
THE SENTINEL



Bembridge and St Helens Harbour Association

No. 47 March 2013

WE NEED YOU !!!

AGM SATURDAY 16 MARCH, St Helens Community Centre, 2.30

Chairman's Letter

Dear Member,

Since its inauguration in September 1989 in response to a massive planning application for Bembridge Harbour, much has been achieved and we believe the Association has served the community well. **BASHHA remains the only independent group representing the whole spectrum of community and Harbour users.**

We very much need your help with some of the routine tasks carried out by the committee and also to re-energise the Association with fresh ideas for activities. Janet Shuter, our Editor, has analysed the assistance needed overleaf. She is enthusiastic about reviving and extending some of the activities that were a feature of BASHHA in the 1990s.

The 24th **BASHHA AGM** takes place on Saturday 16 March at St Helens Community Centre at 2.30 pm. We hope as many members as possible will attend. Officers and committee members will need to be elected. This year we are including a discussion of future organisation and future projects, and we hope some of you will wish to take on active roles.

Publication of our research-based *Appraisal of the Environment of Bembridge Harbour* was a significant 1990s project to raise awareness of the many aspects of Bembridge Harbour and the need to maintain a balance between its commercial, leisure and residential usage. We are re-mounting the text on our website over the next two weeks, and one of our hopes is to undertake research to update the report.

We were greatly saddened by the sudden death of founder member **Roy Hollis** on 16th January. We extend our deepest sympathy to his family. He will be greatly

missed by his many friends and colleagues.(see Obituary)

Even when few challenging or urgent concerns occur, we continue to monitor activities in and around the Harbour and respond to **planning applications** that could have deleterious effects.. One such proposal, supported by the RSPB, was for **60 holiday lodges** at a site off Carpenters Road next to Brading Marshes Nature Reserve. It was strenuously opposed by Brading Town Council, Bembridge and St Helens Parish Councils and BASHHA. Over 100 comments were submitted. The case has yet to be determined.

BHUG keeps us up to date with activities and developments in the Harbour and Robin Powell represents us on the Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group.(BHAG) See page 4. Harbour owners Malcolm and Fiona Thorpe keep in touch through the monthly *On the Wind* and biannual *Bembridge Breeze* publications. Their second Public meeting, reporting back on what has been achieved by **Bembridge Harbour Authority** since January 2012, will be held on 8th March in Bembridge Village Hall at 6 pm.

Bembridge has not been included in the first tranche of **Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)** see page 3.

The Hearing of the **Village Green** application has been postponed again, but the **Bembridge Point Tidy Up** is making steady progress.

Our warm thanks to **Martin Woodward** for his fascinating presentation *Treasures from the Deep*.

Yours sincerely,
Barbara Clough, Chairman

BASHHA: building the future

The past

BASHHA was set up to protect the harbour and its environment in the face of a major housing development proposal which it successfully opposed, with the overall objective of environmental protection by securing a balance of maritime, business, community and conservation interests.

BASHHA objectives cover the actions necessary to achieve this in an informed and democratic way, and whoever owns the harbour, they are still relevant. They should not be interpreted in a purely maritime sense, but in relation to the whole surrounding area. In the 1990s BASHHA achieved a wide membership, representing the diversity of local interests, and has subsequently delivered on its promises at minimal cost.

At the same time, BASHHA had a programme of education and research: regular walks guided by experts revealed the wealth of land and marine flora and fauna as well as historical sites in the area. As noted in the Chairman's letter, groups of members, with professional assistance, identified and quantified wildlife and plants; businesses; water quality and a wealth of information was published.

The present

The problems of recent years, stemming from a long history of mismanagement of marine facilities, has tended to focus attention on harbour ownership and administration. However, as well as proactive involvement in harbour usage issues such as the Harbour Dues battle, BASHHA has continuously involved itself with planning and conservation issues such as St Helens sea wall. All these efforts have been reported in the Sentinel as they happened.

The future

We are privileged to live in an ecologically diverse and rich environment. But how many people now know what is so special about the area, and how many have seen the rare and beautiful species that live here? We should once again be organising walks and field trips and rockpooling and talks. We should create a website with a photographic record of what lives here.

Environmental change usually happens slowly, but needs regular monitoring. How many species have disappeared since we counted them in 1995? How many new species have moved in? Now there is a ragwort problem on the Duver. What else is lurking? We should be checking and comparing.

Vigilance is needed to keep abreast of the activities of those who own the environment. At present there are concerns about RSPB activities such as tree felling; and concerns about the Environment Agency raising water levels in Brading marshes. And although we applaud the improvements made by the new Harbour owners, we must bear in mind that in the future commercial pressures

may lead us into a quite different situation, where BASHHA's independence will count.

