



## Solent Water Quality Association

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 SWQA is in the process of amending the Award criteria in preparation for the revisions to the Bathing Water Directive by 2015. 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/](http://www.solentforum.org/forum/sub_groups/Water_Quality_Group/).

**GOSPORT BOROUGH COUNCIL** **SEAWATER QUALITY RESULTS FOR THE GOSPORT COASTLINE 2009/10**

LATEST RESULTS FOR THE SITES HOLDING THE SOLENT WATER QUALITY AWARD 2009/10

SITE	1	2	3	4
1 : LEE-ON-THE-SOLENT	Good	Good	Good	Good
2 : STOKES BAY	Good	Good	Good	Good
3 : STOKE LAKE	Good	Good	Good	Good
4 : HARDWAY	Good	Good	Good	Good

The results displayed are based on the bacteriological standards contained in the European Council Bathing Water Directive (76/160), namely:

- EXCELLENT WATER QUALITY - meets EC Directive (annual min. 80% of samples must achieve 100 total coliforms and 100 faecal coliforms per 100 ml)
- GOOD WATER QUALITY - meets EC Mandatory standard (annual min. 95% of samples must achieve 10,000 total coliforms and 2,000 faecal coliforms per 100 ml of water)
- ▲ POOR WATER QUALITY - samples failed to meet the 'GOOD' standard

The SOLENT WATER QUALITY AWARD provides an easily recognised indication of satisfactory water quality at bathing beaches and other recreational waters in the Solent area. The Award applies to areas within a 200m offshore limit.

Further information can be obtained from Gosport Borough Council, Environmental Health Services, tel: 023 8254 8475.

To report an emergency pollution incident please call the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 807060. To discuss water quality data contact at [RWSL@COMMUNITIES.ENV.AG.UK](mailto:RWSL@COMMUNITIES.ENV.AG.UK) or Mr. D. Lowthion on 01903 832658 or write to The Environment Agency, Diving Road, Chichester, West Sussex PO26 2AG.

SOLENT WATER QUALITY AWARD



## Award Winners, 2009

The following Solent beaches received Solent Water Quality Awards in 2009.

### **Chichester**

- West Wittering
- Bracklesham Bay
- Selsey

### **Fareham**

- Hillhead

### **Gosport**

- Gosport Marina
- Hardway
- Haslar Marina
- Lee on Solent
- Stoke Bay
- Stoke Lake

### **Havant**

- Hayling West Beach
- Hayling Central Beach

### **Isle of Wight**

- Colwell
- Cowes
- East Cowes

- Gurnard
- Ryde
- Sandown
- Seagrove
- Shanklin
- Springvale
- St Helens
- Totland
- Ventnor
- Yaverland

### **New Forest**

- Calshot
- Christchurch Bay
- Milford on Sea

### **Hampshire CC**

- Lepe

### **Portsmouth**

- Eastney Boat House
- Southsea West Beach



## Proposals for Award Changes 2010 – 2012

The Solent Water Quality Group secretariat and chairman propose making changes to the Solent Water Quality Awards. These proposals have been put to the recipients of the 2009 Awards, and approval amongst the Water Quality Group is being sought. It is hoped that the changes can be launched during 2010.

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 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 and the proposed changes to the public.

If you have a view on the changes, then please email your comments to [info@solentforum.org](mailto:info@solentforum.org).