

SOLENT PROTECTION SOCIETY

Minutes of Council Meeting held on 2 February 2021

(Due to Government guidelines on Covid -19, this meeting took place on Zoom)

Present via Zoom:

Lord Montagu – President	Chris Edmond
Bob Comlay - Chairman	Tim Kermode
Sarah Fremantle – Deputy Chairman	Paul King
Peter Henderson - Treasurer	Poh Chye Lim
Richard Brown	Bobby Payne
Jeremy Clark	Mike Rainey
Rob Crighton	David Sizer
Gerard Downes	Bob Stevenson

Secretary: Cassie Strang

Apologies: None

1. Minutes of previous meeting

No comments. The minutes will be signed at the next physical meeting.

2. Matters arising

Bob Comlay had volunteered to act as interim Chairman for the next year. David Sizer proposed and Bob Stevenson seconded his appointment. Sarah Fremantle had volunteered to act as interim Deputy Chairman for the next year. She was proposed by David Sizer and seconded by Jeremy Clark. These positions would take immediate effect and David Sizer therefore passed the meeting over to Bob Comlay.

3. Area reviews

3.1 Gosport, Fareham and Portsmouth: Bob Comlay reported that the French Authorities had rejected the go-ahead for work on the Aquind project. The UK consultation closes on 8 March. No action from SPS.

A planning application had been submitted for 4,000 homes at Tipner West, which included reclaiming mudflats. Bob Comlay showed slides of the proposed area. Although a brownfield site, there were possible issues with reclamation and flooding and possible environmental harm in other areas of Portsmouth Harbour. It had been reported last month that an application had been submitted in December for a marina. SPS to keep a watching brief.

The work at the Southsea sea defences had unearthed a Tudor slipway.

3.2 Isle of Wight: Mike Rainey would investigate further on a salt marsh project on the River Medina.

Mike Rainey

Mike Rainey reported it had been suggested by the local MP that the whole of the IoW become a National Park or extended AONB.

Harcourt Sands near Hyde had put in a new planning application for additional holiday homes. The location would still be behind the trees screening the shoreline. No reason for SPS to be involved at this stage, but a watching brief on the view from the sea.

Newport Harbour had applied for a Harbour Revision Order and Mike Rainey would investigate further.

Mike Rainey

3.3 Langstone and Chichester: Discussions on going at Budd's Farm with Southern Water. Portsmouth University taking an interest and had posted a three minute video on social media. Possibility of SPS working with those involved. Bob Comlay to forward the link **Bob Comlay**

3.4 New Forest (including Lymington): The Hurst to Lymington project had had a second Steering Group meeting and consultants would make recommendations for a bid for capital repairs.

3.5 Southampton Water East (including River Hamble): No further reports.

3.6 Southampton Water West: A £2 billion bid for the Solent Freeport is being brought forward by the Solent LEP and must be submitted by 5 February. SPS to keep an active watching brief.

[Post meeting note: Freeports in the UK were removed in 2012. The Government intends to reintroduce up to 10 Freeports in the UK post Brexit, but no locations announced. Southampton had been one until 2012. A Freeport is considered to be outside Excise and Customs duties of the UK and offers tax incentives for companies using them]

4. Reports

4.1 Blue Marine Foundation – Solent Oysters Scheme: Rob Crighton would report back on the meeting in February at the next Council meeting. Jeremy Clark suggested that SPS become more involved but corporation fee £3,000 and individual £1,000. This would be discussed at the March Council meeting under affiliate groups. **Rob Crighton/Bob Comlay**

4.2 Marine Licence Applications: Paul King had previously circulated his report. One application open – for the refurbishment of Bedenham Pier in the NW corner of Portsmouth Harbour.

MMO are reviewing South Marine Plan – a requirement to do so every three years. Paul King and Mike Rainey had submitted their comments. Paul King was interviewed to discuss in more detail and Mike Rainey would be invited at a later date. MMO would submit their report to SPS prior to publication for Paul and Mike to decide whether their comments should be in the name of SPS or individual.

Discussion on Totland Pier and damage to seagrass under the pier due to new pylons and by anchoring vessels. Sarah Fremantle pointed out that there had to be a balance between restoration of the pier, commercial activity and MCZs. Mike Rainey was of the opinion that SPS should remain neutral but would submit comments from SPS referring to the seagrass.

4.3 Coastal Path: No further reports.

4.4 Pollution: Richard Brown reported that the subcommittee had met on 12 January.

Southern Water could not meet the legal 20 day deadline to respond to questions raised by SPS and had requested an extension to 1 March., this was agreed. It was observed that there had been no improvement on spills over the last year. The Southern Water beach buoys covered only four areas: Hillhead, Ventnor on the IoW and two in Langstone Harbour.

The Sewage (Inland Waters) Bill will include the Solent providing that the Solent water body constitutes an 'arm of the sea' in law. The geographic definition of the Solent was discussed and our preference was agreed as the area from a line between Hurst Castle and the needles in the west, and Bembridge Ledge and Selsey Bill in the east. It was agreed that Council members would write to their local MPs again to clarify the above. **ALL**

There were delays to the Sewage (Inland Waters) Bill and it was agreed that SPS should continue pressure on the topic to ensure it would be included in the new Environment Bill.

4.5 External Relations. This would be discussed at the March Council meeting

4.6 Solent Forum update: Rob Crighton would report back at the March Council meeting on the Steering Group meeting on 24 February. Bob Comlay was keen to attend. **Rob Crighton/Bob Comlay**

4.7 Sarah Fremantle had remotely attended the Coastal Futures Conference which had been renamed the Ocean Recovery Conference. It was of particular importance in 2021 as the UK is hosting both the G7 and the COP26 (UN Climate Change) Conferences. It will therefore be inherent on the UK to show leadership in Marine conservation and Climate Change initiatives. DEFRA Minister, Rebecca Pow, set the challenge by announcing 2021 to be Marine Super Year. She reported that there would be several new marine initiatives and conferences during 2021.

5. Website and other social media

This would be discussed at the March Council meeting.

6. Chairman's matters

Bob Comlay discussed the showed slides on his suggestions for the transition planning of SPS. He would circulate his paper before 4 February and requested comments from all Council members before end of 8 February. This would be discussed in detail at the March Council meeting. **ALL**

7. Treasurer's Report

Peter Henderson reported that as of 31 December, the Charifund held £71,219 and the Charibond £30,733 which was a slight improvement on September 2020 figures. The bank account total is £8,288 for 31 January and SPS should be able to meet all its expenses.

Poh Chye requested that a formal resolution was necessary to confirm the new Chairman and Vice Chairman appointments so that the regulatory bodies and bank account signatories could be changed.

8. Secretary's report

Nothing to report.

9. Any other business

Although David Sizer had been unable to join half the meeting due to internet failure, the Chairman thanked him for all his hard work over the last three years as Chairman and confirmed that David would remain on Council.

Date of next Council meeting will be on Tuesday 2 March 2021 at 10AM via Zoom