



Issue 7

[www.shra.co.uk](http://www.shra.co.uk)

December 2005

## 2006 - a defining year for the harbour.

As we look forward to the Christmas and New Year holidays, harbour residents can look back on a year in which the profile of the situation on the harbour has been raised throughout Eastbourne. Whether they love us or hate us, there can be no doubt that most residents of the town are much more aware of our problems, and the issues we are fighting, than they were just a few months back.

Without singing our own praises too loudly, the committee of the SHRA takes some credit for the successes, and recognise the contribution of many others, especially the members of the 'No to B&Q' group who's campaign was the catalyst for bringing us together.

Our chairman, Rick Runalls, will review the current year in his 'Chairman's footnote' so no more of that for the time being; let's look forward to the New Year.

Many of the current issues will still be with us in the New Year, and there will be many new ones. But, be in no doubt, 2006 will be a defining year for the harbour. The opportunity to rescue the original concept is long gone, but what happens in 2006 will determine whether the harbour becomes a thriving community, or whether it becomes a 'sink estate' on the borders of Eastbourne. The SHRA is determined that it is the former option that becomes a reality, and we will be relying on your support in the fight to achieve that goal.

The problems around the two commercial sites are still to be resolved. At the time of writing, B&Q have not yet submitted an appeal against the rejection of their planning application. However, they still have five more months in which to do so. We must not be complacent, if the appeal comes, we will have just six weeks to present our case to the First Secretary of State's inspector; we will need everybody to contribute if we are to be successful.

Our council has assured us that any appeal will be vigorously contested and that they are confident that the case can be won.

The good news, for residents, is that B&Q's trading situation continues to deteriorate and we have received information that they are likely to embark on another series of job reductions and store closures in the near future. Should they appeal and lose, they will incur considerable costs and, in the light of their financial situation and stated restructuring plans, their management would have great difficulty in explaining to their shareholders why they are pursuing this ludicrous application.

The greatest opportunity to make a real difference to the fate of the harbour, and rescue the 'harbour village' concept, rests with the development of the 'Five Sites'. These five areas are the only remaining plots of land for which absolutely no planning consent has yet been granted, and as such are of the utmost importance in our fight. They represent the opportunity to salvage the infrastructure required to create a thriving community from what has become just another housing development.

Sovereign Harbour Ltd., you will not be surprised to learn, are insisting that development of these sites should include a high proportion of high-density housing. Considering that the housing density on the harbour already exceeds the upper limit of John Prescott's ridiculous targets, the SHRA will vigorously contest any application of this kind, and will be asking for your support, and also for the support of the EBC. What we need is not more housing but a medical centre, a community centre, open space and leisure facilities.

We are aware that we will be fighting an uphill battle, and so we need to ensure that we use every weapon in our armoury.

The creation of Sovereign Harbour required the consent of Parliament through the 'Eastbourne Harbour Act' of 1980 as revised in the 'Eastbourne Harbour Act' of 1988. Though these Acts, Parliament agreed to the creation of the harbour and the residential and commercial development that would surround it. Anybody who has seen the original concept that was put to Parliament would not recognise it in what has actually been built. It is our view that the will of Parliament has been ignored, and we have consequently asked our MP, Nigel Waterson, to seek a Judicial Review into the history of the harbour's development to determine where it all went wrong. The objective of this request is not to apportion blame, but to ensure that no further development can take place under the original consent, unless it supports the original concept.

The coming year will also see the intensification of our campaign to persuade the EBC that adoption of all the residential developments on the harbour is well overdue. In order to facilitate this, the EBC must be persuaded to put pressure on South Harbour developers to complete the highway and footpath works that have been outstanding, in some cases, for almost ten years.

With your support, the headline on the December 2006 issue of Waterlines will read '2006 – An outstanding year for Sovereign Harbour'.

## Members General Meeting

On the evening of November 24<sup>th</sup>, about ninety members braved the inclement weather to attend the SHRA's mid-year General Meeting.

Those who came along were able to watch an excellent slide presentation by Alan Everard of the RSPB on the flora and fauna of the area.

