

Solent News

The newsletter of the Solent Forum

Issue 60: Summer 2026

Inside this issue:

- NOC thirty year anniversary
- Cowes week bicentenary
- Solent AMS toolkit published
- Lymington sea water baths
- Wetwheels wins King's Award
- Floating wetlands
- Seagrass around the island
- Portsmouth Port celebrates 50 years
- Non native species in the Solent
- Seagrass and oyster reef volunteering
- A coast for all
- Archaeological excavations at Buckler's Hard
- Hurst Spit to Lymington Strategy consultation
- Deployment of settlement panel monitoring on Cefas SmartBuoys



The Solent Forum is the Coastal Partnership for the Solent

Partnerships for Marine Nature Recovery

Natural England have published Partnerships for Marine Nature Recovery (JP072). It recognises that delivering marine nature recovery (MNR) in England requires effective collaboration across sectors, scales and stakeholders. In the marine environment, achieving environmental targets depends not only on policy mechanisms, such as Biodiversity Net Gain, Marine Net Gain, green and blue finance, and Local Nature Recovery Strategies, but also on the strength of partnerships that enable coordinated, place-based action.

Findings demonstrate that Coastal Partnerships already play a significant role in marine nature recovery, as trusted, place-based brokers connecting communities, regulators and delivery partners. In relation to governance, the research highlights the importance of both 'hard' factors (e.g. legal status, funding structures, organisational arrangements) and 'soft' factors (e.g. trust, collaboration, leadership, skills and local reputation), with the latter often proving equally or more critical to effectiveness. While many Coastal Partnerships operate successfully without formal legal status, those with stronger institutional arrangements or host-body support are shown to be better positioned to attract and manage larger-scale investment for MNR.

This project, commissioned by Natural England's social science team and funded by Natural England's research and development capital budget, aimed to better understand what characterises effective coastal partnerships for supporting and delivering marine nature recovery, particularly in the context of emerging policy initiatives.

Partnerships are important mechanisms for delivery of the Government's key environmental targets defined in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environmental Improvement Plan.

News from the Forum

Chair's Column



Welcome once again to Solent News, as the Forum embarks on a new chapter with Southampton City Council and the Partnership for South Hampshire.

We held another information and networking packed Forum meeting at the D-Day Museum in March. Speaking slots always fill up quickly and it is great that members want to share their knowledge and experience (and to ask for help!) in such a generous and open way. Please make sure that you book early to attend the next meeting on 15 October at the National Oceanographic Centre.

As you can see from the rest of this newsletter, there is a huge amount going on around the Solent, with many successful projects to be celebrated covering nature recovery, culture and heritage, coastal protection, recreation, industry, research and communities.

As we swelter in yet another early summer heatwave, and recognise the significant impact we have already had on our climate and biodiversity, the importance of the research and active restoration work taking place around the Solent comes to the fore. I particularly want to highlight the number of volunteers who are attracted to working on marine projects such as seagrass and oyster reef restoration. We are one of the most active and successful coastal forums, and this is down to the amazing work undertaken by our members and wider stakeholders.

My thanks once again to Kate Ansell, whose commitment and enthusiasm drives the Forum onwards, and to the members of the Steering Group who provide valuable strategic direction.

New Host for the Forum

As of 1 April, the Solent Forum transferred to a new host organisation, this was a year in the making and involved lots of discussions with the Solent's coastal community about where and how our Coastal Partnership should be situated.

The Forum is now hosted by the Partnership for South Hampshire, which is a grouping of local authorities who use partnerships to deliver a wide range of strategic work across south Hampshire. Coming under this umbrella enables the Solent Forum to work more closely with other Partnerships, such as Bird Aware Solent and the Solent Nutrient Mitigation Partnership.

The Forum requires a legally constituted body to provide operational hosting facilities as it is an Unincorporated Association. This role has been taken on by Southampton City Council, with the Forum Manager post moving to its Growth and Prosperity Directorate.

Forum staff would like to thank all those who supported us in this transition, moving an organisation after 34 years takes a lot of forward thinking, planning and legal and technical support. We would also like to thank our previous host, Hampshire County Council, for the many years that it supported us.

Manager's Update

Over spring 2026 much of the focus of the Forum has been on ensuring its transition to its new host. Our core work has very much continued in this period with a Solent Forum meeting in Portsmouth in March with sixty delegates attending. In addition to the great presentations that we listened to it was fabulous to see the networking that took place and how the Solent's coastal community are so willing to share their knowledge and experience with each other and seek out opportunities for partnership working. I for one love to work in this cohesive and supportive environment.

Our project work has been focused on Beneficial use of Dredgings and how we can start to develop this as a viable option for the many marine businesses and harbours that need to dredge.