Why we need you now

BASHHA will be 25 years old next year, and some committee members have served almost as many years. Barbara Clough is approaching her 20th year in the chair. Over the years, more and more work has devolved upon her and the few active committee members. Although we have for years been looking for new people, clearly we have not asked loudly enough. So here is the bottom line: **BASHHA will die soon because it can no longer carry out essential functions.**

Currently, we have Christine looking after accounts; Helen as committee secretary; me [Janet] cobbling together a newsletter – and Barbara doing just about everything else. Jobs that need doing if we are to carry on at all are:

1. **Membership secretary** – to keep records and supply information to the Treasurer and for Sentinel distribution; issue subs reminders.
2. **Sentinel distribution organiser** – to manage the delivery of the Sentinel to those who still need a paper copy via post and volunteers .
3. **Publicity person** – to publicise meetings, activities etc. by sending timely information to IWCP; On The Wight and other publications and websites.
4. **Events/ Activities organiser** – to line up, brief and look after speakers, activity leaders and the like; and to make venue bookings. Cttee to help identify speakers.
5. **Planning/ environmental change monitor** – to keep an eye on planning applications and other activities; report to committee; deal with corresp.
6. **Information officer** – to keep abreast of relevant activities by other bodies [e.g. Defra] and keep committee informed. To look out for awards etc. which might be available for BASHHA projects.
7. **Beach Clean coordinator**, to organise the twice-yearly beach clean and anything similar.
8. **Archivist** – to help organise the mass of information we have accumulated over 24 years.
9. **Hon. Secretary** – a formal role required by law. Most hon sec jobs can be & are delegated.

The above are the basic jobs. Any projects such as updating the 1995 environmental appraisal will require more volunteers.

If you can help with any of the above, please contact Barbara Clough by phone [873213] or email bassha_sentinel@btinternet.com, preferably Before the AGM on 16 March.

Janet Shuter

Marine Conservation Zones update

The Bembridge site [which extends from St Helens to Luccombe] was not included in the first tranche of sites for consultation. Reasons are set out in *Marine Conservation Zones: Consultation on proposals for designation in 2013: Annex A.3 – Balanced Seas sites requiring further consideration*, which can be downloaded from DEFRA.

Decision: Requires further consideration.

Rationale:

Socio-Economics

The area is used extensively by a number of sectors which is why there were considerable boundary discussions during the Regional Project process. The highest best estimate quantified cost of £164,000 per year falls to the **recreation sector** due to possible mitigation needed for anchoring over sensitive features.

costs

After the Regional Project finished it came to light that the **St Helen's Roads anchorage** was more heavily used than first thought by commercial shipping. Currently no mitigation has been found that would allow the anchorage to continue whilst meeting the conservation objective. If the anchorage is closed there is likely to be significant economic impacts that can't currently be quantified. The Southern IFCA have introduced a voluntary code of conduct to encourage fishers to avoid the use of bottom-towed fishing gear within '**Seagrass Protection Areas**' comprised of all of the Seagrass beds in the District.

Table 2. Sector Impacts & Assoc. Best Estimate Costs

Sectors Impacted	Best Estimate Costs (£ per year)
Aggregate extraction	1,000
UK Commercial Fishing	14,000
Ports, harbours and shipping	3,000 + significant unquantified cost
Recreation (incl boating & sea angling)	164,000
Renewable energy (wind, wave and tidal)	1,000
Best Estimate Total Cost =	£ 183,000.

Data Certainty

Within this site four features have unacceptable data certainty, these include Subtidal mud, Seapens and burrowing megafauna, Lagoon sand shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*) and Starlet sea anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*) and will require further work prior to their designation.

Conclusion

Although Bembridge recommended MCZ has been highlighted by the SNCBs as a site at higher risk, there is a strong indication that there could be significant unquantified costs due to the St Helen's Road anchoring site impacting upon the meeting of the conservation objectives. Further work is needed to provide more clarity about the associated cost. Further work will also be required to improve the data certainty for some of the features prior to this site being considered for designation.

extracted by Janet Shuter

Cmdr. Roy Hollis RN (Retd.) FCP, FRGS

Roy Hollis's remarkable and adventurous career and life has been graphically recounted in the recent *Island Life* 47 issue. We are full of admiration for what he achieved. Roy was a much loved and respected character steeped in the history of St Helens and Bembridge. He was one of BASHHA's Founder members and was a long serving Committee member. When he retired from his post he was made an Honorary Life Member.

Roy was very generous in allowing BASHHA to use material from his fascinating 1964 Brading Haven Study in our 1995 Appraisal of the Environment of Bembridge Harbour. At the celebration of BASHHA's 20th Anniversary we were honoured that Roy presented his Study – his Magnum Opus, into the custody of our Association for future reference, for which we are most grateful.

