

Solent Forum Annual Report: 2024 - 2025

The Solent Forum is an established coastal partnership that promotes and delivers integrated coastal and marine management around the Solent. Established in 1992, it provides advice on strategic coastal and marine matters and facilitates communication and information exchange amongst its [members](#). Its work is steered by a group of key organisations, who also guide the work of the Forum Manager.

This report sets out what the Forum has achieved in the 2024/25 financial year and what it plans to deliver in 2025/26. The long term aims and objectives of the Forum are set out in its [Business Plan](#) that covers the period 2025 to 2030.

The Forum has three categories of work that it undertakes; core partnership work that is ongoing each year, specific project work that runs for a defined time period and the servicing of subgroups. It both leads and works as a partner in externally funded projects.

The Forum hosts regular events as part of its core service, both alone and in partnership with others, to support project work and disseminate information on important Solent issues.



Solent Forum Aims

The aims of the Solent Forum are:

- To promote, facilitate and support integrated planning and sustainable management of the Solent.
- To provide a broad based consultative forum.

Solent Forum Members

The Forum has a wide ranging membership from many coastal and marine sectors. [Members](#) are professional bodies and organisations such as local government, harbour authorities, marine businesses, 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 and independently chaired.

Membership benefits include:

- Access to the [Solent News service](#);
- Free attendance at biannual [Solent Forum meetings](#) and free or reduced entry fee to other Forum events;
- Access to Forum reports, data and the Forum's [Solent Information Database](#);
- Use of the Solent Forum network to communicate with other authorities, organisations and user groups;
- Opportunity to undertake partnership work and influence the direction of future Forum project work;
- Opportunity to join Forum Subgroups: [Natural Environment](#) and [Solent Marine Sites](#) (Relevant Authorities only);
- Use the Forum network to assist with project work via letters of support for bids, stakeholder engagement, event hosting and legacy output management.



Solent Forum Objectives

The Forum has six objectives. Below is a summary of the relevant core work that the Forum undertakes to deliver each objective:

1. To raise awareness and understanding of members' roles and aspirations

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

2. To improve sharing of the information base

Relevant Forum work: Professor Mike Clark Award, Solent News Service, Forum website, Solent Bathing Water Quality Awards, Solent Information Database, identification of research needs, Natural Environment Group grant funding.

3. To facilitate better communication, consultation and liaison:

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum website, Solent Forum meetings, topical workshops, Solent Information Database and Coastal Consents Guide.

4. To raise awareness and understanding of the human and natural changes likely to materially affect the Solent area and its interests:

Relevant Forum work: Solent News Service, Forum website, Solent Forum meetings, Solent Forum serviced subgroups and resource hubs.

5. To promote the national and regional importance of the Solent in policy, development and plan making:

Relevant Forum work: Solent Forum Meetings, Solent News Service, Forum website, officer input into national coastal and marine policy work and partnership working.

6. To raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of Climate Change on the Solent and appropriate mitigation, resilience and adaptation measures:

Relevant Forum work: Solent Forum Meetings, Solent News Service, Forum websites and workshops.

Solent Forum Core Work

- Biannual [Forum meetings](#).
- News service - biannual newsletter, ([Solent News](#)) and monthly enews.
- Maintaining the [Forum website](#), including hosting partner material and [information hubs](#) of key topical information.
- Provision of the [Solent Information Database \(SID\)](#) - a meta database of Solent research and reports.
- Servicing of ongoing and ad hoc subgroups.
- Running the [Professor Mike Clark Award](#) to support student research in the Solent.
- Maintaining a [Coastal Consents Guide](#) to advise those wishing to undertake development.
- Membership networking and attendance at key local meetings like Catchment Partnerships and the Southern Coastal Group.
- Collating and sharing information on key issues with member organisations, facilitating partnership working.
- Project legacy support. Chairing and facilitating external project workstreams and workshops.