We have recently surveyed our members about what issues they are dealing with in the marine and coastal space and what services we can provide to assist them. The results help us to set our work programme for the following year and make sure we can keep up to date with latest developments.

I look forward to seeing all members at our next meeting on 15 October 2026 at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton.

Kate Ansell
Solent Forum Manager

Heritage

NOC Thirty Year Anniversary

Thirty years ago the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) in Southampton opened its doors. The project broke ground in 1993 to combine the Natural Environment Research Council's oceanographic and vessel services with the University of Southampton departments to host a purpose-built dockside site for marine and earth sciences. The merger encompassed all aspects of research, training, undergraduate teaching, technology and support services. In April 1996, the finished Centre was opened by HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

Thirty years on and this dockside site remains a hub of ocean research, technology and innovation, home to many brilliant minds all dedicated to gaining a deeper knowledge of our ocean.

The University of Southampton's School of Ocean and Earth Science is based at the site and it holds the UK's only Regius Professorship in Ocean Sciences.



© National Oceanography Centre

The Big Repair sees Masts Removed

The masts of Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson's flagship HMS Victory have been successfully removed as part of a conservation project.

The 10-year, £42m scheme called The Big Repair, is happening 100 years after the ship arrived in Portsmouth's dry dock. The rear mast, foremast and the bowsprit were removed using a 750-tonne crane. The main mast was removed in 2021. The next phase will see the ship enclosed in scaffolding for the conservation project, ending in 2033.

New displays in the museum will help visitors understand the layers of the ship and how the team are repairing her.

Visitors will also be able to take part in immersive demonstrations and workshops showcasing traditional shipbuilding skills.



© National Museum of the Royal Navy

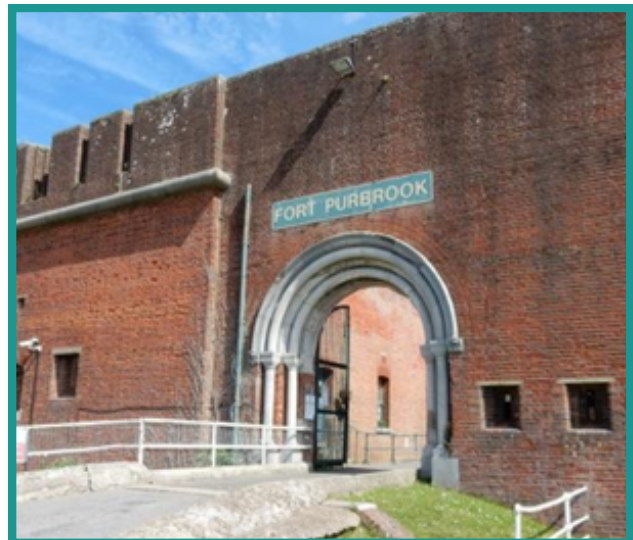
Conserving Historic Forts

A major conservation programme has begun at Fort Purbrook and Fort Widley, helping to safeguard two of Portsmouth's historic Victorian forts for future generations.

The £2.1 million project is being delivered by the Peter Ashley Activity Centres Trust with funding from Defra through the Countryside Stewardship scheme, administered by the Rural Payments Agency and supported by Historic England.

Work is focused on the repair and conservation of the historic ramparts at both forts and the restoration of chalk grassland from damaging scrub, creating nature-rich areas for the public to enjoy.

Fort Purbrook and Fort Widley were originally built to defend Portsmouth's Naval Base. Today they serve a very different purpose, providing a home for the Peter Ashley Activity Centres Trust, a place where thousands of young people each year take part in outdoor activities, education and community programmes.



© Peter Ashley Activity Centre

Recreation

Cowes Week 200th Anniversary

Cowes Bicentenary is the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Cowes Week, scheduled to take place from 1 to 7 August. The event will feature a variety of sailing races, special events on the water, and onshore activities, with a focus on the rich history of the regatta.

Cowes Week is one of the UK's longest running and most successful sporting events and is a key highlight of the British sporting summer. It has been held in early August every year since 1826, except during the two world wars and the Covid pandemic in 2022.

Traditionally, it takes place after Glorious Goodwood and before the Glorious Twelfth (the first day the grouse shooting season). Occasionally the traditional dates are changed to ensure optimum racing, taking account of the tides or, as in 2012, to avoid a clash with the Olympic Games.

The first race was for a Gold Cup of the Value of £100, held in 1826 for just seven yachts under the flag of the Royal Yacht Club (which later became the Royal Yacht Squadron in 1833).



© Cowes Week

Advanced Mooring Systems Toolkit

Traditional swing moorings are most commonly used in UK waters by recreational boats, consisting of an anchor, chain (rode) and float. But they can result in abrasion to seagrass beds and other sensitive seabed habitats.

