirmed the conference is more Southern than just Solent as there are a number of Dorset Speakers.

ABP are kindly donating venue, costs of food and some expenses will need to be covered. Proposed tickets at £95 for SF members, £120 for non-members. Costs for conferences discussed as a problem for many people at the moment but agreed that merely discounting by 10 or 20 pounds wouldn't help this problem. Group discussed attracting more people, not just representatives but others from their organisations. Suggestion by TK of discount for multiple bookings from an organisation to encourage more people.

KM confirmed that Solent News will be leading with an article about the conference as well as a booking form, and reminders will be sent via the monthly email. TK advised if he was sent a PDF it would be much easier to disseminate within organisation. Also useful if attending contributes to CPD as justification to line managers. Could mention on flyer.

MC emphasised that the conference was not a 'closing ceremony' but the beginning of a new phase of marine planning to make people better equipped for the future. It is relevant nationally and will be a role model for what other partnerships are doing. Group should try to encourage a few national attendees. Even if a small number would make a difference to conference budget and reputation. MA advised he may be able to advertise the conference .

Group discussed national Marine Policy Statement would be happening at the same time, which the MMO are likely to talk about. Could be an idea to set up a table to discuss the issue after conference or MMO may wish to pay for a stand.

*ACTION: Karen to send PDF attachment of booking form when Solent News goes out.*

*ACTION: SFO to confirm if attending conference contributes to CPD and to make sure this is advertised.*

*ACTION: SFOs to think about costings for conference and possible discount for multiple attendees from one organisation. Also targeting national attendees*

*ACTION: Investigate possibility of MMO/Marine Policy stand at conference as a funding source.*

**b) Other Projects**

DISC (Data Information of the Solent Catalogue)- Catalogue of all research projects related to the Solent. one of top-viewed pages on Forum website.

Nature Conservation Group projects summarised.

Solent Disturbance & Mitigation; Household Survey and Visitor Model contract to Footprint Ecology & Modelling Contract to Richard Stillman at Bournemouth University. KM confirmed NCG has ownership of project. Group discussed being able to pre-debate outcomes before the report is published to ensure everyone is happy. CP advised phase 3 is likely to be highly contentious. KM advised phase 2 will be presented to the project group. MC felt the steering group should see results before it is presented at a members meeting and that group need to consider the possible strategic implications.

CCATCH - KM explained name change from AdaptSolent but is all essentially the same thing. Rachel Gallagher is working on the bid for CC2150 project, a joint collaboration with the EA. MC asked Steering group if happy to empower KM to carry project forward on groups behalf. LS advised that the decision from Europe on project funding has been delayed and could be November or possibly January. KM stressed that an important element is Local Authority sign-up. Not asking for money, just officer time. MoAs have been sent to local authorities but most SG members were not yet aware of them despite the time constraints.

State of the Solent – Gemma Conway is presently working on this. KA to discuss in detail later in agenda.

Strategic Guidance Review of recreation and tourism chapter – AR advised the group that the brief for the project had been put out to tender with two consultants submitting bids. The recreation group were in the process of submitting their votes and feedback on the bids. It is hoped phase 1 of the project will be commissioned in July as funding is already available.

*Action – AR to send copy of SGR brief to TC*

Group informed that the next Steering group meeting will be 13<sup>th</sup> October in Portsmouth and reminded of the dates of 15<sup>th</sup> September for the members meeting on IOW and 30<sup>th</sup> September for SoMaP conference in Southampton.

Group informed that Northwood House in Cowes is no longer available for meetings for health and safety reasons. There is also no longer a catering service. CP advised he has been to Yelf's in Ryde, the proposed new venue and confirmed it as suitable. SFOs will be visiting Yelf's in July. It was confirmed to group that it is walking distance from the ferry terminal and directions will be sent out. RH advised he may be able to negotiate a deal on the Red Funnel from Southampton.

*Action – AR follow up on Red Funnel deal via RH.*

## **5. Solent Forum Annual Report**

KM advised that invoices had been sent to members with a copy of the report a few weeks ago. It is also available on the website and can be reproduced on glossy paper if necessary. MC stated that all the items presented are needed as a substantive demonstration of business and congratulated KM and KA on producing the document.