Standing Solent Forum Subgroups

- [Solent Marine Sites Management Group](#) (Relevant Authorities only)
- [Natural Environment Group](#)
- Beneficial use of Dredgings (BuDS Solent)

Work Programme 2024/25

Meetings and Events Held and Assisted with in 2024/25

Meeting	Attendees	Date of Meeting/Event
Solent Forum	Solent Forum members	October 2024 and March 2025
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	Autumn 2024 and Spring 2025
Solent Marine Sites (SEMS)	SEMS Management Group	Activity survey in Spring 2024, Management Group meeting in September 2024
Natural Environment Group (NEG)	NEG Members	Spring and Autumn 2024
Horizon Scanning survey	Solent Forum Members	Summer 2024
Solent coast and marine LNRS workshop	Coast and marine stakeholders	January 2024
MMO marine planning implementation workshop (Solent Forum co-chaired)	Coast and marine stakeholders	November 2024

Projects/Partnership Work Undertaken in 2024/25

Project/Service	Objective	Details
Beneficial Use of Dredging in the Solent Project (BUDS)	Explores how dredgings can be used in coastal defence and habitat replenishment schemes.	Submitted the Marine Licence application for Phase 3 of the project. Subsequently withdrawn as MMO could not consent the proposals as submitted.
Solent Seascape Project	A Blue Marine Foundation and partners project to restore and reconnect seagrass meadows, oyster reefs, saltmarsh and seabird nesting habitat over five years (2023 to 2028).	Solent Forum is a member of the project Steering Group and chair of the Recovery Plan Working Group.
Information Hubs	Collates information on a wide range of topics of relevance to the Solent.	Hubs built and will continue to be updated.
Solent Plastics Pollution Hub (SPP) SPP facebook page	SPP collates and publicises work on reducing litter and preventing plastic pollution in the Solent.	We are now in the legacy phase of this project and we will continue to update the project website and Facebook page until 2026.
Habitat Restoration Inventory for the Solent to Sussex Bay	Working with University of Portsmouth to raise awareness and encourage partnership working on habitat restoration.	Project commenced Jan 2023, and is now complete. The Forum has access to the resources to update the restoration map as new projects come along.
Solent Marine Invasive Species and Biosecurity Planning	To raise awareness of marine invasive species amongst Solent stakeholders and help them to adopt biosecurity measures.	The Forum continues to hold, update and publicise these Plans.

Work Programme 2025/26

Key Meetings and Events Planned for 2025/26

Meeting	Attendees	Date of Meeting/Event
Solent Forum	Solent Forum members	October 2025 and March 2026
Solent Forum Steering Group	Steering Group Members	September 2025 and February 2025
Solent Marine Sites (SEMS)	SEMS Management Group	Survey of activities spring 2025, annual meeting September 2025
Natural Environment Group (NEG)	NEG Members	Spring and Autumn 2025
BuDS Solent Project Group	Technical invitees	March 2025
Horizon Scanning survey	Solent Forum members	Summer 2025

Project Work Committed for 2025/26

Project/Service	Objective	Work Programme for 2025/6
Solent Plastics Pollution Hub (SPP) SPP facebook page	SPP is an information hub to collate and publicise all the work taking place around the Solent and its associated river catchments on reducing litter and preventing plastic pollution.	Continuing project legacy support until February 2026. Annual updates will be produced in Feb 2025 and Feb 2026.
Itchen Preventing Plastic Pollution Partnership	This project is looking to address all uncontrolled plastics which have the potential for entering the River Itchen.	Solent Forum will be sitting on the steering group of this project that commenced in February 2024.
Beneficial Use of Dredgings (BUDS)	To explore how material from dredging that takes place in the Solent can be used in coastal defence and habitat replenishment schemes.	We will support the project group and look at how to take forward beneficial use of dredgings work in the Solent.
Solent Biosecurity Planning	To increase awareness of marine invasive species and adopt biosecurity measures in the Solent.	Our webpages will be refreshed and promoted to coincide with Marine Invasive Species week every May.
Solent Nature Recovery	To ensure that coast and marine are embedded in the developing Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) for Hampshire, Isle of Wight and West Sussex.	We will continue to support the Responsible Authorities with the coastal aspects of LNRS' and continue to input into national work on marine nature recovery.
Sea the Value (Developing the economics of biodiversity)	Communities and organisations will be engaged in mapping values and trade-offs, and co-developing green investments for marine biodiversity.	The Solent is one of two project field sites and we will be supporting the project team until 2025.
Solent Seascape	A Blue Marine Foundation and partners project to restore and reconnect seagrass meadows, oyster reefs, saltmarsh and seabird nesting habitat over five years (2023 to 2028).	Solent Forum is a member of the project Steering Group and chair of the Recovery Plan Working Group and we will fully support this project over this period.

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