



# Newsletter

March 2021

We hope you are all staying safe and surviving the lock down.

We have had to abandon plans for conservation activities and a series of walks but we are thinking ahead and on page 2 of this news letter we offer some ideas of what will do once we are free of restrictions.

Water quality is occupying the minds of many people and another article on page 4 explores this issue. Your committee has discussed our approach and will continue to do so.

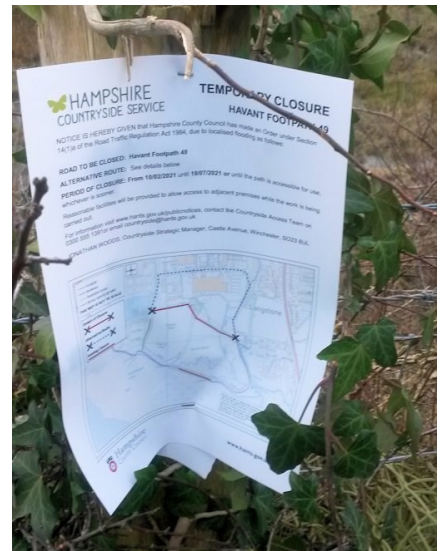
## Oysters



The Blue Marine Foundation are hoping to lay cultch (A mass of broken stones and shells on which oyster spawn may settle) in the Russells Lake area of the harbour as part of their project to restore native oyster *Ostrea edulis* populations. They are hoping to complete the legal processes so the cultch laying can be completed in time for the Solent's natural oyster spat fall.

The University of Portsmouth are trialling development of sustainable structures for the creation of Atlantic saltmarsh and native oyster reefs. The Harbour staff and the Marine Institute are trying to find a suitable location for a trail in Langstone Harbour.

The Southmoor Sea Wall on 15th February and a temporary closure notice. The sea wall can be crossed at low tide but the path that is being closed till July is very very muddy so our walks probably will not be going here.



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# Walks and Talks

Here is an outline of some events we would like to arrange. Firm dates can not be settled until we know just when the government will relax Covid 19 restrictions.

## Walks

- **'Thatched House' Locksway Road to Milton Common. May.** Hopefully on this walk we will see and hear some of our summer birds that have arrived from Africa; and there should also be butterflies and wildflowers. We will see the locks that were once part of the canal from London to Portsmouth and walk on some of the flood defences built a year or two back.
- **Warblington to the oyster beds. June.** This slightly longer walk will start in Chichester Harbour and take us over the bridge to see the noisy breeding gulls and maybe terns on the old oyster beds lagoons. On the way we might find cattle egrets.
- **Old Bedhampton to the shore and back.** This three mile walk can be interesting at any time but is best in the winter when there is a good chance of finding kingfishers or late spring when there should be some orchids. A short diversion to look at the sea wall breach might interest some.
- **Farlington Marshes.** Also around 3 miles depending on whether we go in from the usual entrance or walk in from Broadmarsh.

## Talks

- **Climate Change.** This would be the talk we had to cancel a year ago with a Nick Pepin from the University. We will have to wait until meeting venues are open to us.
- We have one or two other ideas but your suggestions would be welcome.

