

Waterlines



The Newsletter of the Sovereign Harbour Residents Association

Issue 70

www.shra.co.uk

April, 2013

Sovereign Harbour Residents Association

Annual General Meeting

for members only

at the

Haven School, Atlantic Drive

Thursday, 9th May 2013

Starting at 7:30pm

Doors open 7:00pm

Vacancies exist for new committee members

Nominations, in writing,

should be sent to:

The Secretary,

SHRA,

PO Box 124,

Eastbourne, BN24 9AW.

To arrive no later than 12:00 noon on

Wednesday 24th April

Harbour Completion Takes a Step Forward



At the Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club, on 1st and 2nd March, Sovereign Harbour Ltd (SHL) exhibited its Master Plan for the development of remaining harbour sites, taking another step towards the completion of the Sovereign Harbour project.

The plan, which showed proposals for the remaining eight harbour sites owned by SHL was, in general, well received by the 350 residents who came along to see it.

The proposals closely reflected the aspirations of harbour residents, as expressed in a series of public consultations over the past few years. It also met the requirements of the Sovereign Harbour Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which was accepted as part of the Eastbourne Plan by the Borough Council at its April 2013 meeting.

At the heart of the exhibition was a model of a proposed Community Centre that has been at the top of residents' wish lists for many years.

Under the requirements of the SPD, SHL will be required to build and hand over the community centre before any residential development is started.



Visitors to the exhibition were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals and an online facility was provided for those unable to attend. The formal consultation has now closed.

A spokesman for SHL said: "We would like to take this opportunity, first of all, to thank everyone within the Working Group who joined us at the events and in particular those who spent time talking with visitors and helping to explain the background to the proposals. We greatly appreciated their help.

The exhibition was well attended, with 328 visitors registering over the two sessions, the vast majority of whom were harbour residents.

In total 146 people have submitted comments via leaflets or on-line. Many have commented on just one site or topic, whilst others have commented and made suggestions on a number of the sites and on other general master plan issues. A further ninety comments were made at the event via the post-it forms pinned to the master plan.

We are still working our way through the detailed comments and suggestions, but our initial review points to over half of respondents expressing clear support for the proposals (58%), and just 5% expressing a clear objection to all or part of the master plan. The remaining 38% have not expressed a view but have made suggestions on how the proposals might be further improved or have pointed to issues that they would like to be addressed.

Whilst many of the issues raised are known to us and are already being considered or have been addressed through the SPD, it is nonetheless useful to hear them being raised directly with us. In addition some very useful feedback has been received with specific design suggestions and we will certainly be looking at ways to build these into our proposals."

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How Can This Contract Be Fair?

The coastline of the UK (including Northern Ireland) is, at the best estimate, 9,632,000 metres long. Sea defences on 9,631,200 metres of that coastline are maintained by the Environment Agency (EA) at the public expense through general taxation. The other 800 metres is maintained by the owners of 3,700 properties at Sovereign Harbour Eastbourne through a PFI contract with Pevensey Coastal Defences Ltd. (PCDL). Interestingly, this is part of a larger contract that covers 9,000 metres of beach, the other 8,200 metres is publicly funded.

What makes this particularly unjust, is that the sea defences at Sovereign Harbour, just like the rest of those covered by the larger contract, protect a much wider area. It has been predicted that the area flooded by a breach at Sovereign Harbour would reach Hailsham. It is also patently clear that sea defences at Sovereign Harbour would have had to be maintained, irrespective of the residential development.

What is most shameful is that the EA, a publicly funded agency, has hidden behind this very unfair contract and now actually receives more income from harbour residents than it pays out on the PFI. In other words, the EA is making a profit out of us.

