Minutes of the Hamble Estuary Partnership Meeting
Warsash Sailing Club on 16 May 2013

Present:

Anthony Gallagher - AG  HEP Chair
Alison Fowler - AF  HEP Officer
Amanda Bowens - AB  Hants and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology
Rachel Hardy - RHa  Eastleigh Borough Council
Don Alexander - DAl  Association of Hamble River Yacht Clubs
Peter Jennings - PJ  River Hamble Harbour Authority
Robert Hughes - RHu  Warsash Sailing Club
Robin Ayling - RA  Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Ian Underdown - IU  Hamble Parish Council
Diane Andrewes - DAn  Bursledon Parish Council
James Addicott - JA  Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership
Gavin Holder - GH  Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership
Karen McHugh - KM  Solent Forum
Jenny Leeves - JL  Bursledon Rights of Way & Amenities Preservation Group
Jeremy Clark - JC  Solent Protection Society
John Selby - JS  Royal Yachting Association
Paul Hobbs - PH  Warsash Residents Association
Amy Dale - AD  Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Sally Bradshaw - SB  Natural England
Hillary Crane - HC  Natural England
Tony Blewett - TB  River Hamble Mooring Holders Association

Apologies were received from the following:

Claire Hamilton  Environment Agency (Biodiversity)
David Evans  River Hamble Harbour Authority
Toby Fletcher  Warsash Maritime Academy
Rachel Gallagher  Hampshire County Council (Coastal Planning)
Stephen Allen  Sarisbury Residents Association
Chris Moody  River Hamble Marinas and Boatyard Operators Association

Absent:
Curdridge Parish Council
Botley Parish Council
The Crown Estate
Hampshire County Council (Countryside)
English Heritage
National Federation of Sea Anglers

1. Welcome:

AG welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Presentation “Current projects of the Hants & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology”
Amanda Bowens (HWTMA):

Presentation is available on the HEP website for 1 year, then on request from the HEP Officer.

The presentation introduced 2 projects being delivered via ‘Arch Manche’ - an EU funded initiative that aims to demonstrate how archaeology, art and maritime coastal heritage can be used to show long-term patterns of coastal change and the impact on human settlement in order to predict future changes. It is hoped the information will be brought together onto a Geographic Information System (GIS).

The first site is large timbers located on the foreshore adjacent to Hamble Yacht Services. These are thought to comprise some form of chine built, flat-bottomed, wooden barge; the type of construction has also been associated with a vessel type known as a Langstone Barge.
The second site is a series of wooden posts in the muddy foreshore at Hamble-le-Rice. A GPS survey has now been carried out each year since 2011 in order to understand whether there is any significant sediment change in the area. This has been used alongside analysis of historical OS maps, indicating that these remains represent a former oyster pond. The exposure of these remains demonstrates a need for ongoing monitoring of known archaeological sites which can be affected by similar changes to their environmental context.

The HWTMA have a Maritime First World War project in the second round of a Heritage Lottery Fund Application. The aim is to highlight the presence of the approximately 700 wrecks on the south coast associated with WWI (e.g. the sea plane carrier opposite Riverside Boatyard), and to collect information and stories associated with them to create exhibitions and an online resource for the public and schools. There will be volunteer opportunities to get involved. See www.surveymonkey.com/s/WW1Survey_public. If successful, the project will be delivered 2014–2018. As part of a pilot study, a survey will take place in Summer 2013 at Hamble Point where it is know that sea planes were tested.

Members then discussed other archeologically/historical sites around the Hamble.

3. Minutes:

Minutes of the previous meeting in May 2012 were agreed.

NE were unable to give a presentation to this meeting but will be asked again for a future meeting.

It was agreed that in the absence of additional information being supplied, the draft ‘Guide to Public slipways & hards of the River Hamble’ now be published on the HEP website so it can start to be used by the public this summer season.

Action – AF to publish the guide on HEP website (Action completed)

It was agreed a draft of today’s meeting will be circulated for comment after which it will be posted on the website.

4. HEP update Since Last Meeting:

AF and other HEP members have assisted several students with enquiries relating to projects listed on the HEP website. All projects are going ahead but only one has decided to apply to the fund (see later item).

AF has been approached by coastal partnerships from as far afield as the Moray Firth with regards to creating their own versions of the Hamble Riverview interactive map demonstrated at the last meeting. HCC IT department have ongoing issues with aerial photography display software. New aerial photos are planned to be taken by HCC this summer, and will be produced with new software more compatible with the relatively new HCC mapping system that hosts Riverview.

