



Chairman's Review of the Year.

2024 has been a year of steady consolidation as environmental custodian of Langstone Harbour. There has been a sustained effort in community engagement, demonstrating the commitment to safeguarding Langstone Harbour's unique ecosystems.



Our monthly series of work parties has continued throughout the year, across the entire harbour.

John Worley our conservation officer has established a regular group of volunteers who on the last Saturday of every month undertake a series of tasks around the Harbour....generally things other groups don't wish to get involved with. Projects include our regular Marine Conservation Survey (MCS) to the removal polystyrene modules.

April 1st saw the plan to introduce crocodiles into Langstone Harbour to help deal with excess sewage. Our public consultation point on Langstone Quay attracted considerable profile and some amusement and support from drivers coming on and off of Hayling Island. Whilst most people understood it for the April fool hoax it was, it proved to be an amusing way to deliver a more serious message of sewage discharges affecting the whole of the Harbour.



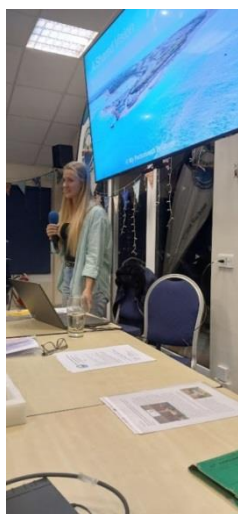
Our Harbour Cruise in May aboard the Pride of Hayling Ferry was as popular as ever and something we hope to make an annual event. The low tide gave us excellent sightings of our resident



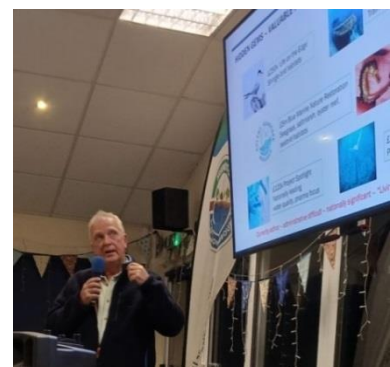
harbour seals and useful additional income for the operators of the Pride of Hayling Ferry.

Our annual Round Harbour walk in October enabled members to walk the recently opened Eastern Road leg of the Portsea North Flood Defences and also an opportunity to review the path across Southmoor Langstone, which shortly will become part of the King Charles III England Coast Path.

After the success of last year's AGM where Roger Morgan Grenville presented an engaging talk on his 1000 mile trek across the UK in support of the Curlew, we had a tough act to follow. However most attendees this year would agree that the theme **Langstone Harbour its future whatever that maybe** was a timely debate given the shortly to be published Harbour condition report, which is expected to be critical, as it was with adjoining Chichester Harbour. It was a well-attended meeting with a wide diversity of interest.



Rob Bailey gave attendees inkling as to how to market the Harbour as an important international destination for eco-tourism. He identified £100m of inward investment, based



on its special environmental and historical designation. Meg Roberts, the LHB's Environment Officer, gave an overview of the environmental improvement and restoration projects she had in mind and emphasised the importance of community led efforts to help to shape the future of the Harbour.

During the meeting, FLH Chair Kevin Edwards emphasised the group's role in and drawing together the various interest groups within the Harbour to offer a unitary voice. Harbour Master, Billy Johnson said "Keeping the local community informed and involved is going to become increasingly important for Langstone Harbour we will use every opportunity to engage with the very people who actually use and value our wonderful harbour."

Following on from the evening's discussion, the threat to the existing Harbour management structure following the publication of the Fisher Report surfaced. This damning report could offer few recommendations apart from it being municipalised. Both the Friends of Langstone Harbour and the Clean Harbour Partnership presented a robust riposte to this report and it was heartening to know that at a recent meeting of the Harbour Board the report was firmly rejected in favour of a more collaborative approach to the Harbour's future. Essentially this will enable the Harbour Officers opportunity to prepare their own collaborative 50 year plan, this time in consultation with the Board Members and other stakeholders; hopefully now to include both the CHP & FLH and the widest number of harbour users.

We have just taken delivery of the first of a series of cards painted by our Artist in Residence Sarah Butterfield. This one entitled ***View from the Oyster Beds*** will be familiar to many Look out for the card which will shortly be going on sale through various retail outlets in the area. We are grateful to Sarah for her generous donation.



Membership has steadily increased over the year and this year we welcome members of the Langstone Village Association who have become our first affiliated membership. Working closer with the local authorities, we also welcome the growing number of local councillors who have joined the Friends, *where Harbour interest rises over politics.*

We have received good media profile over the past 12 months; we are grateful for the support of the Portsmouth News, the Langstonian, BBC Radio Solent and the Hayling Islander.

The Friends are keen to extend membership to anyone interested in the ongoing care and protection of the Harbour. Membership currently costs just £5 and if you are not already a member or you wish to renew or join further details can be obtained from our Membership Secretary Heather White at flhmembership@gmail.com

Looking forward to the New Year

Following the rejection of the Fisher Report it is now hoped that this will lead to the development of a more inclusive Harbour wide Strategy plan and future structure that will serve well into the future.

We will continue to work with Southern Water to improve water and shoreline quality. We have a further visit to the waste water plant at Southmoor planned for early in the New Year to which all members will be welcome.

Throughout the year we will be continuing our work with the MCS. Rather than our usual beach cleans this study actually analyses and records the items found. We have been documenting this same beach for over 20 years in order to build up an historic picture, as well as feeding into the national profile.

In January the Solent State of Nature Report will be published which it is believed will be critical of the current situation in our local waters. We look forward to working with Solent Seascape Project with their ambitious nature recovery programme.

It is going to be an exciting and action packed year in the protection and restoration of the Harbour. We look forward to working with you.



Picture credits: Kevin Edwards & Steven Moody