This situation came about because the Eastbourne Harbour Act, which became law in 1980, opened up the possibility of residential development on "The Crumbles". Southern Water, (SW) the predecessor of the EA, was concerned that the cost of providing defences to protect the area from the risk of coastal flooding would put undue strains on its finances, and opposed the plans. An additional issue was that the planned design of the harbour arm would interrupt the natural flow of shingle along the coast from west to east, resulting in a build-up at Langney Point and depletion of the beach to the east.

In order to resolve these problems, SW and Tarmac Construction, which had contracted to purchase the land from the Duke of Devonshire and the

Eastbourne Harbour Company, entered into an agreement, the "1988 Southern Water Agreement. The agreement placed a number of obligations on the signatories; those applicable to SW were taken over by the Environment Agency (EA) and those applicable to Tarmac by Carillion plc. In the event both the EA and Carillion failed to honour their commitments, resulting in legal conflict.

The result of the conflict was that clause three of the 1988 agreement was replaced by a new agreement, the "Sovereign Harbour Beaches (Sea Defences) Deed of 2001. A clause of less than 100 words was replaced by a document of over 100 pages, which absolved the signatories of their obligations under the 1988 agreement and placed greater financial burden on harbour residents. Significantly, this agreement was not disclosed to purchasers of harbour properties. Even after the SHRA became aware of the 2001 deed, it was necessary to use Freedom of Information legislation to obtain a copy.

The Deed and Grant of Covenant, which we all signed, referred only to the 1988 agreement, so how can it be considered to be a fair contract?

One of the obligations of the 1988 agreement was that SW would replace and maintain the groins on the Sovereign Harbour Beach; under the 2001 deed this obligation was removed. The excuse was that "current thinking" was that it was more efficient to allow tidal movement to evenly distribute the shingle. In other words, to allow the shingle that we pay for, to drift along the coast to populate the beaches for which the EA has responsibility.

In discussions with the EA, it has repeatedly been stated that the Sovereign Harbour contract was to be the model for all future coastal defence works; twenty five years on, it is still the only such scheme.

The EA has also repeatedly stated that it has no obligation to protect residential properties. However, it is currently, proudly, boasting about its

£12 million project to protect 1,900 residential properties at Littlehampton. It also recycles shingle on Seaford beach every year "to reduce the risk of coastal flooding to low lying areas and is spending £25.3 million this year on flood defences in the south west.

Isn't it really time that the EA came clean and admitted that it was wrong to place this burden on harbour residents? Isn't it time it worked with us to put things right?

Rotary Club of Sovereign Harbour 3rd Annual Harbour Walk



In 2012, over 100 walkers and over 40 dogs took part in the Rotary Club of Sovereign Harbour's second annual charity harbour walk, in aid of "Guide Dogs for the Blind".

It was not a competition; there were no prizes for winning; it was a gentle, 5 kilometre stroll around the marina, which started at midday, and finished at about 1-1:30pm, just in time for lunch at the beautiful Sovereign Harbour Waterfront.

The 2013 walk, which will be held on 12th May, will be just the same, but this year, the walk will be in support of the Polegate based charity, the "Children With Cancer Fund". www.childrenwithcancerfund.co.uk.

Registration for this year's walk is now open. You can register online, at www.harbourwalk.info, or by post. Registration and sponsorship forms can also be downloaded from this website and, if you can't make it for the walk, but would like to add your support, there is a facility to make a donation.

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Infinity and Beyond

It is very pleasing to see that residents of the South Harbour are already able to benefit from the roll out of BT's fibre-optic network "Infinity".

Additionally, the BT Openreach website now shows an expected date for availability of the service in the North Harbour of 30th June.

Just a few months ago BT was unable to give any indication of any likely availability of the service, or even if it would be made available. It seems likely, therefore, that revisions to the company's plans have been influenced by the pressure applied by the Sovereign Harbour community.

Those of you struggling to receive TV programmes online at even the lowest definition will be encouraged to know that a South Harbour resident was shown a demonstration of the BBC iPlayer running on his PC, at the highest possible definition, in three windows, simultaneously. That's fast!!