As a skilled artist and photographer, Alan was an ideal choice as the judge of the photographic competition that was run during the Summer months and, following his well received presentation, he announced the winners and presented the prizes. Alan said he was impressed by the standard of the entries, and that he had a very difficult job in making his decision. The prize winners were:

First prize, a meal for two at Simply Italian on the Waterfront, Mark Jarvis, Long Beach View.

Second prize, lunch for two at the Dover Street wine bar in London, Elaine Smith, St Lawrence Way

Third prize, a bottle of vodka, Joan Baxter.

SHRA chairman, Rick Runalls, opened the meeting by welcoming our guests, Sovereign Ward councillors Patrick Bowker and Patrick Warner.

Rick then reviewed the progress that the SHRA had made since the current committee took office.

Membership, he said, had been less than fifty in the run-up to the AGM; our 450<sup>th</sup> member joined the association on the evening of the meeting, a massive, almost ten-fold increase.

Rick also presented the treasurer's report, which showed that the Association's finances were in good shape, and that expenditure was under control.

- Other issues discussed were:
- Harbour Development and Planning
- The Sovereign Harbour Trust
- Adoption of open space and highways
- Anti-social behaviour

Towards the end of the meeting, we had a visit from our Community Support Officers, Martin Hyland and Emma Southall, who explained their roles and responsibilities. Emma and Martin can be contacted through the Police non-emergency help line on: 0845 60 70 999. Martin told the meeting that, in emergency situations, the public should use the '999' service.

A full report will be published on the website and on the notice board.

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## Would you like to make new friends?

Bev Adams e-mailed Waterlines to ask for our help, which we are pleased to give. Bev came to the harbour almost a year ago, newly divorced and very short of friends in the local area. She quickly came to the conclusion that she was not alone in her situation and that there must surely be many other people around the harbour who, being new to the area were feeling lonely and isolated. Not being one to sit on her hands, Bev decided to do something about it and put an advertisement in 'The Local Oracle' for anybody in the area, married or single, who wanted to make new friends.

As a result, a group of like minded people began to meet on a monthly basis and, at one point, 36 people attended the meeting which, as Bev says, "*was brilliant*".

Bev is so pleased with the way things have gone that she would love to expand the group to help others to develop a circle of new friends. In her e-mail, Bev says, "*I really feel this is an important part of the wonderful place we live in, and I know there are an awful lot of people that would love to make friends but are at a loss how to go about it*". Bev is self employed and her work takes up a great deal of her time, so she is very anxious to get some help in

ensuring that what she started can continue, to the benefit of the harbour community.

Bev concluded her e-mail by saying, "*I really believe in this and after the terrible year 2004, I can honestly say this has been the happiest year of my life, and that is mostly due to making friends with some lovely people.*"

If you are interested in becoming a part of this group, or are willing to help in the administration, please contact Bev Adams on:

01323-479797

e-mail [adams.associates@btconnect.com](mailto:adams.associates@btconnect.com)

The next meeting of the group will take place in the Yacht Bar on the Waterfront on 21<sup>st</sup> December from 7:30pm onwards. Look out for Bev, she will have a name sticker on her top.

Future meetings will take place in the smoking area of Simply Italian for drinks, or nibbles, or a meal, starting at 7:30pm on Wednesday:

25<sup>th</sup> January, 2006

22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2006

29<sup>th</sup> March, 2006

Why not give it a try, what have you got to lose, other than lonely evenings?

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## Christmas carols, bah humbug!!

Where's your Christmas spirit? In the November issue off Waterlines, we called for volunteers to take part in a carol singing event around the harbour in support of local charities.

We were aware that it would be a bit difficult as we had left it a bit late, but the response was very disappointing. Consequently, we will not now be able to go ahead.

However, those who were interested have vowed to start much earlier next year and make this event a success. You have been warned.

## Members' surgeries.

Don't forget the monthly members' surgeries at Simply Italian on the Waterfront.

Next surgery from 10:30 to 11:30 on

Saturday:

7<sup>th</sup> January 2006

## Land at the End of the North Harbour

Residents of the North Harbour will be aware of the vacant plot of land at the end of the harbour, adjacent to Pacific Drive. If you ask what they believe the land will be used for, most will tell you that it will be a car park to serve the pontoons that will be installed at that end of the harbour. Wrong!