As the tide rises and falls, differing amounts of chain will lie across the seabed, abrading the seagrass and leading to mooring scars. Changing these systems to environmentally friendly designs to remove abrasion can help to address key pressures from this recreational activity. Advanced Mooring Systems (AMS) are becoming more popular as their ability to protect key habitats such as seagrass beds from damage becomes more widely understood.

The [LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES](#) project demonstrated the effectiveness of Advanced Mooring Systems (AMS) as an alternative to traditional swing chain moorings which abrade seagrass beds, through trials in three Special Areas of Conservation in subtidal environments.



Vessel installing marker buoy with a train wheel sinker in Osborne Bay. Credit: Andrew Hunt, VSEL

There is existing information for harbour authorities and sailing clubs to use to help inform potential options for installing AMS and the systems that are available e.g. [Advanced Mooring Systems \(AMS\): LIFE Recreation ReMEDIES: Lessons learned and good practice guide](#). However, further support and guidance is needed on installing a mooring in a specific location with specific environmental conditions, particularly for intertidal areas.

To assist an easy to understand and accessible [toolkit for harbour authorities, sailing clubs and private mooring owners](#) was produced providing bespoke information on the options available for specific mooring locations and environmental conditions in the Solent, including information on design options (anchors and risers), potential manufacturers and suppliers, installation and maintenance.

Recreation

Lymington Sea Water Baths

Lymington and Pennington Town Council have been awarded a grant of £154,800 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to protect the future of Lymington Sea Water Baths.

The project will help explore how one of the UK's oldest surviving open-air sea water bathing sites can be protected, better understood and planned for future generations.

The Grade II listed Lymington Sea Water Baths first opened in 1833, and remains an important part of the town's coastal, social and leisure heritage. Unlike many later lidos, built in the 1920s and 1930s, the Baths reflect an earlier period of sea water bathing and have a distinctive character shaped by their coastal location.

This initial development funding will allow the Town Council to carry out the vital early work needed to understand the Baths properly and plan for their future.

The project will include architectural design work up to concept design stage, specialist structural, engineering, environmental and heritage assessments, a heritage review, community engagement and a business options appraisal.



© Visit Hampshire

WetWheels Wins King's Award

In May, more than 80 guests gathered at the Royal Southern Yacht Club to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Wetwheels Hamble and witness the presentation of the prestigious King's Award for Voluntary Service.

Over the past decade, Wetwheels Hamble has enabled more than 15,000 disabled people, together with their friends and families from across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, to enjoy life-changing experiences on the water aboard its fully accessible powerboat. For many participants, the experience represents freedom, confidence, inclusion and the opportunity to do something they never believed possible.

The event brought together volunteers, skippers, crew, sponsors, supporters and founding members who have all played a role in the organisation's success. Nearly half of those attending were Wetwheels Hamble volunteers and operational crew whose commitment and generosity have enabled the charity to thrive over the past 10 years.

A highlight of the celebration was the formal presentation of the King's Award for Voluntary Service by the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson. The award is regarded as the highest honour given to local voluntary groups in the UK and is widely recognised as the equivalent of an MBE for voluntary organisations.



Founding members of Wetwheels Hamble, Dick Long (far left) and David Mead (far right) with Wetwheels founder, Geoff Holt seated

Nature Restoration

Floating Wetlands

A new project is set to help degraded coastal environments through the installation of pioneering floating wetlands, including a rarely trialled floating saltmarsh system in a marine setting.

The project, led by the University of Portsmouth in partnership with Southern Water, will see specially designed floating pontoons, engineered to support saltmarsh vegetation, deployed in coastal waters. Their purpose will be to recreate crucial lost “green” habitats in areas dominated by concrete infrastructure such as seawalls and flood defences.

The wetlands will host a diverse range of saltmarsh plants, with marine species being trialled on a floating system. By effectively creating a floating saltmarsh, the project aims to provide vital habitat for fish and marine life, enhance biodiversity, and restore valuable ecosystem functions to heavily modified coastal environments.



© University of Portsmouth

The wetlands have been set up at the Southcoast Wake Park in Portsmouth as part of a long-term research programme, using a before-and-after monitoring approach to assess their environmental impact. Scientists will track changes in water quality, biodiversity and ecosystem resilience over time.

Seagrass Around the Island

Thanks to support from Seacology, residents and visitors to the Isle of Wight can learn more about the Island’s important seagrass meadows following the installation of new signage.

Two new signs have been installed at Seaview, the location of one of the Island’s extensive *Zostera marina* seagrass meadows. It is where Project Seagrass, Blue Parameters, and Warren Boats have installed two Advanced Sustainable Mooring Systems (ASMS) to relieve pressure on the Island’s seagrass habitats.