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Community Council, Should We Try Again? - By Rick Runalls

As we move into the final stage of the harbour development, the time has come to consider once again whether a Community Council should be formed to represent the interests of Sovereign Harbour. This question will be raised with members at the coming AGM on 9th May and the SHRA Committee thought it would be worth reviewing the issue to enable you to give it some thought before the meeting.

Many readers will recall that about five years ago the SHRA gave harbour residents the opportunity to apply for a Parish/Community Council. A petition was raised and open meetings organised to debate the pros and cons with guests, who had actually been involved with setting up similar councils in their own communities.

Unfortunately the controlling party on the Borough Council appeared to consider the idea of a local council an anomaly and a threat rather than an opportunity to embrace the localism being promoted by the previous government. One recognises that it is a major step for a Borough Council to change its vision from one of centralised control and hoarded power, and move towards one of devolving responsibilities to local communities. Nevertheless it is just such a vision that underpins 'localism' and also the "Big Society" of the current government.

Five years ago the Borough Council determined that it would hold a

referendum of the harbour electorate on its support for a Community Council. The poll failed to achieve a majority in favour, but the result was close run – a swing of just 130 votes would have changed the outcome.

In our view the case for a Community Council is stronger now than ever and the enthusiasm shown by residents coupled with the result of the previous referendum warrant the question of Community Council being revisited. So, what has happened over the last five years?

Interestingly the idea of localism has not only survived the change of government, but has been strengthened by the Localism Act, 2011. Applications for Community Councils are, in our case still with the Borough Council to decide, but now there is a clear presumption that an application for a Community Council will be supported if a majority is achieved in a local referendum.

In this environment, and recognising the level of cooperation that has existed between the SHRA and the Borough Council in recent years, it is hoped that, should residents decide in favour of a Community Council, they would receive an appropriate level of support.

It was rather irksome when, five years ago, we were told that Sovereign Harbour did not need a Community Council because 'it wasn't a community', just a development. Things have progressed radically since then. As well as a growing



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community spirit, supported through local groups, we have finally reached a position where plans are in place that will deliver several of the facilities essential for the development of our community. These are now enshrined in the Sovereign Harbour SPD, SHL's vision for the completion of their remaining harbour sites and in the refurbishment plans for the Sovereign Harbour Retail Park. We do have a community, and that community should be represented by a Community Council, with local interests at its heart.

Although the SHRA has striven to represent residents' interests, there is a limit to what it can do without formal status and authority. The committee has done the best it possibly can to influence developments on the Harbour with some success. However, there are issues it cannot address effectively. One such issue, which affects all harbour property owners, has been intractable – that is the issue of the Southern Water charges we pay annually. The attempts we have made to challenge the validity of the flood defence and harbour

maintenance components and get proper representation on the controlling bodies have been rebuffed. Sadly, it has become clear that the only way we can make our presence felt, and get our concerns addressed, is likely to be through a legal challenge.

Both the Environment Agency and Premier Marinas clearly recognise that a Residents' Association is unable to do this, which continues to limit our effectiveness. However, a statutory body such as a Community Council has a formal voice, and can raise funds to pursue the issues, should this be necessary. It is probably not a surprise that one of only two organisations that objected to Sovereign Harbour having a Community Council five years ago was Premier Marinas. Experience tells us that without a Community Council there will never be a realistic opportunity to challenge the open-ended commitment we all have to paying harbour charges.

We hope this gives you a flavour of where we stand at present, and look forward to hearing your views at the AGM.

RNLI Update

by Bob Jeffery

We're having an exceptionally busy period at the moment despite the atrocious weather when boaters should be tucked up in a nice warm harbour somewhere! To date the all-weather boat (ALB) has been called out 18 times and the inshore boat (ILB) 12 times.

On 15th March we received a warning from Dover Coastguard that a sailor had ignored countless warnings and insisted on setting sail apparently on route to Venezuela in search of gold treasure.