True, Sovereign Harbour Ltd. was granted planning permission in October 1998 to relocate the Southern Water pumping station on the site, and build a 55 space car park. A condition of the permission was that the work should commence within five years. The work on the pumping station was completed, but work on the car park was never started. We have now been told that, because the work on the car park was not started, the planning permission expired in October 2003 and the original outline consent for the North Harbour comes back into effect. That consent allows the land to be used for residential development and that is precisely what Carillion intend to use it for. However, as the application was for the re-siting of the pumping station **and** the car park, it could be argued that the work **was** started and the consent should not have been allowed to expire. How can residents have any confidence in the planning process, especially when applicants are able to pick and choose which parts of the consent they put into effect?

Of course, during the five years that the consent was in place, searches by purchasers' solicitors would show that this would be open land. Coincidence? What do you think?

When asked about this land at a meeting with SHRA committee members, Carillion Development Director, Mark Orriss, stated that "there was never any intention of using that land for car parking". In that case, why was planning consent applied for? Unfortunately, at the time of the meeting, we were unaware of the lapsed planning application.

In the near future, Sovereign Harbour Ltd., or a subsequent owner of the marina, will be installing more pontoons at the end of the North Harbour. The new berthholders will need somewhere to park their vehicles, and, on current evidence, will not be prepared to walk too far. We are already seeing berthholders vehicles, and those of marine contractors taking up valuable space allocated to residents and their visitors. Unless sufficient, convenient parking is provided, this can only get worse.

When the North Harbour berths are fully occupied, boat owners at the end of the harbour will be a considerable distance from ablutions and toilet facilities. Unless facilities are provided closer to the berths, it is likely that some boat owners will be tempted to discharge their waste directly into the harbour. This land could also be used to provide those facilities in addition to the car parking spaces.

The most worrying aspect of this case is that it reinforces our conviction that, having granted outline planning consent, the EBC is virtually powerless to exercise any control over future development. This is why any future attempt to gain outline consent must be challenged.

## Ongoing issues

When the outline planning consent for the harbour was granted, the land owners were given almost *carte blanche* to build residential developments almost anywhere they wanted. Developers have abused this consent and the council planning enforcement officers have done little to enforce the meagre conditions that were applied to the consent. For example, the consent for the North Harbour required that every development should have a play area for children and an amount of amenity open space. To our knowledge, of about fifteen developments, only two have play areas. We should all be asking why this was allowed to happen, and who is responsible.

Another condition of this consent was that developers should provide on-site parking for their contractors. After pressure from the EBC and the SHRA over the large number of vehicles regularly parked at the end of Pacific Drive, Carillion imposed restriction on parking in this area. As a result, some of the parking has moved further along Pacific Drive, but much of it has moved onto the Key West area of the South Harbour close to the locks. This area is now so congested during the day that the SITA refuse collectors are unable to get through to empty residents' bins. This in itself presents a serious problem but, more importantly, if a refuse collection lorry cannot gain access, the same would apply to emergency service vehicles. Once again, developers' convenience takes precedence over the health and safety of residents.

### 'Reliable Tradesmen'

Below are additions to our list of tradesmen recommended by our members. Although we are happy to publish the names, the SHRA is unable to endorse the recommendations and would urge members to make their own checks.

We would appreciate your comments, good or bad, on the service you receive or, if you feel you would like to add a service to the list, please write to us at:

Waterlines  
PO Box 124  
Eastbourne  
BN24 9AW

Or, e-mail [waterlines@shra.co.uk](mailto:waterlines@shra.co.uk)

### Garage doors supply and repair, Remote controls

Dimensions  
01323-743263

### Household maintenance, painting and decorating

Dave Rhodes  
01323-479141  
07792-321983  
[otisrhodes@hotmail.com](mailto:otisrhodes@hotmail.com)