Copies of this year’s Hamble Directory were handed out.

Marine Planning has picked up speed with the South Coast (Dartmouth to Folkestone) being the next area to be covered. The national Coastal Partnerships Network is made up of many of the UK’s partnership including the HEP and Solent Forum. The CPN was commissioned by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to deliver a project on developing the engagement between Coastal Partnerships (CPs) and the MMO, looking into the value of using CPs to deliver communication on marine planning. AF has contributed info on the HEP to this report, highlighting our size, resources and make up.

AF, KF and other officers from coastal partnerships in the South Marine Planning area met with the MMO on 26th February to discuss how coastal partnerships can assist with the marine planning process over the coming two years. As the HEP sits within the same area as a larger partnership (the Solent Forum), the MMO, AF and KM agreed that the Solent Forum would take the lead (see presentation below by KF).

5. Presentation - “Engaging with the Southern Marine Plan” by Karen McHugh (Solent Forum)
KM summarised the key elements of the new Marine Planning System in England, explaining that the objective of marine planning is ‘effective management of marine activities and more sustainable use of our marine resources, creating the framework for consistent and evidence-based decision-making’. Plans will interpret national policies and apply area-specific policy, spatially where appropriate, to the management of marine resources and activities, contribute to coastal integration, and guide developers on where they will be able to carry out activities as well as guide the MMO on licensing decisions. The South (Dartmouth to Folkestone) Inshore and Offshore planning began in Autumn 2012, to conclude Autumn 2015. KM set out key dates in the process, and opportunities where the public can get involved. For more info email solentforum@hants.gov.uk

Action: AF to cascade the Solent Forum’s local workshop invitations to HEP members once received.

6. Student Research Fund:

Members discussed an application to the student research fund by James Farr. His project will study non-native and invasive plant species, their habits and their impact on the landscape. RHa particularly welcomed the project and additional information it could bring forward, and will arrange to meet with James. Members felt the scope should be extended upstream of Botley, and if this project could not deliver that, then it should make recommendations for future work in the that location. Members approved the application. James will present his findings to a HEP meeting in 2014.

Action: All members were asked to revisit the current list of projects at http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hambleestuarypartnership/student-research-fund-2.htm and update AF with any new or amended proposals.

Action: AF to circulate student project list to local universities.

7. Presentation - “Coastal Management & The Coastal Strategy”:

by James Addicott & Gavin Holder (Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership)

Presentation is available on the HEP website for 1 year, then on request from the HEP Officer.

The presentation introduced The Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership (ESCP), comprising the local authorities of Fareham, Gosport, Portsmouth City and Havant. The four authorities work within a shared service agreement to deliver coastal management including strategy and planning, capital projects and maintenance & monitoring including. The work of the Coastal Partnership also includes consultee and input to planning decisions. By working in partnership, heritage and environmental improvements may be able to be delivered through coastal defence work as these open up additional funding sources. Detailed surveys will soon take place of Hamble coastal assets (along the eastern Fareham shore), to include assessing bank heights and areas of coastal change.

The ‘River Hamble to Portchester Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Strategy’ is being developed to address the problems of coastal flooding and erosion in this area. To date the scoping stage, including baseline data collection, and the brief for the development stage have been completed. The development stage will include key stakeholder/community events planned for August 2013 and March 2014. Approval from Defra and the Environment Agency is aimed for December 2014. The ESCP will continue to update HEP members on progress. Further info at www.escp.org.uk.

8. Partner Updates:

Eastleigh Borough Council’s new and revised draft Local Plan is currently being drawn up and is due for public consultation at the end of 2013.

Association of Hamble River Yacht Clubs raised concerns over mooring costs, security, and safety for sailing dinghies relating to the recent decision by the Harbour Board to approve an application for a continuous pontoon at Mercury Gardens.
River Hamble Harbour Authority now publishes Notices to River Users on the Hampshire Public Notices Portal. Anyone can register http://www3.hants.gov.uk/publicnotices/pnaemails.htm. Everyone one the old system were automatically re-registered to receive the new email alerts.

The Harbour Authority’s forensic marking scheme was launched over the Easter weekend http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hambleharbour/hamble-crime-deterrence.htm. The scheme involves issuing SmartWater forensic marking kits to all boat owners who pay annual Harbour Dues for 2013, free of charge (the 4000 kits are funded by the Harbour Authority). It is hoped that these kits will be applied to the valuable items on the vast majority of the boats on the River during the season. This, combined with a comprehensive poster and PR campaign, should ensure that potential thieves are deterred from stealing on the River. Over 30% have already been collected by boat owners from their respective mooring providers.