24 hours later he was off Bexhill in worsening conditions and making very slow progress against wind and tide. We were tasked to attempt to make contact and offer assistance and safety advice but again this was declined. Coastguard officers monitored his progress throughout the day until finally at 20.05 the yacht went aground on the beach near South Cliff Tower. With the yachtsman defeated in the appalling sea conditions he finally sent out a 'Mayday' distress call to which our ALB responded. The yachtsman was finally detained by the police under the mental health act.

On the 28th March our volunteer crew had another long day. At 06.44 the ALB was tasked to attend a collision 17 miles offshore between two fishing trawlers.

No sooner had the crew returned to station from that incident they were asked to return to the scene because communication had been lost with one of the vessels. Back on scene, they found all was well, the crew failing to respond because all were on deck repairing their damaged fishing gear. Before reaching Sovereign Harbour the ALB was again re-tasked this time to another trawler which had dragged up a 500 pound World War Two bomb which was in good condition with its detonator still intact.

The bomb was eventually detonated in a controlled explosion in Pevensey Bay at 15.35 nearly 11 hours after the crew were initially paged.

Harbour Friends Update

(by Elaine de Bairacli Levy)

It takes more than the cold weather to stop members of Harbour Friends enjoying themselves.

In recent weeks we have successfully held a Fun Quiz and evening of jollity with 'Call my Bluff', both of which were a huge success. A big thanks to Charles Herod for magnificently chairing the latter and ensuring a fair outcome!!

How well do you know Hastings and Rye? Back by popular demand after the success of last year's visits, sightseeing trips, ably guided by Bryan and Jackie Drewett have been organised for 6th April and 5th October. After the tour, dinner as usual.

In response to requests for more weekend evening entertainment, Harbour Friends will be running a game show 'Who doesn't want to be a millionaire'. This will take place at 7:30pm on Sunday, 12th May at the Yacht club.

For a change, a day time visit to Brighton Greyhound Track has been organised to take place on 9th June. Members will have lunch and an opportunity to have a flutter or two. This is now fully booked, and it looks like being a good day out. If you missed the opportunity this time, watch this space for a re-run in the not too distant future.

If you still have space in your diary, why not add the date of the next fun quiz scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 26th June.

As you can see, Harbour Friends is very active and everyone living on the Harbour is welcome. Why not join us.

The groups meets every Wednesday evening at the Sovereign Harbour Yacht club from 7:30pm

For more information contact:

Jilly Smith on 01323 470366 or
Brenda Newland on 01323 470114

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South Harbour Water Feature

The appearance, functionality and costs of the huge water feature in the Columbus Point area of the South Harbour have been concerning local residents for many years. Following campaigning by the Water Feature Action Group (W FAG), last year Eastbourne Council and the developer (Persimmon Homes) agreed to a professional survey of the feature, which took place in October 2012.

EBC has now posted letters to affected local properties to announce publication of the long-awaited Report on the survey. The Report contains a brief history of the water feature and details past and current maintenance problems and repairs. It records the current condition of the feature and its equipment, and suggests the following four options as possible ways forward.

1. Re-coat, repair and run the feature in its current configuration.
2. Fill in the feature, remove equipment and decommission.
3. Shut down the long curved legs (Legs 1 & 3) but leave Leg 2 (the straight leg from the Outer Harbour prom) operational as present, while raising its bed level to reduce water content.
4. Run the water feature to the original concept, but have Legs 1 & 3 as shallow rills, (possibly with low height foam jets or bubble jets), leaving Leg 2 as currently designed, but with lower depth of water.

The Report gives some indication of the costs of the various options but is silent on who would pay for them.

During the next month the W FAG, Columbus Point Residents Association and the Dominica Court Residents Association will be consulting their members to obtain their views of the Report prior to deciding a joint response.