### Light upholstery, chair seats, stools, etc

The Tapestry Company  
Paul Dunkley  
01323-508042  
07980-988527

### Window Cleaning

Alan Watford  
01323 472545

**Temple Bird  
Solicitors**

27/28 The Waterfront  
Sovereign Harbour  
Eastbourne BN23 5UZ  
Tel: 01323 479888  
Fax: 01323 479999  
e-mail: [legal40@aol.com](mailto:legal40@aol.com)



Tel: 08700 347 880  
Fax: 08700 347 875

[info@steelfinancialservices.com](mailto:info@steelfinancialservices.com)  
[www.steelfinancialservices.com](http://www.steelfinancialservices.com)

FINANCIAL SERVICES  
MORTGAGE SERVICES

INSURANCE BROKERS  
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS  
HEALTHCARE

STEEL HOUSE 2 Enys Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 2DE

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**New Sponsors needed for 2006.**

Sending a copy of Waterlines to every home on the harbour is a drain on the SHRA's financial resources. However, we feel that it is very important that residents are kept informed about the news and issues that affect us all. Our costs have been kept relatively low by the support of our sponsors, the two most generous of which you see in the panels above. We thank them, and wish them well.

However, this regular support will be coming to an end at the end of the year and we will be looking for new sponsors, either on a regular basis, or on a month by month basis.

Because of the Christmas holiday, we will not be publishing a January edition of Waterlines, but will be beginning the New Year with a February issue.

If you would like your company name to be associated with the SHRA, and have your message delivered to every home on the harbour, please contact us at:

Waterlines  
PO Box 124  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex BN23 9AW

Or e-mail: [waterlines@shra.co.uk](mailto:waterlines@shra.co.uk)

**Chairman's footnote and review of 2005.**

Well, our Committee has been in for about 6 months now, so it seems appropriate to take stock, think about what we have done, whether its been as effective as we wanted, and above all to think about where we are going. Those SHRA members who were at the AGM in May this year, and readers of the first addition of 'Waterlines', will recall that we wanted to make openness and communication cornerstones of our approach and to take a more demanding and transparent position in dealing with Council and business interests when it came to representing Harbour priorities. The introduction of the 'Waterlines' newsletter, our monthly 'surgeries' on the first Saturday of each month and the recent General Meeting at Haven School have complemented each other in opening up a better dialogue with residents and, as a result, more residents are approaching us with feedback, and to talk through issues they have. In the interests of encouraging more sense of 'community' we have also organised a Halloween event for residents and children, and a photographic competition for residents.

As far as taking a more demanding position with respect to major Harbour developments is concerned SHRA, has been working in concert with the 'No to B&Q' group in resisting the application to change land use of the development areas along Pevensey Bay Road. SHRA set up and ran the open meeting in July, which was supported by elected representatives on the Council and at which residents from the Harbour and surrounding areas made their opinions felt. Finally to facilitate residents attending the Planning Meeting at which B&Q's application was heard, we laid on a special bus service. Although it was gratifying that the elected representatives on

the Planning Committee were aligned with residents' views and rejected the application, the fact that Council officers were advising acceptance of the B&Q proposal, even though it contravened Eastbourne's own development plan, was sobering. An appeal by the planning consultants representing B&Q and Sovereign Harbour Ltd. (Carillion) is anticipated sometime over the next five months and frankly, I feel uncomfortable relying on the tenacity of our council officers in fighting such an appeal, given their support of B&Q to-date.

Clearly SHRA has much more work to do on this and other planning issues affecting the Harbour. As a Committee colleague eloquently indicated at our recent General Meeting, for several years the Harbour has been a 'cash cow' of tax revenue that has provided a major boost for Eastbourne. All Harbour residents have had from this is ongoing over development with little or no control being exercised by planners in the face of business interests. Now its time that the social needs of Harbour residents is put first. As far as I am concerned, we cannot relax while any 'development opportunity' exists for business interests to exploit. Sadly we do not seem to be able to rely on Council officers to protect *our* interests, so the tenacity and support of our elected representatives is critical, as is the need for SHRA to continue fighting for residents' welfare.

Finally, my thanks to all of you who have given your time to support our efforts by delivering newsletters and other such tasks. Your contributions have been crucial to the massive progress the SHRA has made in such a short time. I wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Rick Runalls