The Education Resource project, a web based learning zone for schools and students of all ages, is now accessible via RHHA’s website. It explains how the River Hamble can be used for a range of curriculum based activities and includes video information about the River (more videos pending).

The Harbour Authority has recently assumed responsibility for the removal of seaweed and litter from the Warsash slipway. The contract has been let to a company called HarbourClean and the work will be carried out within three working days of an order. The contract covers up to 18 clearances per annum. Fareham Borough Council will be making a contribution towards the annual cost of this contract.

The Harbour Authority’s annual Crabbing Competition will be held on Saturday 15th June.

Southern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority gave an update on their environment work. Fishing activity within the Solent European Marine Sites is looked at against the features (e.g. seagrass, mudflats) for which the site is designated, and colour coded depending on the evidence available and extent of effect of each activity on the feature. The IFCA have responsibility to ensure that ‘red’ risk features (i.e. highest risk) are managed by December 2013. The SIFCA has 2 proposed byelaws aimed to be in place by end 2013. One is a towed gear permit scheme byelaw which will attach conditions to permits for use of towed gear i.e. closed areas over seagrass beds. The second is a seagrass hand-gathering protection byelaw which will prohibit hand-gathering activities including bait digging ion seagrass beds. The SIFCA proposes to do surveys on ‘amber’ coded activities (e.g. clam dredging on intertidal mudflats) where there is a lack of evidence. The SIFA continue to monitor bait digging activity and as above will look at the effects of this on various site features as part of their assessment of Amber features.

RA offered for SIFCA to do a presentation at the next meeting.

Action: AF to contact RA to arrange a presentation.

Hamble Parish Council raised concerns regarding the precedent set by the Harbour Board’s approval of the Crown Estate continuous pontoon at Hamble River Sailing Club within a Mooring Restriction Area.

The Parish Council has raised objection to the proposed development at the Royal Southern & RAF Yacht Clubs in relation to impacts on navigational safety, loss of recreational space on the water, and potential impacts of the dredge on the Hamble foreshore and council owned slipway. I welcomed the formation of the Hamble River Valley Forum.

Bursledon Parish Council (BPC) echoed the issues and concerns raised by HPC with regards to development in the River. The 3 recent continuous pontoon proposals by the Crown Estate have brought certain issues to the surface, particularly ‘development in Mooring Restriction Areas’ which are defined in local planning policy, ‘mooring availability for those of modest means’ and ‘safety on the water’ especially of children sailing. BPC wrote to Councillor Keith House (Harbour Board member & Leader of Eastleigh Borough Council), following which EBC have now decided to extend their planning jurisdiction beyond mean low water and so all development to the mid-river line will now also need planning permission.

DA expressed concern over a public rubbish bin that has been damaged and is regularly over-filled at Lands End hard. EBC and BPC have not reached an agreement over responsibility for improvements to this situation. AF offered to liaise with EBC to seek rectification and to prevent the risk of rubbish falling into the river.

DA explained that the local parish councils felt it would be useful to join together to make common cause and have agreed to form the Hamble River Valley Forum. The inaugural AGM will be held in June.

Action: AF to contact EBC regarding condition of the Lands End bin and collections.
Eastleigh Borough Council post meeting note regarding Mooring Restriction Areas:

These areas are designated within the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2001-2011) and shown on the accompanying Proposals Map. Unlike policy 155.OS of the adopted local plan, the supporting text to policies were not saved when the local plan expired in 2011. However, the supporting text to policy 155.OS (which limits the number of afloat moorings to 3,261 and for such moorings not to be in restricted areas), states, “There are a number of areas where it is the Council’s intention to prevent further moorings in order to retain the character of the river by keeping the relatively open nature of certain stretches, allowing views across and along the river as well as providing for dinghy sailing”. There is no reference to the purpose of the policy to be in respect of affordability of moorings or safety on water. Navigational safety is addressed by separate policies – 39.ES and 156.OS.

EBC have recently received legal advice that the planning jurisdiction can extend beyond mean low water to the mid-river line. In the light of this, applicants for work on the river are advised to contact the Development Control unit at EBC to establish if planning permission is required for their proposal at any position within the river.

