

Solent Forum Nature Conservation Group
19th June 2009
Chichester Harbour Conservancy Dell Quay

Chair – Ed Rowsell

Present

Tina Cuss – FBC	Ed Rowell – CHC
Judy Halpin – HCC	Rhian Edwards – SF
Dave Rumble – HWT	Alison Fowler – RHHA
Ken Collins – NOC	Jenny Mallinson – NOC
Lindsay McCulloch – SCC	Tim Sykes – EA
Caroline Price – EA	Susan Bragg – HCC
Nicky Horter - CHC	Malgosia Gorczynska - NOC
Gordon Watson – Portsmouth University	Ciaran Roe – Student with SF

Apologies

Lindsay Bates – CDC	Peter Burrad-Lucas – PCC
Katherine Rowberry – LH	Roger Davies – QHM
Debbie King – HWT	Rachel Hardy – EBC
Sarah Wiggins - NE	

1. Welcome and Introduction

ER welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves. Unfortunately Ben Rainbow from West Sussex County Council has sent his apologies due to illness therefore there will be one less presentation.

2. minutes and matter arising

All action from last meeting carried out and no outstanding actions.

3. Current Nature conservation Group project Updates

Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project

All the data from the 1st year bird surveys has been analysed and the report will be available in time for the meeting on the 16th June. The report will also include recommendations for next years surveys.

With regards to funding it is likely that PUSH will provide around £67,000 but currently awaiting confirmation (since the meeting this has been confirmed).

The project group now need to prepare for the additional sections of phase two which will include another winter of bird surveys, visitor and household surveys before the modelling work can begin.

NE have put in a bid for £20,000 to carry out some breeding bird surveys. Sarah Wiggings is currently awaiting the results regarding this bid.

Richard Stillman will be presenting about phase 1 of this project at the next Solent Forum Members meeting on September the 23rd.

Action 1) SFO - 1st year of survey to be circulated once signed off by project group

Seal project

ER updated the group about the seal project and showed a map of where they have been tracked so far. Five seals were equipped with GPS and have been travelling over a range between Southampton Water, Ryde and Selsey Bill. The trackers also measure depth and salinity amongst other things and therefore a great deal of information can be gathered and not just where the seals have travelled. However it is still unknown exactly where there pupping areas area.

TS asked if there were affected by acoustic disturbance as this would need to be kept in mind with the EIA for the ABP dredge perhaps.

The project is now concentrating on raising awareness regarding these animals. There is possibly potential in a few years time of carrying out another tagging session in order to gain more information. ER circulated some leaflets that had been produced on behalf of the project.

Action 2) ER or Jolyon Chesworth from HWT to present to the group in future about the results of the deal project.

Wader Roost

Third and final year of data collating has finished and now moving into the 2nd part of the project. This is to analyse the roost data and to come up with a criteria for wader roost and brent geese sites. A big part of phase 2 is the site characterisation to list the common features that make wader roost sites. Work on this will begin end of June.

Bait Digging Topic Group

This is a subgroup of SEMS management which is concerned with the number of account of commercial dredging that is occurring through out the Solent and the potential damage to the European Marine Sites. Natural England have been carrying out a lot of work to try and establish a level for personal use – this will be around 3lb – roughly two bucket loads. This is what is recommended by SABDA as an appropriate amount to collect over 1 hour for personal use.

There has been a great deal of work carried out at Fareham Creek with new signs having been put up. Unfortunately majority of these have been vandalised although

the police have still received a number of calls regarding bait diggers in the area. However, the police lack resource to deal with all the reports of bait digging.

The Bait Collection Topic group aims to collect information about bait digging and to formulate a literature review. The main difficulty is proof that bait collection is having a negative impact on the site. The group aim to investigate a volunteer licensing system which has been hailed a success elsewhere. The group also wish to obtain a map from the Crown Estate indicating where bait collection is known to be occurring in the Solent.

GW updated the group on his project which is look at bait collection through adding CCTV to certain area. Unfortunately GW has not be able to obtain funding as yet but that Crown Estate has shown significant interest recently and he is hopeful that they will be able to provide some funding for the project to go ahead. This project will help establish a pattern in certain areas – number of people and how long they dig for etc.

Action 3) GW – update the group if funding is obtained.

Action 4) – SFO to update NC Group of any development with the bait collection topic group.

4. Chichester Harbour AONB – Presentation

Nicky Horter gave a presentation regarding Chichester harbour AONB. Please see attached power point.

5. An update on WSCC Biodiversity initiative – Ben Rainbow unfortunately ill

Presentation available through attached power point.

6. New initiative and studies

SFO presented a paper on the alien species webpage which suggested collating know alien species on to one list for the area. There is also then potential to map the presence of various species or perhaps just some of the key species. The work could be done either by a student or by contracting Kate Ansell or Gemma Conway to carry out the work.

The group agreed that a comprehensive list of alien species added to the Solent Pedia website would be a good idea. However a need for a map would need to be decided once a basic list has been compiled. It was agreed that SFO would go ahead and get a

student on placement with the forum to collate a list of known alien species. Majority of this could be found through trawling through various literature and speaking to members of the NC Group.

Unfortunately due to the boat trip the group ran out of time to discuss any further idea for projects. However SFO did highlight that the group had currently around £12000 in the reserve to carry out various pieces of work. SFO is not entirely sure how such a large reserve has formed but this opened up opportunity to carry out some project work in the near future.

7. AOB

SFO wishes to draw the groups attention to 2 consultations that the group might wish to respond to. Firstly 'Delivering Marine Conservation Zones and European Marine Sites: A draft strategy for marine protected areas' which is the proposal under the Marine and Coastal Access Bill to deliver marine protected areas. The second is Consultation on proposed minor amendments to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. The aim of the amendments is to make clear that provisions to make a special nature conservation order (SNCO) under regulations 22 - 27 and Schedule 1 of the Habitats Regulations can be used to restrict operations taking place on water as well as those on land, in order to protect European sites.

TS wished to highlight that the public consultation for the Water Framework Directive finishes at the end of June.

LM noted that SCC would soon to finishing the work that they have been carrying out regarding flight paths over Southampton City. This is a possible future presentation at a NC group.

Action 5) – SFO to circulate link for consultation.

8. Next Meeting

Date of next meeting to be confirmed