Further information at:
www.waterfeature.eu

Discount for Members

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Community Police Update

by PC Ed Faulkner

Haven Beacon PTFA Update

by Wendy Smith



PC Ed Faulkner
07787-685813



PCSO Martin Hylands
07909-873787

Earlier this month we were working alongside the RNLI with their "Flare Amnesty". I understand over 1200 flares were handed in by boat owners and harbour users.

Despite the bitterly cold weather, this was a successful day and a good opportunity for the RNLI to engage with very many people.

Also this month we have had one or two residents contacting us regarding "cold callers" and their concern that residents are letting unknown people through communal entrances of apartment blocks.

These entry systems are there for a reason, and residents should be very careful before letting unknown, unexpected callers through secure doors.

Once inside they can often access garages, and post boxes which puts your, and your neighbours', property at risk.

Please be mindful when your buzzer goes, and only let in your visitors, and people that you know.

Finally the weather will improve soon, and so we remind everyone about doors and windows being secure too. The Harbour has had a very few burglaries in the last few months and we hope to keep it that way.

The Haven Beacon PTFA have once again been busy raising money to support the school. We were pleased to be able to present the children in KS1 with a basket of books for each class this term which cost £425.

On Friday we held another cake and second hand children's book sale which raised £177 towards books for KS2 classrooms, which we hope to be able to buy before the end of the school year.

Children have been enjoying going on educational school trips this term, supported by a contribution of £1000 towards the cost of coaches from the PTFA.

After much consideration the PTFA has decided that it will not be possible to repeat the firework event in November. The event required a huge amount of preparation, a large number of people were required to help on the night coupled with expenses and stress of putting on the event compared to the amount raised was felt not to be a good use of the PTFA's time as more money was raised in a couple of hours at our Christmas Fayre.

Unfortunately there were many people who chose to watch the fireworks without paying the entrance fee this year.

On a more positive note, plans are now underway for our Summer Fayre on Saturday 20th July to which you are all invited.

Phil the Bag 26 April. The PTFA use Phil the Bag to raise money from old textiles. Any fabric, clothes, bedding, belts, bags or shoes. Things that can be reused are, those that can't are recycled. We would be grateful for any contributions before 9am on 26th April.

Thank you for your continued support with our fund-raising efforts.

Harbour WI Update

by Judy Latter

Due to a snow blizzard, the March meeting of the Harbour W.I. was cancelled; but the Craft Club on the following Monday went ahead as usual with a good turn-out to learn how to crochet with Mary Unsworth from Westham W.I.. They are hoping to make 'stitch and pin' cards at their April meeting. The Craft Club meets at the Pevensey Bay Baptist Church every third Monday of the month at 2pm.

The snow also stayed away for the Lunch Club to go to Horsebridge for a very nice lunch in the King' Head on the 13th March and a visit to a Matinee performance of 'Midnight Tango' at the Congress Theatre on the following day.

The ACM of the East Sussex federation was held at the Winter Gardens on the 25th March. Ten members of the Harbour W.I. attended, with two of them, Heather Hyrapiet and Pat Pearce in charge of the W.I. produce stall, which sold out!

Coming up, the Harbour W.I. is holding a 'Bring and Buy' and Afternoon Tea at the Langham Hotel on the 4th April – always very popular – and the Lunch Club are having lunch at Pasha on the 23rd April. A trip to Canterbury is planned for May, a Garden Centre in June, Chartwell in August and Winchester Christmas Market in November. So lots to look forward to!

The Harbour W.I. meets in the Sovereign Suite of the Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club on the second Monday of the month at 2pm. The meeting on the 8th April is entitled 'Kill or Cure' – a talk by Lady Teviot about medicine in the 19th century.

The Harbour W.I. has reached a maximum for the premises where it is held, but visitors are welcome by prior arrangement with Frances Harrap on 01323 472649.

