



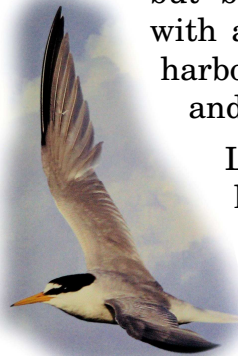
Friends of Langstone Harbour Newsletter

November 2014

There has not been much recent news from us except for those who are on our e mail distribution list. We are concerned about communication with our members but getting people to write is the problem!

Our main activity continues to be the monthly work parties but even these are drawing fewer participants than they used to. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find information on our recent and planned activities.

The AGM was affected by the need to change the speaker at the last moment which left some people disappointed that they were unable to raise particular issues with the planned speaker. However we had a good talk from Chris Cockburn on the efforts to encourage little tern breeding in the harbour. Thank you Chris.



We have changed our secretary. John Worley has taken over from Bryony James who has had to give up the task due to conflicts with her employment. We are grateful for what she has done over the years and to John for taking on the task.

We have welcomed Chris Gilsenan as a new committee member but we still have room for more new committee members. If you might be interested contact one of the officers listed below. We meet on average about every six weeks and our meetings are friendly but business like. We need people with an interest in any aspect of the harbour and ideas of how to promote and protect it.

Lastly—if you receive this newsletter by post but would be content to have it by e mail please e mail John Goodspeed at john@havantnature.net

Annual Subscriptions 2014/15

Subscriptions became due on 1st October 2014. Please will all members pay their £4 per household as soon as possible.

Please send cheques payable to "Friends of Langstone Harbour" to Norman Brookhouse, 2 Fortunes Way, Havant, PO9 3LZ.

Thank you.

Friends of Langstone Harbour Officers

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Work Parties

There's work to be done! And we are doing it.

Our last two work parties have been on our adopted beach in September where four of us picked up 1,400 individual bits of litter weighing over 18Kg—all from 100m of beach; and also quite a bit which we did not count from the rest of the beach.

In October we worked on the shore line path north of Kendall's Wharf. Five regulars were joined by two very welcome new workers and it was nice that walkers and cyclists using the path thanked us for what we were doing. With a westerly wind the smoke from our bonfire blew out over the harbour so we may not have been quite so popular with other harbour users.



Our next two work parties will be as follows.

- November 29th bashing scrub at the oyster beds in an area where the locally scarce dames violets are being smothered by bramble.
- January 3rd back on our adopted beach clearing litter.

We work on Saturday mornings for about 3 hours and usually go home with a warm feeling of a job well done. If this is something you fancy let John Goodspeed know and he will make sure you get the details of where and when we are working.

2015 Annual General Meeting

It may be early to talk about October but put in your brand new diary
now!

Tuesday 13th October at 7.30 p.m.
At St Andrew's church hall Farlington

Speaker: Scott Mills (East Solent Coastal Partnership)
Topic to be confirmed later.

Erosion on the Billy Trail



The way storms earlier this year have brought the sea to the edge of the Billy Trail just south of the oyster beds is worrying lots of people.

In the past inappropriate and ineffective measures have been adopted to try and prevent this erosion and the adopted Shoreline Management Plan for this length of coast is 'No action'.

The issue is not a simple one.

This is about the only bit of natural coast for miles around and there is a good case for letting it stay that way. Hard measures like those at Broadmarsh/Southmoors are

distinctly unnatural and therefore inappropriate

The path is not at present a public right of way but signs posted recently on the path indicate that an application has been made to make it so.

It would be very expensive to attempt to preserve the status quo.

It should be possible to make a simpler form of path to connect the remaining trail at much lower cost than a hard engineered solution.

It might be helpful if something could be done by way of renourishment of the very thin beach gravel. It might be the loss of gravel drifting north due to measures adopted further south that is the cause of the problem.

Meetings of interested parties are being held and the Friends of Langstone Harbour will take an interest in these discussions.

Incidentally the storm effect on the oyster beds lagoon, as pictured right, is even more severe but does not appear to have generated the same anxieties.



The view over the harbour on 19th November



Eelgrass

Seagrass

This article is based on a longer one in the Solent Protection Society's recent 'News'

Eelgrass and seagrass are alternative vernacular names for the plant *Zostera*. It is a plant very similar to terrestrial grass and just like ordinary grass needs light to survive. So it grows in water where light can penetrate and in the Solent this is generally in depths of less than 3 metres.

It is an important plant for a number of reasons.

- It is an excellent nursery habitat for a wide variety of small fish, arthropods and in the Solent sea horses.
- It stabilises mudflats which also provide shelter for growing fish.
- It is a key element in the diets of wildfowl including our important population of Brent geese.



The loss of nursery habitat for many species of fish is one of the reasons for the decline in fish stocks in the Solent which has led fishermen to turn away from white fish to scallops, prawn and lobsters. Bottom dredging for these species is a threat to the eelgrass and can lead to a loss of eelgrass beds over and above the losses described below. And less eelgrass in the long term means fewer fish!

The once rich beds of eelgrass in the Solent, including Langstone Harbour, have been badly affected by algae covering the leaves and preventing necessary photosynthesis. However mapping by the Solent Seagrass Project (www.solentforum.org/forum/sub_groups/Natural_Environment_Group/Solent_Seagrass) has shown that there is a significant recovery which will enhance the ecological health and economic viability of the Solent and its harbours.



One of the problems for eelgrass beds is that many of them are in areas favoured by fishermen and where yachts want to moor or anchor. Byelaws are in place to control bottom trawling and there are ongoing negotiations on the anchoring and mooring of yachts in eelgrass beds. There is now a better understanding of the problem and a balance will hopefully be found between all the diverse interests involved.

To learn more check out the web site quoted above.