



Friends of Langstone Harbour Newsletter

April 2013.

Funding Cuts

You will have read elsewhere about the cuts being imposed on the Langstone Harbour Board by our two local authorities.

The harbour Board's functions include ensuring the safety of navigation in the harbour, pilotage for commercial users of the harbour and they are required to carry out these duties with due regard to the requirements of a number of significant environmental regulations.

Because of the harbours exceptionally high ecological significance it enjoys local, national, European and international environmental designations. Among these the European wild birds and habitat directives are particularly important considerations.

Funding of this work is achieved through charges for harbour dues, moorings and pilotage. Any balance needed to cover the duties outlined briefly above is raised by a levy (the precept) on the Havant and Portsmouth Councils. Costs in recent years have been of the order of £600,000 with precepts of around £70,000 being met by each council. That does not sound like a lot of money compared with the total budgets of the councils but we know they are both being pressed hard in these times.

An initiative led by Portsmouth Coun-

cillors has led to a reduction of 50% this year with elimination of the precept next year.

The Board, dominated by 6 members of each of the two councils, has agreed these proposals with the shortfall this year being met from the Board's reserves. Those reserves had been intended to cover unavoidable future capital expenditure e.g. on jetties and harbour management and patrol craft.

Most of the board's costs are staff wages so the move approved by the councillors will lead to big staff reductions in the not too distant future.

It's a valid question to ask how will the board, 12 councillors and a few others, then discharge **their duties** as we have listed them above!

Failure to provide the resources to manage the harbour properly could well lead to significant charges which may far outweigh the savings currently envisaged. Such charges would fall to be met by precept!

The Board have commissioned an independent review of harbour services. We are left hoping, not very confidently, this can lead to some common sense reconsideration by the councillors of their proposals.

John Goodspeed

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Port Creek Tidal Footpath/Cycleway Campaign

By John Worley

For cyclists and pedestrians travelling west across the top of Langstone Harbour an attractive path continues north of Port Creek to Hilsea and Portchester - a minor setback being the railway bridge at Port Creek where the footpath underpass is not passable three hours either side of high water.

Eastbound the tidal underpass offers no difficulty because a footbridge there leads across the creek giving access to the Airport estate and the southern end of the Eastern Road bridge. Westbound however the tidal underpass can block a half mile path with no junctions. Backtracking to the Eastern Road would be inconvenient - worse - some may be tempted to force the underpass when it really isn't safe.

The Friends of Langstone Harbour are lobbying for a warning at the Eastern Road end of the footpath about the tidal underpass ahead - and suggesting how the state of the tide may be gauged before embarking on that leg.

Reaction from Portsmouth City Council, who are keen to make the City cycle and pedestrian friendly has been positive, and we hope to launch a joint project.

The pictures are of the proposed sign and its intended location.



Footpath/Cycleway to Cosham and Hilsea

Warning - This footpath is tidal at the railway bridge 0.7km ahead

The footpath under the railway bridge has the same elevation as the beach below the concrete sea defences here.

If you cannot see the beach below, the footpath ahead is closed

(Cross the bridge and use the footpath to the south of the creek instead.)



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etc



Thursday 18th April Langstone Harbour northern shore.

Meet in the Bidbury Mead car-park in Old Bedhampton (next to the church)(SU703064) at 14:00 for a 2½ hour walk exploring the streams and northern shore of the harbour.

Wednesday 12th June Explore Southmoors for flowers Meet and park at the end of Southmoors Lane (SU708049) at 19:00 for a wander along the shore and across the fields for birds and hopefully orchids.

Wednesday July 3rd Milton Common Meet and park at the end of Moorings Way Portsmouth SU676004 at 7pm to wander round the common looking for birds and wild flowers.

For all these walks

Dogs on leads welcome. Suggested donation £1.50. Contact John Goodspeed 078 1143 5252

Wildlife Trust Walks
around the harbour

Work Parties

In the last few months we have worked at the oyster beds, Budds Farm, and the Farlington 'triangle'. The groups have been small but good work has been done.

At the oyster beds the RSPB warden wanted bramble cleared along the pathway by the lagoon and it was particularly rewarding to complete the job in one morning's work.

At the Farlington 'triangle' we were engaged in clearing scrub to create a much more open area which might be used in future by the Brent geese. This is a huge task but a worthwhile one where we can make a contribution.

Unfortunately our last quarterly clean up of the beach at Budds Farm was rained off so we will probably do that job at the end of April.

One encouraging bit of news for those who worked at Fort Cumberland collecting gorse litter and redistributing it is that there are signs of the gorse spreading as a result. This should help the local Dartford warblers to extend their territories.



Gathering Gorse litter at Fort Cumberland.. February 2012.

Bramble removal at the oyster beds. 22 Mar 2013.



Bird Life

At the time of writing we still have many of our winter birds including the long staying re-breasted goose. A few spoonbills are on the reserves at Farlington and Titchfield Haven but soon these will all be gone

There are signs that the little egrets will nest gain on Langstone Pond and some of our woodland birds have been busy nesting for some weeks but I suspect the season is running slowly and late.

Nevertheless migrants are arriving. There have been plenty of chiffchaffs and along the shore wheatears. Away from our locality there are records of blackcaps and ospreys arriving or passing through. As yet there are no signs of the ospreys taking to the nesting platform that have been build for them

A barn owl was seen twice in March near a potential nest box close to the harbour.

Friends of Langstone Harbour
Public Meeting.

Thursday April 25th at 7.30 p.m.

Portsdown :
Conservation on the urban fringe



An illustrated talk by **Richard Jones**, PCC Portsdown Conservation Officer. We will hear how Portsdown is being restored as species rich chalk downland.

At St Andrew's Church Hall,
Havant Road, Farlington

NB. this is not our usual venue!

Car parking is off the road in the approach to the hall

Refreshments

Raffle

Please join us.



Subscriptions

The above meeting would be a good time to pay your subs if you have not already done so. Alternatively please send £4.00 to Norman Brookhouse, 2 Fortunes Way, Bedhampton, PO9 3LR



As usual we have had regular sightings of avocets this winter in the harbour between the Eastern Road and Farlington Marshes.