Information is also available on:
www.shra.co.uk/wi

East Dean and Friston Art Group Exhibition



Local artists who are members of the East Dean and Friston Art Group will be exhibiting their work over the May Bank Holiday at the East Dean Community Hall. The Show has always been popular and attracts large numbers of visitors.

The paintings that will be on display have all been created by the members of the Art Group, and will be available for purchase.

Show times:

- Saturday 4th May 2pm - 5pm
- Sunday 6th May 10am - 5pm
- Monday 7th May 10am - 4pm

Admission and parking for the event £1, including beverage.

There will be a raffle, and refreshments will be available.

New Sussex DAB Radio Station

A new radio station, "Smile Sussex" was recently launched on DAB across the South Coast of Sussex.

The station predominately plays a musical mixture of Classic old Standards; think Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Rat Pack and many more legendary artists from the 1930s until the present day. Naturally Smile Sussex is attracting an older audience of listener, and many of them in the Eastbourne area.

Listeners to the station are absolutely delighted that there is, at last, a commercial radio station dedicated to this style of music. A genre, that has been missing from the radio airwaves.

PCDL Update by Ian Thomas

Writing about spring whilst the temperature is below zero and snow whirls around outside does at least hint at better things to come. It still seems so far away. At least we are into the New Year, which means summer to come is closer than summer just gone.

The approach of warmer weather also means our Annual Public Forum is not far away. This year the event returns to St Wilfrid's Hall in Pevensy Bay and will be held between 14:00 and 18:00 on Thursday 11 April 2013. Over the years we have developed a vast array of display material, so if there are any particular aspects of our work or the coast that you would like to see presented please let me know; Photos of storms and beach erosion? Government's medium/long term coastal management strategies? Research projects? Beach surveys & modelling? Wave modelling & monitoring? These and other subjects can all be covered.

December 1st 2012 was an important milestone for the sea defence project, since it marked the halfway point of the 25 year scheme. If the weather is no worse in the second half than it was in the first, then I think we will all be relatively satisfied. Of course, there is a continuing danger that storms similar to that of 24 October 1999 will recur – indeed it is inevitable – but I feel confident that the beach is in much better shape today than it was thirteen years ago to deal with events of that nature. That is not to say it is impregnable, and homeowners must always be looking at how best to protect their own property regardless of how much shingle is on the beach. We have learned a lot about how to manage Pevensy's beaches in the last twelve and a half years and strive to do it as efficiently and quietly as possible. The cost of fuel is such that it is imperative we minimise the use of machines. The red diesel we need is much cheaper than fuel we use

to run our cars, but relatively we have had to cope with a 500% increase in red diesel costs between July 2000 and today. Although all our work is reactive to storms that occur during the year, it seems to me that the amount of machine work required will gradually increase over time. Year by year the change may not be so obvious, because not all years are "average", but increased storminess in our climate, and rising sea levels are likely to make the job of maintaining the shingle embankment more demanding as time goes by. Inevitably, any work we do results in some inconvenience to residents, particularly on those fine winter days when people like to be out and about or just have a door or window open for a while. On the other hand, we generally manage to complete all our works between October and Easter, leaving half the year free from disturbance.

Sustainability continues to play an important role in our decision-making. We have looked at options to install wind and solar power generators, but these would not prove economical in the time that remains of the contract. We have added a rainwater harvesting system and this collects sufficient water to run the toilets and maintain a 2m by 3m freshwater pond. Hopefully, next summer will start to see it being naturally colonised by a variety of plants and animals. Alongside it, and also at East Stream depot, we used old fragments of timber, stone and concrete generated by the Pevensy Outfalls project to construct hibernacula. These provide homes for reptiles and amphibians, especially over winter, and found use for a waste material that would otherwise have gone to landfill.

As always more information can be found on our website www.pevensey-bay.co.uk, by emailing pcdl@pevensey-bay.co.uk, or by telephone on 01323-761202.

Ian Thomas,
PCDL Project Manager, Environment
Agency depot, Coast Road, BN24 6ND

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