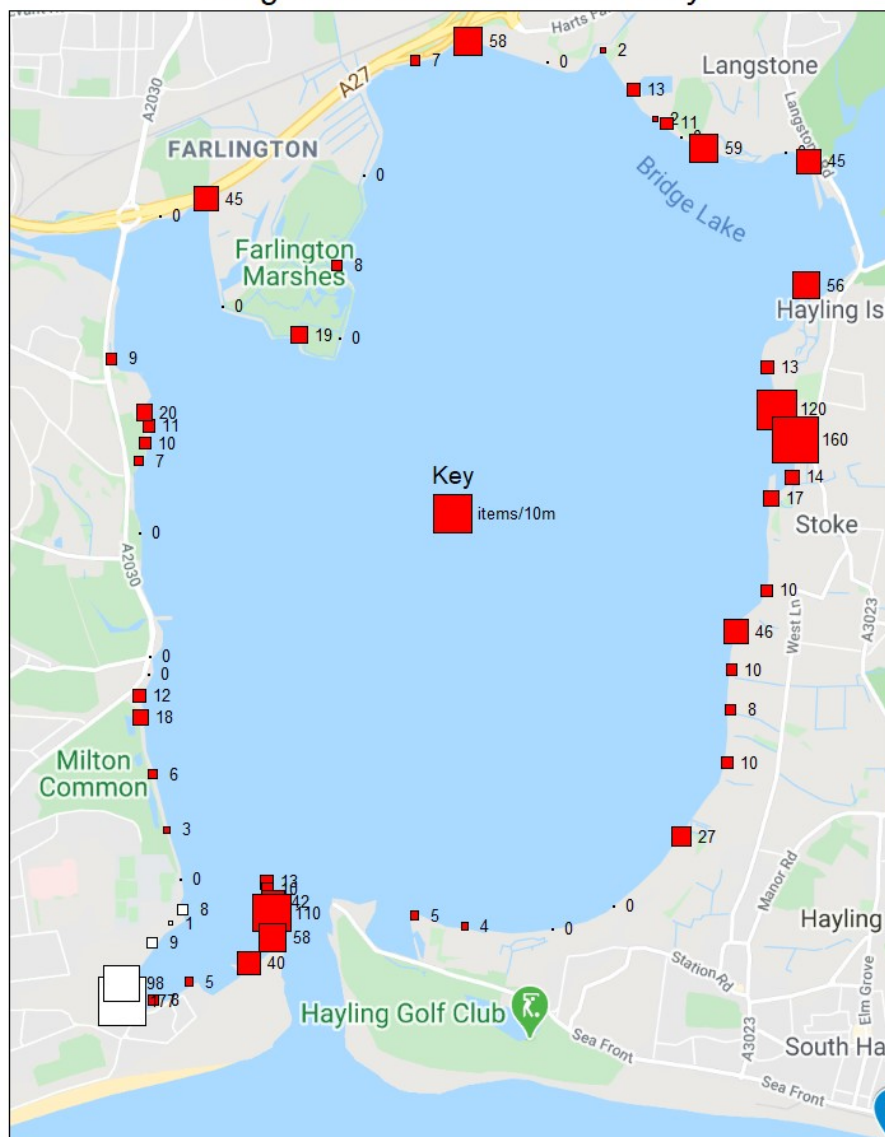
## Wrecks

At the time of writing there is a boat high and dry on one of the RSPB islands. This will be removed soon but its too far up the beach to be lifted or towed away. It will be cut up on site with as much care as possible to minimise glass fibres getting into the water.

Dealing with wrecks is not a straightforward business. Owners have to be contacted, notices displayed and board approval obtained, The Harbour authorities will deal with any hazards to navigation, which frequently means they have to do the work and that costs money. If possible the costs will be recovered from owners or their insurance companies.

Contractors will be doing the work in the case above.

## Langstone Harbour Litter Survey



Showing macro-litter items per 10 metre length of shoreline in June 2020

A whole shoreline litter survey will be undertaken as soon as we are allowed out. The map above is last years spring shoreline. All the worst areas were cleared during the summer/autumn. (the white squares represent litter already cleared by our first Harvester bash).

Our quarterly litter picks on our Adopted Beach where we categorise and count the litter for the Marine Conservation Society will also resume as soon a possible.

If you are not on our list of working volunteers and would like to be involved please let us know.



5th December in The A27/Eastern Road roundabout dirty corner

# Pollution

Water Quality seems to be on everyone's agenda lately whether you are talking about Langstone or Chichester harbours, or indeed the Solent.

It's an indisputable fact that there is a lot of man-made pollution going into the water. That's not new and our harbours are, in some respects, cleaner than they were even 30 years ago. Back in those days all of Havant's treated sewage was going into the north of Langstone Harbour but now, after treatment with Portsmouth's wastewater it is pumped way out into the Solent. We don't see the sea ducks and gulls feeding on sewage at the Budds Farm outfall that we did when the writer first came to Portsmouth.

More insidious and less controlled are the nitrates that continue to build up in the water affecting the wildlife using the harbour and leading to algae blooms which none of us like. Nitrates come from agriculture and horticultural practices as much as development. Algae blooms blanket the mud affecting the rich life hidden there and lead to eutrophication in summer which kills fish too.

The local councils and harbour authorities have been forced by central government to address this problem and restrictions have been placed on development. Planning applications rarely make provision to deal with additional sewage but sadly this is not, of itself, grounds to reject applications. Water treatment authorities are supposed to make provision for whatever sewage arises.'

Water treatment works need a lot of investment to cope with existing sewage let alone more of it. The local population increases every year while the same water treatment works struggle to cope.

Most of our sewage outfalls deal with combined surface water run off as well as domestic and industrial sewage which leads to storm overflow events. It is this which is troubling some of the people that use the harbours.

Your committee are watching all this with interest and encourage the relevant authorities as they press for improvements. These authorities are endeavouring to work together pressing the various agencies who have the powers to do something. But improvements will involve money and guess where that will come from?

## Harbour Wildlife

This is a good time to look for birds in our harbour. I have enjoyed the number of kingfishers on the northern shore of the harbour and up the streams sometimes finding two on the same walk. A few more weeks and they will disappear to their breeding sites.

The usual ducks and geese are around and you might still find a great northern diver if you look carefully and are a bit lucky. They tend to be in the south of the harbour. As usual in recent years there are not as many goldeneye as there once were.

It's good to have regular avocets, usually on the Farlington Marshes lake or in the Broom Channel when they can be seen from the Eastern Road roundabout. They will soon be moving on unless one or more pairs breed on Farlington Marshes again.



J.G.