A further sign has been installed at Priory Bay, the location of the start of their Fragment Walks and one of their restoration sites on the Island.

The signage has been installed by Project Seagrass as part of ongoing efforts to protect and restore seagrass ecosystems within the Solent. It is designed to raise awareness of seagrass meadows around the Isle of Wight, in addition to highlighting ways that individuals can support these fragile ecosystems.

Further poster versions of the signs will be installed at Ryde and other locations around the Island.

People can upload seagrass sightings via citizen science tool [SeagrassSpotter](#).



© Project seagrass



© Hants and Wight Wildlife Trust

Ports and Harbours

History of Lymington Harbour

Lymington is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, and its importance as a port grew steadily during the medieval period. Sheltered waters, access to the Solent and a navigable river made it an ideal location for trade and fishing. By the 13th century, it was an established harbour town, exporting salt, timber and agricultural goods.

Salt production played a crucial role in shaping the town. For centuries, salt was harvested from seawater in large salt pans along the river and marshes.

From the 17th to the 19th centuries, Lymington became known for shipbuilding and repair. The riverbanks were lined with yards constructing fishing boats, coastal traders and naval vessels. Timber arrived by sea, and skilled craftsmen worked close to the water's edge, creating vessels that would trade along the English coast and beyond.

It also has a colourful smuggling past. Its proximity to the Isle of Wight made it a convenient landing place for contraband goods, particularly in the 18th century. The maze of creeks and salt marshes provided ideal hiding places for smugglers evading customs officers.



© Lymington Harbour Commissioners

Portsmouth Port Celebrates Fifty Years

Portsmouth City Council were approached in 1975 by a ferry operator who had just started a service between Plymouth and Roscoff, to open a route between St Malo and the UK. An agreement was reached and Portsmouth City Council developed a new berth within 100 days for £1 million. The first sailing from the new International port was Brittany Ferries Portsmouth - St Malo route, which commenced on the 17th June 1976.

What followed, was rapid growth, further port developments, new routes, super ferries and innovation. Portsmouth International Port contributes £400 million to the UK economy, £7.5 billion in trade and supports over 5,000 jobs nationally. The profits of the port support essential council services, it is the largest and most successful municipal port in the UK.



© Portsmouth International Port

The Port aims to reach net zero by 2030 and become zero emission by 2050. This includes its Sea Change shore power project.

Habitats and Species

Non Native Species in the Solent

In 2018/19, non-native species (NNS) were surveyed by timed searches at 14 clusters of sites in the Solent region, each cluster consisting of a marina, a designated (SAC or SPA) shore near to the marina and another designated shore further away. A report re-surveyed four of these clusters in 2022, to: monitor for changes in species' distribution and abundance; review the persistence of documented differences in the prevalence of NNS between the 'Near' and 'Far' shores; assess if the clusters were suitable for ongoing sentinel monitoring; and continue to refine the shore rapid assessment protocol developed during the earlier surveys.

These re-surveys, after an interval of 3-4 years, documented the apparent colonisation of new shores by a suite of NNS, San Diego sea squirt, Pacific oyster, Red-ripple bryozoan and Green sea fingers, plus a marked increase in abundance on shores by another, Tufty buff bryozoan. Two species, Purple fan-worm and Pink-hearted hydroid, were found that were not recorded in the previous surveys, the former already now present in three out of four marinas surveyed.

The two newly recorded species do not yet have regional risk assessments, but both can dominate space and appear to have the potential to be species of concern. The previous patterns of NNS diversity between the sites within a cluster and of site occupancy across clusters both following the relationship Marina > Near shore > Far shore largely persisted, although not always with statistical significance.



Hydroides ezoensis on Chilling Shore.
Also seen are *Styela clava* and *Tricellaria inopinata*.
Image: © J Taylor, NE

Volunteers Help with Seagrass Restoration across the Solent

The Solent Seascapes Project and its volunteers have successfully planted hundreds of thousands of seeds and transplants across sites in the Solent.

At Thorness and Priory Bay on the Isle of Wight, Project Seagrass planted 175,416 seeds and 1,154 seagrass transplants, helping to restore an area just over the size of one and a half football pitches.

At Calshot, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, who are also a partner in the project, planted more than three times as many seeds as last year (100,700), while a further 3,950 intertidal seeds were also planted by the Trust on the River Hamble, where seagrass was all but lost.

The planting follows an intensive community effort last summer which saw volunteers give over 600 volunteer hours to the largest seed collection Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has undertaken to date at Seaview and Calshot.

This spring also saw experimental trials, comparing germination success between subtidal and intertidal seed populations collected from Isle of Wight meadows, helping to refine methods for future large-scale restoration.