## **6. Solent Forum Accounts and discussion on financial situation**

KM advised it has been a good year because of SoMaP providing more income, which previously helped part fund Rhian's position. Because of SoMaP, the Forum made a surplus last year in addition to putting up subscriptions. Next year doesn't look so good as having to

factor in possible non-payments and two confirmed payment holidays. There will be income coming in from the Solent Disturbance admin fee and from the Water Quality Conference (if it makes a profit). Non-payments may prove to be worse than originally thought. Should non-payments continue next year, the implications will be serious for the forum. TK advised the government wants to reduce public sector spending by 25% over 3 years. Hopefully the finances are sustainable for 12 months but beyond this may have to lose staff. A number of SG members queried the fairness of payment holidays, as organisations may be effectively free-loading. KM advised that special one year arrangements have been made with these organisations who have always been hugely supportive but are presently unable to pay; she stressed that it is of benefit to the forum for those parties to continue involvement. The importance of keeping people at the table was discussed and encouraging people to contribute more officer time where they cannot pay

The Group discussed these membership subscription issues at length. It was generally agreed that it would be better if organisations made lower payments rather than pull out all together. MC discussed possibly reducing subscriptions with incomes from elsewhere. KM felt it would be preferable to negotiate individually with organisations depending on circumstances rather than promise a blanket 10% reduction and asked them to contact her directly should they need to discuss subscriptions. KM advised that reducing income to the forum affects what it can offer. Most costs are low and it is staffing that uses most of resources. Scaling back would mean less employees. It was emphasised that all LAs are struggling and spending needs to be justified to management. KM advised she could produce a generic Business Case to help people justify the cost within their organisations. There is a strong business case for coastal partnership membership, estimated at £80,000 per year that an LA would otherwise have to pay for. MA stressed the importance of value for money and relating things back to statutory obligations, which could be the only areas where funding is available. KA suggested existing members from different sectors be asked to write testimonials that new organisations could be approached with. This would also be good to put on the website. Could be related to statutory needs.

***Action. KM to forward business case of retaining memberships of the Solent Forum to SG.***

The group then discussed other ways of bringing money into the Forum. MC stated that the funding of the forum has changed over last 5 years from almost entirely subs funded to around 50%. Increasing mixed economy is being encouraged meaning the value for members is going up. Ideally income to the forum would be around 1/3 Government, 1/3 members and 1/3 projects but it is important to have a regular annual income that can be depended on. KA suggested looking at the Thames Estuary Partnership economic model as they have lots of different membership types.

TK suggested idea of 'associate member fee', addressing a large base to make small contributions possibly targeting the private sector, private yacht clubs, commercial shipping interests, and the public; MC was hesitant about serving public. If the Solent Forum boundary were to change, there would be an opportunity to bring in new potential members such as aggregates and offshore renewables organisations. CCATCH could be an opportunity to gain members through engagement programme. Also raised was offering a paid service to empower elected members to conduct duties, although would not want to compete with SCOPAC on this and not the aim of the forum to take sides. KM advised MMO have said they want to use coastal partnerships and are pursuing it actively; the Forum could save them money by providing expertise.

MC rounded off the discussion asking the group to continue to provide input and engagement and act as an early warning system should the Forum become vulnerable.

*Action: KM to consider new ways of generating income based upon the discussion above*

## **7. Solent Forum Boundary change discussion**

MC introduced the boundary change issue. There was a wide range of views expressed at the last meeting and it is unlikely the group would move rapidly to consensus. Mike introduced KM's scoping paper forwarded to group with the agenda.

MC asked for three separate decisions to be made. KM has included analysis of advantages and disadvantages in circulated paper.

1/ Changes to the E-W boundary - this should not challenge the functional remit of the forum as there is no partnership to the east and thus it is likely everyone would be happy with keeping Selsey at the Eastern boundary. To the west there is a small gap between the boundaries of Solent Forum and Dorset Coastal Forum; by extending our boundary westwards, it puts NFDC area entirely within SF.

2/ Extending the area of interest to include South Wight. The forum is hoping to create a business case to get IOW to return and this inclusion would increase the attractiveness to IOWCC.

3/ whether to change functional remit by extending interest in inshore waters to 12 nautical miles. The existing focus is near shore and coastal zone.

The role of sub-groups in changing boundaries was discussed. MC advised it would be up to subgroups to extend their boundaries.

MC detailed example to group of the Dogger bank offshore consultation for which he was facilitator. The primary impacts are seen onshore through new infrastructure to serve it. There are potential huge opportunities for marine industry and employment. MC stressed importance of keeping an open mind about new non-renewables also. Stakeholders are driven by new opportunities for coastal business, not negative impacts. CP felt that extending to 12 nm was a direction the forum has to go in and group should be discussing how to manage it rather than whether to include it.

With regards to western boundary, KM confirmed that Dorset had agreed SF could lead on stakeholder engagement with MMO. Proposals for marine plan have changed. South area may go into Devon and up to Thames making it less relevant who leads. Fewer marine plan areas costs less for the MMO. Coastal partnerships are all looking for ways to work together. MC felt there was no good reason to go east. The Solent has special interests that differ from other coastal areas like Sussex, Devon and Cornwall. Group discussed that Dorset unlikely to come east because the gap is part of Hampshire. The group therefore agreed that the eastern boundary should remain the same and that the Forum should extend the western boundary to Hengistbury Head (in agreement with DCF). TK advised it would cross the boundaries of two SMPs and although felt it to be a slight downside, it makes more sense to have a sensible boundary with Dorset.