Solent Forum stated that the evidence gathering stage of the Solent Disturbance & Mitigation Project has now finished. http://www.solentforum.org/forum/sub_groups/Natural_Environment_Group/Disturbance_and_Mitigation_Project/ On assessing the evidence, and the implications under the Habitats Directive, Natural England confirmed that they would not be able to state that certain new housing developments, and resulting increase in human activity in the Solent, will not cause a significant adverse impact on protected populations of waders and wildfowl. Phase III of the study, Towards an Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy, has therefore been commissioned so that any new housing developments have the tools in place to provide the necessary mitigation.

Bursledon Rights of Way & Amenities Preservation Group explained that the Bursledon Parish Plan has highlighted the huge value that the local population put on footpaths and rights of way in the area.

Solent Protection Society have focussed recent efforts on developing their new website which is coming soon. The SPS will be a co-sponsor for a proposed conference in the autumn on habitat renewal. (A further discussion on this issue was held under ‘any other business’ below).

Royal Yachting Association highlighted their ongoing involvement in consultation relating to Marine Conservation Zones and to proposed wind farms such as Navitus Bay.

Warsash Residents Association confirmed that whilst areas on the west bank of the Hamble River have Parish Councils, the Fareham side does not. PH clarified the role of the resident association but highlighted that they are not an elected body and do not know the views held by all residents.

Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust have a new run of Shoresearch surveys starting which are undertaken by volunteers. To get involved please see their website. The Solent seagrass surveys are continuing – CD copies are available on request or via the website. HIWWT are continuing work related to proposed Marine Conservation Zones and reports are available on their website. Unfortunately no sites have gone forward for the first tranche. Information on all on the above is available at http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/pages/marine-projects.html

Natural England will undertake a survey of Lincegrove & Hackett's Marsh SSSI this summer as part of their ongoing SSSI monitoring programme. As part of a review of their advice for SSSIs they are also updating and finalising the Favourable Condition Tables (FCTs) for the Upper Hamble Estuary & Woods SSSI. The FCT document sets out the designated interest features for a site, together with targets to define favourable condition for each feature. FCTs for all SSSIs will be updated and finalised by 2104. Information will be displayed on NE’s website making it more accessible to the public (SSSI condition assessments are already available via this link: http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/Special/sssi/search.cfm . FCTs are not published online yet but information will provided when they have been finalised and become available).
The boundaries of the Special Protection Areas in the wider Solent are currently being reviewed with surveys and modelling being carried out by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to inform this review. This is specifically looking at potential seawards extensions for areas used by foraging Little, Common and Sandwich Terns.

Under the High Level Stewardship scheme, Hook-with-Warsash Nature Reserve continues in its existing agreement and NE are working with HCC to set up a new agreement for Manor Farm Country Park.

River Hamble Mooring Holder’s Association voiced concerns regarding loss of small boat inner channels within the Hamble as a result of developments, and any potential loss of the Hamble slipway that could result from the proposed capital dredge at the Royal Southern & RAF yacht clubs. Antifouling paints on boat hulls release copper into the River, and with boat sizes on the increase the area of boat should be considered in decision making, not just the number of boats.

Southampton Solent University are currently researching the presence of micro plastics in Solent waters. They have sampled the water column, including the Hamble, and these will be analysed by Southampton Hospital ecotoxicology lab for polymer mix with the aim to ascertain the quantity of different polymers and the level of environmental impact associated with those microplastics.

Any Other Business:

JC (Solent Protection Society) raised the issue of loss of mud and saltmarsh habitats and queried what the different authorities were doing regarding this. AF briefly explained some of the research and discussions that are underway between dredging/marina operators, universities, regulating authorities and Natural England. AG confirmed that the HEP could play a role in engaging with this issue.

Action: AF to monitor progress in this area within the wider Solent and feedback at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting – to be confirmed for November 2013

- Close -

Post meeting note:

The HEP Chairman and Officer met on 5 June to follow up on key issues raised and outcomes of the meeting. The Harbour Master was invited to the first part of the meeting and the issues and concerns raised by members relating to RHHA were highlighted to him as he was absent from the HEP due to another meeting.

The HEP Chairman and Officer then discussed how some potential future student projects might achieve better outcomes if delivered through a more extended period of research than BSc level. These could include the following (but do not exclude any other project listed on the website):

- Investigations into electrolysis rates/accelerated breakdown of anodes in the Hamble.
- Economic multiplier of marine and marine related industries to the local economy.
- A review of the Hamble as a destination for visiting boats.
- Analyses of trends in the yachting and boating sector and how these can be reflected in the management of the River.

Action: AG to look into funding mechanisms available to progress on one or more of these projects.