Image: © Project Seagrass

Coastal Communities

Volunteers Prepare Oysters for Reef

In May, 260 volunteers helped prepare 20,000 native oysters for deployment onto a newly built reef in Chichester Harbour, as part of the UK's largest subtidal oyster reef restoration project.

The large-scale effort forms part of the Solent Seascape Project, a major marine restoration initiative led by ocean conservation charity Blue Marine Foundation alongside Chichester Harbour Conservancy and the University of Portsmouth's Institute of Marine Sciences. The project is supported by the seabed owner, the Manor of Bosham.

Volunteers also took part in "biosecurity days" at the University of Portsmouth's Institute of Marine Sciences, where the oysters were cleaned and carefully checked before being placed onto the reef.

For centuries, native oysters were part of everyday life across the Solent. Coastal communities relied on oyster beds for food, trade and employment, with evidence of oysters being harvested in the harbour dating back to Roman Britain. The restoration aims not only to recover a lost species, but to help reconnect the region with an important part of its maritime heritage.

Native oyster populations in the Solent have fallen by around 96% over the past century due to overfishing, disease, invasive species and declining water quality. Despite this decline, oysters remain one of the marine environment's most important "ecosystem engineers". A single oyster can filter up to 200 litres of water a day, helping improve water quality, while oyster reefs also create habitats for hundreds of marine species and help protect coastlines from erosion.

Fun Facts on how to build an oyster reef:

- 🚢 Barges of cultch: 6
- 🦪 Oysters: 20,873
- 🧼 Scrubbing days: 4.5
- 📅 Volunteer slots filled: 246 (some came along multiple days!)
- 🕒 Volunteer hours: 1,388
- 🍕 Food: 90 pizzas, ~900 slices!!! 30 packets of biscuits, lots of fruit too 🍌🍎🍊
- ☕ Drink: over 200L of tea/coffee
- 🎬 5 Film screenings of our new seagrass film
- 🎧 5 listens to our project album
- 🗺️ I think the furthest travelled for this event was Falmouth 🌍
- 👤 Steps: 58,843
- 📏 Distance covered: 48.6km

Information courtesy of Dr Luke Helmer, Solent Seascape Project.



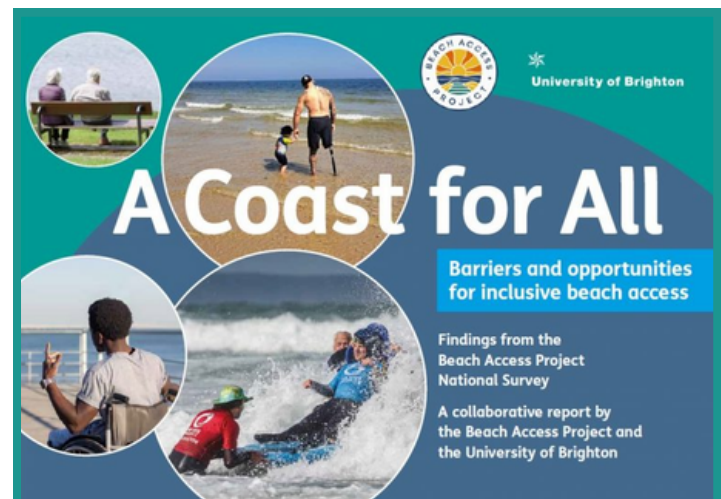
© Luke Helmer, Solent Seascape Project

A Coast for All

Beaches and coastal environments are a central part of life. They support wellbeing, recreation and time with family and friends and are widely understood as shared public spaces. But access to these environments is not experienced equally. A report presents findings from a national survey led by the Beach Access Project in collaboration with the University of Brighton, exploring how people with medical conditions and disabilities experience beaches across the UK.

Many people are able to reach the coast, but cannot go further. They arrive, but are unable to access the beach itself or take part in everyday activities such as paddling, swimming or spending time at the shoreline.

The Report shows that barriers are primarily environmental and infrastructural, but are also shaped by wider practical, informational and experiential factors that influence whether people feel able to visit and participate.



Culture and Heritage

Sails of the South

Portsmouth's iconic Sails of the South landmark has been restored to its full glory, following an extensive refurbishment programme to improve the structure's safety, appearance and long-term resilience in time for the city's centenary celebrations.

The distinctive tri-sail structure, which sits at the entrance to the city on the M275, was originally installed to enhance the arrival experience. While the fabric sail panels had reached the end of their 25-year design life, leading to the recent removal of some for safety reasons, the wider structure itself was designed to last 50 years.

This project has replaced all sail panels and included structural checks and upgrades, including new lighting, to ensure the landmark continues to meet modern safety standards and fulfils its intended lifespan.

The 43-metre tall tri-sail sculpture is designed to look like three large sails, symbolising the city's maritime heritage (naval, commercial, and leisure sailing). It was originally installed as part of a gateway regeneration project.