TK queried whether having an inland boundary is particularly helpful. The forum's remit is the coast and the rest should be areas affected by the coast or that have implications for the coast. KA advised that the original strategic guidance had no firm boundary but things were included if they affected the coast. Discussion followed about problems with debating location of solid lines. It was felt important that the forum was able to evolve. MC suggested defining core function as things affecting the coast and inshore can be brought in where

relevant. It may help develop relationship with renewables industry and identify new members in industry.

General agreement to keep inshore and landward boundaries undefined, allowing for flexibility where different issues affect the coastal zone. MA suggested if people wanted to use the forum's stakeholder engagement, they could be charged if it meant extending the boundary. KM confirmed that the MMO boundaries should be established by the next meeting. There will also be an MMO representative at the SoMaP conference to whom questions could be presented. MC reinforced the importance of being pro-active with the MMO.

***Action: KM action western boundary change in agreement with DCF and to bring back proposal of extension to next meeting***

***Action: KA to adjust logo to show boundary change***

***Action: KM to approach MMO to discuss their planned involvement with the Forum and potential financial avenues.***

## **8. State of the Solent Indicators**

Gemma Conway is presently working on this and KA gave a handout to the group with an update on progress. This will be the third State of the Solent and we are moving towards a web-based system to save on printing costs. The review is a couple of years later than originally planned due to a big review process.

KA asked the group to comment on the categories and how they are laid out referring to the tables in the handout, the first being based on Karen's SoMaP matrix and the second based on the chapters in the Strategic Guidance. There are 48 datasets in total. KM advised that the second table was arrived at as many European indicators are looked at this way. General agreement that this seems a good idea to continue. MC suggested ensuring the MMO are aware we run databases and indicators. Being proactive could mean our format is used as a guide nationally. If someone else sells it a different way, we may have to change. Could potentially become an MMO funded work if is data they require. Group agreed to use second table unless a good reason comes up not to (e.g. MMO)

KA handed out a pilot factsheet for discussion, showing how each subsection will be presented. Gemma has asked for the SG for their opinion on whether or not each factsheet should have a section on 'Implications for coastal planning and management'. General agreement that it is a very useful section and where possible should be tied to statutory functions. CP pointed out that some interpretation is important because diagrams can be taken in the wrong context. Gemma intends to send to relevant groups before publication. TK suggested the inclusion of national trends could be useful as a comparison so that Solent data can be put more into a national context.

MC stated that we couldn't expand the project so much as to make it unachievable but useful to produce a 'wishlist'. National trend comparisons would be useful for the future as well as approaching MMO for funding for national comparison data. It would be helpful to include a section which comments on data quality. KM suggested having a 'champion' for each section to look over it before publication.

KA asked the group to forward any further data to Gemma that they may have, particularly if they can help with any of the categories with a 'x' alongside in the table. TK commented that flood frequency is difficult to define because of the different types and influences.

*Action – Karen to raise issue of standard indicators with MMO*

*Action – Group members to forward any further useful data to Gemma*

## **9. Any other business**

New Member application form Solent Cruising and Yachting Association agreed by group. They are to pay charity rate of £70.

Discussion of having a post of vice-chairman, which is needed from time to time. AI was asked whether the VC should always be the QHM. AI advised that this was common practise but not enshrined in the constitution. MC advised that practise is to have a chair who is unaligned with a sector and group needed to discuss whether it should be internal or external to steering group.

TK suggested having a Titular Vice Chair and acting Deputy Chairs – perhaps more than one DC from different sectors. This would mean that the forum could retain QHM who finds it difficult to attend meetings. There was general agreement about the idea and MC suggested the group contemplate and come back in the Autumn with nominations. It was suggested that the positions should be agreed by the steering group and ratified by members in case of any objections. Ideas include Ron Hancock (very popular), Andy Bradbury, Dave Moore and Sarah Black.

*Action – group members to send any potential nominations for deputy chair to Solent forum and KM put on the agenda for next meeting*

Revising the Marine consents guide - raised by TC. Many have found it extremely useful. KM advised it has been put off as waiting for the new Marine Planning system as well as available time. There is an issue of funding. Money will need to be found to produce the review. KA advised it can be put online to avoid the printing costs. RH would like ABP to be involved as a streamlined consent system is needed for Southampton Water. KM advised that Alison Fowler at River Hamble is also interested. KA suggested the MMO may want to comment on scoping paper.

*Action – SFO to produce scoping paper on MCG around October time. KM to involve RHHA and ABP*

Oil Spill in Southampton Water – RH asked to write up a passage about the oil spill incident for the Solent News. RH and DT confirmed they had some photos.

*Action: KA to write article in SN*

Solent Forum will be 20 years old in 2012. AI suggested the group start thinking about a celebration of some kind to mark the occasion.

*Action: KM to think about how to celebrate 20 year old birthday*

**Next meeting 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010 in Portsmouth**