As a committee member he made a tremendous contribution, sharing his wisdom and extensive knowledge of Bembridge Harbour, its history and geography. He was passionate about its protection and preservation. Roy was a good friend with a keen sense of humour and he will be greatly missed.

Spring Beach Clean

Saturday 20 April

Meet Tollgate Café Bembridge Point or former Hovertravel Works at 10am.

Gloves and stout shoes essential. Bags provided. At your own risk please.

Bembridge Street Fair Monday

27 May 2-4pm. BASHHA Publicity Stall

Ragworting Day – help clear the Duver!

Organised by Michael MacInnes. Date to be confirmed: please look out for notice

Brading Marshes Mystery

Despite rumours of proposed 15cm rise in water level, Dan Ross of the Environment Agency confirmed on 1 March at a Brading Town Hall public meeting that there would be no change from the 2009 Eastern Yar Strategy. However, there seems to be more to it than that – watch this space!

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Bembridge Harbour Advisory Group update

extracts from report to BHUG, 10 January

Trot Moorings. Despite best efforts to encourage a return to swinging moorings, Trot moorings would continue to be laid for the foreseeable future as they are clearly seen as a vital asset to the Harbour Company. Efforts to persuade them to only commission the required number (plus some spare) would continue.

Tidal Surge. Notwithstanding Nigel Bennett's suggestion that the surge in August had been due to a slump of mud & sand at the channel entrance, an alternative explanation put forward was that it was simply a pressure variant caused possibly by a thunderstorm in the vicinity. Something that has been seen before.

BAC Moorings. There were a couple of moorings that were having to be vacated as they were too close to the Duver pontoon extension - alternative arrangements had apparently been agreed.

BHA Celebration Weekend 27-28 July. Outline programme coming on well.

Dredging Application for Bembridge Boat Storage. Other than everyone suspecting that it was going to be a

harder task than it looked on paper, no particular concerns were raised regarding the MMO application that had been submitted to reconfigure the slipway in front of BBS to provide better waterside access.

Mooring & Harbour Dues Rates. Are expected to be promulgated by the end of January (After note: mooring fees have been increased on average by 2%; harbour dues are unchanged.)

Bembridge Groyne. Whilst accepting that funding was not currently available, it was agreed that rebuilding the Groyne had to remain a high priority. Barbara agreed to try to locate the letters from EA & NE confirming that there was nothing in EYS that would be used to restrict a rebuild/refurbishment.

Update: ML Dredging should arrive in the Harbour during the week beginning 8th April to dredge **Bembridge Marina.** All berth holders will be offered temporary berthing on the Duver Pontoon. Fisherman's has been postponed to next year. *Mike Samuelson*

Bembridge Point Tidy Up

After two clearance sessions on site no further progress will be apparent until planting of shrubs and trees takes place when the cold weather improves. However, there will soon be a welcome display of daffodils. Work is currently focusing on preparation of the Information Board to be sited near the Bembridge Point signpost, Station Road. The top half will feature the Brading to Bembridge section of the Yar River Trail and the lower half photos of historical interest about the Point area.

Besides the attractive *Yar River Trail - from source to sea* (Island 2000 Trust) we hoped to publicize the Bembridge Trail from Bembridge to Shide, Newport. This and several other Island Trails were published by the IWCC in 1978. Consequently they are in urgent need of updating, e.g. the start of the Trail is given as the Royal

Spithead Hotel which was demolished in 1980 !! The former Row Barge Inn and the Courtyard, High Street are also featured. Sadly, there is no likelihood of the Trail booklets being reprinted in the near future.

The Ramblers Assoc. have been contacted to ask for their help in walking the Trail and checking the accuracy of information given when conditions improve. It could be walked in short sections by volunteers having a copy of the original directions. If any one would be willing to take part in this important and interesting project, please get in touch with me (873213) or the Parish Clerk (874160). It would be a great shame to miss out on revising the Bembridge Trail for the benefit of Bembridge and Island walkers and visitors. If successful it could even feature in a future Walking Festival. *Barbara Clough*

Bembridge & St Helens Harbour Association 2013 Membership Application/Renewal

I/We wish to apply for/ renew membership of the Association and enclose a remittance as follows:

Ordinary membership	Annual	£5	Life	£50
Family membership		£6		£60
Reduced membership		£4		£40

Donation

Name(s).....

Address.....

Email..... telephone.....

Signature..... date.....

I should like to receive the Sentinel by email..... YES..... NO.....

Please send cheques to Christine Grant, BASHHA Hon Treasurer, 3 King's Close, Bembridge PO35 5NX.

Personal information supplied by you will be treated in confidence and will not be supplied to any third party