© Portsmouth City Council

Archaeological Excavations at Buckler's Hard

Marina Projects Ltd supported the 2025 archaeological excavation at Buckler's Hard by securing the necessary licences and regulatory approvals, enabling the work to proceed in a sensitive heritage and environmental context. Led by the Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust in partnership with the University of Southampton, the excavation uncovered significant 18th-century shipbuilding remains, including timbers, artefacts, and what is believed to be the UK's first fully exposed slipway of its kind.

These findings have provided valuable insight into historic Royal Navy ship construction. The project attracted support from academic teams, local organisations, volunteers, and the wider community.

Marina Projects' involvement reflects its ongoing commitment to sustainable marine development and heritage preservation.

The excavation forms part of a wider programme to enhance understanding of the historic shipyard, with further slipway investigations planned under a Marine Licence to continue exploring the site.



Beaulieu River © Marina projects Ltd

FCERM

Sluice Gate at Farlington Marshes

The 120-hectare (300-acre) Farlington Marshes Nature Reserve near Portsmouth is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area for Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site.

A failing tidal valve and crumbling sea wall are letting in salt water which is affecting the flood grazing marshland and washing away birds' nests and reed beds. The site is home to bird species including bearded tit, avocet, redshank and lapwing.

The tidal flap first broke in the spring of 2024. A temporary repair was put in place by the Environment Agency which is responsible for the sea defences. Earlier this year, engineers installed a permanent replacement valve but that too has since failed. More changes to the water control unit are due to be made later this summer.



*Sluice Gate, Farlington Marshes.
© Environment Agency*

The sea wall assets are also nearing the end of their operational life. Development and hard infrastructure such, as the A27 road, means there is nowhere for the marshes to retreat inland. With sea level rising the marshes are a victim of 'coastal squeeze'.

Hurst Spit to Lymington Strategy

A major new public consultation launched on 19 June 2026, inviting communities to have their say on the long-term future of the coastline between Hurst Spit and Lymington.

The consultation showcases the Draft Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy, developed by the Environment Agency and partners, setting out how the area could adapt to climate change, rising sea levels, and increasing flood risk over the next 100 years.

Public exhibitions will run until 21 September 2026 at venues across Lymington and Milford on Sea, presenting the preferred approach and gathering final public feedback before the Strategy is finalised.

- The 15km coastline is facing significant long-term pressures from climate change.
- Sea levels are projected to rise by over one metre by 2120, increasing flood risk.
- The number of properties at risk could rise from 35 today to more than 500 (homes and businesses combined).
- Important habitats such as saltmarsh and mudflats are at risk of being lost
- due to coastal squeeze.



*Green dotted line is Strategy area
© Environment Agency*

The Strategy recognises that maintaining the coastline "as it is" is not sustainable in the long term and proposes a new adaptive approach.

There are a number of in person events taking place across the Strategy area, please see the [public exhibition events poster](#) for times and venues.

Webinars are also taking place on 8 July and 9 September in the evening, register at email: hurstspit2lymington@environment-agency.gov.uk.

More News

Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority

On 16 March 2026, the statutory instrument to formally establish the HSCCA as a legal entity was laid before Parliament.

The region has secured an investment fund of £44.6 million per annum, totalling £1.3 billion over 32 years, with an annual disbursement of forty percent for financial years 2026/27 and 2027/28, alongside additional resources to build internal capacity. The remainder of the fund will be released following the election of a Mayor in 2028. This means there will be a phased approach to support the Authority's setup and gradual assumption of devolved responsibilities.

The HSCCA has nine areas of responsibility which it will focus on. These are:

- Transport and local infrastructure
- Skills and employment support
- Housing and strategic planning
- Economic development and regeneration
- The environment and climate change
- Health, well-being and public service reform
- Public safety
- Culture
- Rural and **coastal**



Deployment of settlement panel monitoring on Cefas SmartBuoys

Settlement panels are artificial structures used to monitor fouling species in marine environments. When placed in invasive species hotspots, such as ports and marinas, the species in the water nearby find the empty panel and grow on it. When the panels are recovered from the water, invasive species in that area can be identified.

This process enables settlement panels to be used as a vital early warning tool for detecting marine invasive non-native species. Over the past year, Cefas have deployed settlement panels on their SmartBuoys around the UK coast, demonstrating how existing technology can be adapted in innovative ways to rapidly detect emerging marine threats.

Aquatic invasive non-native species can disrupt the delicate balance of our ecosystems, displacing native wildlife and altering habitats. From spreading diseases to creating new competition, their impacts can be far-reaching.

To learn more about invasive species visit the [GB Non-native Species Secretariat](#), where you can also find guidance on how to [help tackle the threat](#) of invasive species and [how to report sightings of invasives](#).



