

CDALC Update for Meeting on 10th November

Thus far I have attended two sessions:

- A joint meeting of the Conservancy and Advisory Board which titled a *Deep Dive into Water Quality Issues*.
- A New Member Induction Meeting for new members of the Advisory Board.
- The first formal meeting I shall attend will be on 17th November
- I won't be able to attend the following meeting on 19th January as I'll be in South America

Deep Dive into Water Quality Issues 4th July

Summary

The event meeting provided a fascinating and disturbing picture of how human activity is interfering with the ecology of the harbour to the detriment of natural environment and our own health. The scale of this impact has accelerated significantly over our lifetimes, and the damage may take centuries to repair if possible at all. Water quality issues go well beyond sewage although some of the most alarming issues caused by 'forever chemicals' and micro-plastics are a result of discharges, so this remains a key issue, along with many others....

In his summary Matt Briers, CHC CE was keen to focus on things we can do to address this. He argued that the scale of action requires more concerted regulatory and statutory intervention. But at local level there are also things we can do as communities, harbour users etc. Public awareness is important, and this is an issue which has attracted the public's attention in recent years.

CHC invited expert speakers from a range of organisations including:

- Environment Agency
- University of Portsmouth
- Southern Water

General Background

- Water quality issues include nutrient enrichment (which can cause eutrophication and algal/macro-weed growth), bacterial contamination, heavy metals, and sedimentation.
 - Sources of pollution include agricultural run-off (diffuse pollution), treated sewage discharges (including storm overflows), combined sewer outflows, and groundwater infiltration into sewers
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Key Measures Being Taken

1. Wastewater treatment upgrades & reducing storm overflows

- More than £14 million has been spent near Chichester: e.g., at Lavant and Tangmere works: new storm tanks, improved settlement tanks, reducing phosphate loads.

- A new scheme to reduce storm overflow into the Harbour: surveys and interventions (relining pipes, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), etc)
- Target of zero storm overflows in Chichester and Langstone Harbours by 2030.

2. Nature-based and habitat restoration solutions

- Wetland creation at the Lavant wastewater treatment works: reeds planted, storm overflow reduction, treatment of flows naturally.
- Saltmarsh restoration at Itchenor (drag-box technique to deposit dredged sediment, enabling new saltmarsh colonisation) which improves ecological functioning and thus indirectly water quality.
- Native oyster re-introduction: For example, 4,000 oysters installed at Emsworth Yacht Harbour (each oyster filters many litres of water), helping to improve water clarity and quality.

3. Monitoring, research and catchment management

- Real-time monitoring project (buoys measuring pH, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, nitrates, etc) in partnership with Litmus Technologies and University of Chichester to build a continuous picture of water quality.
- Under the harbour's management plan: monitoring at multiple sites, research into pollution including microplastics, source apportionment.
- Policy in the management to manage sources of water pollution, maintain waste reception facilities, oil spill preparedness, etc.

4. Waste-reception, boating & harbour use management

- The Chichester Harbour Conservancy manages a Port Waste Management Plan for marinas, boatyards and sailing clubs, includes facilities for recycling, oil disposal, pump-out for boat sewage so that black water isn't discharged.
- Engagement of local users (boaters, marinas) in reducing antifouling contamination, promoting best practice for responsible use.

5. Land-use and agricultural interventions

- Working with farmers to reduce nitrate ingress into the Harbour: The Environment Agency is developing initiatives in collaboration for regulation, nutrient-measuring tools and a farmer collaboration group.
- Management plan highlights work under the Solent Diffuse Water Pollution Plan, Catchment Sensitive Farming and the Downs & Harbours Clean Water Partnership to tackle diffuse agricultural pollution.

Award of the Freedom of the Harbour: Tony Kershaw longstanding clerk to CHC and Head of Legal Services at WSCC was awarded the Freedom of the Harbour

New Member Induction for Members of the Advisory Board 16th September

Purpose

This was an opportunity to hear directly from Matt Briers CE, Jo Cox Harbour Master and Richard Austin on the role and work of the Conservancy and to get a better understanding of current issues they face.

Introduction

- CHC established by the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Act 1971
- Governed by a Board responsible for legal matters, with alternating chairmanship.
- Advisory Committee includes stakeholders and meets quarterly to advise the Board.

Governance

- The Board meets quarterly, elected members from WSCC, HCC, CDC and HBC
- The Advisory Board also nominates three members

The Advisory Committee is not legally responsible but provides recommendations to the Conservancy Board.

Strategy

- Vision for 2050 includes effective conservation, biodiversity protection, and community participation.
- CHC aims to be a net-zero organization with a sustainable financial footing.
- CHC is viewed as an exemplar of active conservation whilst delivering safe and effective port management

Key Functions

- The Conservancy maintains the harbour for pleasure craft and recreational use
- It is a unique organization with responsibilities for conservation and amenity areas.
- Visitor engagement statistics show significant participation in educational programs.
- 31 permanent employees (24 WTE), 28 Casual employees

Finance

- Total income £3.7m for 2024-25, with various funding sources
- Much of this is grant related, ie linked to specific projects not income in true sense.
- Expenditure includes staff costs and grant-funded projects.

Current Challenges

- Focus on biodiversity and climate emergency.
- Financial contributions from councils, HCC refusing to pay their share
- Changing pattern of boating and reduction in 'user generated' income

- Long running issues include: Tournurbury Woods, Langstone Mill Sea wall, Yacht Haven, Provision of new jetty at Itchenor, Salterns Lock, Birdham

Management Plan 2025-30

Significantly revised and rewritten following consultation in the Spring. Now has four policy aims:

- Safety
- Access
- Biodiversity crisis
- Climate emergency
- Draft plan for approval in November

Planning and Development

- Around 300 planning applications per year
- CHC has a Member-led Planning Committee for larger or controversial applications
- A non-statutory consultee
- Also respond to consultations, public inquiries, appeals, etc.

Education Role

- Visitor numbers 4,600
- Field trips/ sessions 152
- 180k users of the Education Centre since it opened in 1999
- 40% primary age, 40% secondary age, 20% adults and family

Role of Partners

- Friends of Chichester Harbour: 1000 members, contributes funding for projects etc £30k so far
- Chichester Harbour Trust: seeks control of land for long term protection, high net worth individuals, sites secured either managed by CHC or tenant farmers.

Since the Induction Day.....

I have been in touch with various other members of the Advisory Board. Simion Radford, formerly Chair of the Chichester Harbour Federation, has offered to be nominated as Chair of the Advisory Board and will have my support. The current chair Alison Wakelin, who manages Emsworth Yacht Harbour is to stand down and an election will held to fill the role.

Ivan Western

West Wittering Parish Council