Cefas SmartBuoy © Cefas

More News

GB Rowing Challenge

Two crews set off from Tower Bridge in London on 14th June to take on one of the world's toughest rowing races, the GB Row Challenge, a non-stop circumnavigation of Great Britain by rowing boat.

The challenge sees teams Rowmads and Nautilus attempt to row 2,000 miles around the British coastline, gathering information on ocean health and pollution levels. This data will be analysed by scientists at the University of Portsmouth, before being shared through The Crown Estate's Marine Data Exchange, an open-access resource which is one of the world's largest collections of marine industry data.

The rowers will gather data on microplastic pollution, biodiversity, underwater noise pollution, sea temperature and salinity. This will contribute to ongoing research efforts aimed at understanding the impacts of human activity on marine ecosystems and informing strategies for conservation and sustainability.



© University of Portsmouth

Langstone Coastal Scheme

Havant Borough Council's planning committee unanimously voted to approve the planning application for The Langstone Coastal Scheme.

Scheduled for a main construction start date of April 2027, the £23.6M scheme will reduce the risk of coastal flooding and erosion along one kilometre of the Langstone coastline.

It is designed to protect 53 homes, four businesses, and the A3023, which serves as the sole highway link to Hayling Island. Additionally, it covers a collection of heritage assets, including six listed buildings and two Conservation Areas.

The project aims to provide a 1:200-year standard of protection against tidal still water, equivalent to a 0.5% annual exceedance probability, with structures engineered for a 50-year design life.



© Havant Borough Council

The package of work combines traditional coastal engineering with public realm and ecological components, including:

- Raised earth embankments and sheet-piled sea walls finished with cladding and flood glass
- Raised footpaths, cycleways, and the provision of flood gates
- Landscaping improvements, street furniture and ecological enhancements
- Highway alterations and the realignment of sections of the Hayling Billy Line cycle route

Coastal Partners, Havant Borough Council's dedicated coastal team, will continue to lead the delivery of the scheme.

Tidal flood risk to Langstone is escalating due to rising sea levels and more frequent, severe storm events. Existing defences are failing due to age leaving homes, heritage, and vital infrastructure exposed to frequent flooding and erosion.

Marine Industry

Redbridge Truck Park

One of the early infrastructure investments supported by the Solent Freeport Seed Capital Programme is the new Redbridge Pre-Gate and Truck Park. It is helping to strengthen freight operations while supporting the transition to lower-carbon logistics.

Delivered by DP World, the facility is now fully operational and has received positive feedback from hauliers using the site. The project has increased HGV capacity at the Redbridge terminal, providing space for up to 130 vehicles alongside enhanced welfare facilities for drivers, and infrastructure to support electric HGVs. The project also contributes to wider sustainability goals through:

- Electric charging infrastructure on site
- Supporting increased use of rail for freight transport
- Helping improve efficiency and reduce emissions across the logistics network



© Solent Freeport

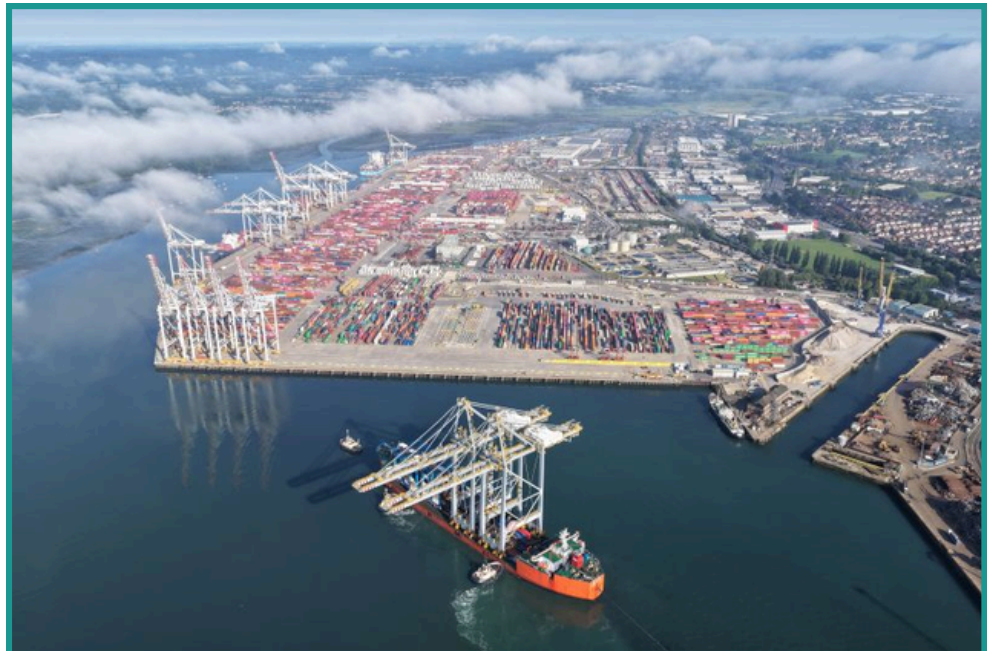
New Cranes for DP World Southampton

The DP World Southampton terminal has welcomed Europe's largest quay cranes, each weighing more than 2,000 tonnes and standing nearly 150 metres high.

This marks the first of two deliveries as part of a major investment programme to the UK's third-largest container port. A further pair of cranes is set to arrive on the south coast later this year.

The investment forms a key part of DP World's long-term strategy to enhance operational capability and strengthen Southampton's role as a gateway for UK trade.

The new cranes will boost handling capacity and volumes at Southampton and are able to service the largest container ships currently in operation, including 24,000 TEU megaships, as well as future larger vessels not yet built.



© DP World

Capable of consecutive 'tandem lifts' of two 40ft containers at once, the new quay cranes will support an increase in efficiency and productivity, improved reliability for customers, and help to futureproof operations at the terminal. The investment is also expected to support faster vessel turnaround times and enhance Southampton's ability to accommodate growing trade volumes.

More News

The Impacts of Climate Change on Coastal and Intertidal habitats in the UK

MCCIP has just published a [rolling update on climate change impacts on coastal and intertidal habitats in the UK](#). This update highlights that high natural diversity and variability of coastal, intertidal and shallow nearshore habitats, and the cumulative impacts of other human activities, makes it challenging to attribute specific responses to climate change. Nevertheless, there is compelling evidence that storminess, changing weather patterns, and sea-level rise are exposing these habitats to stronger wave action, accelerating erosion, and driving ecological shifts. There is also clear evidence that climate change may also be facilitating the spread of non-native species already established on our rocky shores.

The report notes that although the focus of restoration programmes is often on the active habitat creation, the importance of conserving existing habitats through removal of pressures is likely to bring the largest benefits for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Restoration practices should also plan beyond single species and single habitats to a multi-habitat seascape, which is what the Solent Seascape Project does.

It also notes that addressing the key local manageable pressures common to multiple habitats, such as nutrient enrichment, coastal development, and recreational mooring, is critical for practical conversation, restoration and management actions and will improve ecosystem resilience to climate change.

New Masterplan for Fawley Waterside

Fawley Waterside Limited are bringing forward new proposals for the former 91 acre Fawley Power Station site.

The current proposals are for up to 190,000 sqm of floorspace to include:

- Digital industries
- Maritime buildings
- Starter units for business and light industrial use
- Storage and commercial buildings
- A cafe
- Landscaping
- Improvements to flood defence measures



Draft Master Plan © Fawley Waterside

The project team have been carrying out pre-application engagement, including meetings with council officers, and are consulting the community, stakeholders and interested parties, ahead of the submission of a formal Outline planning application to New Forest District Council (NFDC). Comments on the initial proposals are welcome up until the 21 July.

As this proposal is for an Outline Masterplan, subject to its approval, further applications will be submitted in partnership with the future occupiers of the plots. The project team can be contacted at: fawleywaterside@consultationonline.co.uk.

Solent News

Movement in Blue Spaces

A new [Movement in Blue Spaces Playbook](#) has been launched to support Active Partnerships to increase participation in physical activity in, on, and around the UK's waterways, by bringing together sports clubs, environmental organisations, and a wider range of local stakeholders.

Developed in collaboration with the Clean Water Sports Alliance (CWSA), Sport England and Active Partnerships, the Playbook provides practical guidance for enabling more people to access, enjoy, and benefit from blue spaces, including rivers, lakes, canals, and coastal environments. Movement in water boosts physical health, mental wellbeing and connection to nature.

The Playbook responds to challenges, offering guidance, insight, case studies and actionable recommendations to help local systems and organisations. It currently contains 32 case studies including community plastic clean ups on the river, water quality testing by rowing clubs, wheelchair accessible beaches, and walking groups by the water.

The Solent Forum

Since 1992, the Solent Forum has provided a platform to facilitate coastal and marine management in the Solent sub region of the southeast. It operates at a strategic level, providing a network for closer working relationships, information dissemination and discussion of topical coastal and marine issues. The Solent Forum members meet twice a year and will next meet on 15 October 2026 in Southampton.

The Forum is hosted by the Partnership for South Hampshire with Southampton City Council providing its accountable body.

Solent News is prepared and edited by the Solent Forum Officers. It is a biannual publication and issue 61 will be produced in Winter 2026/27. To find out more about the publication, how to submit articles or be included on the mailing list, please visit our [publications webpage](#).

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