



The Sovereign Harbour Trust

Over the past month or so, you will all have received a demand for payment from the Sovereign Harbour Trust. 2,589 households are each obliged, as a condition of their purchase contract, to pay £221.26 to the trust, a total of £572,842.14. With interest, this rises to almost £600,000, a huge sum of cash. But where does this money go to, and who decides how it is spent?

To be clear, the Memorandum of Association of the SHT states its objectives as "The preservation and protection of human life and property by the provision and maintenance of sea defences (which expression, for the avoidance of doubt, shall be deemed to include the harbour area) at Sovereign Harbour, East Sussex and to advance the education of the public in all matters relating to the environment and the preservation of Sovereign Harbour and the surrounding areas".

The Trust's only income is the money paid into it by the residents of the harbour, and the distribution of this money is decided by the board of trustees. There are six Trustees places on the board, three nominated by Carillion, and three by the Environment Agency. The EA have still not nominated any of their Trustees, leaving the Carillion nominees in sole control.

In response to residents concerns, the SHRA has made representations to the trust, through it's Secretary, to obtain representation on the board by harbour residents. The response was that "as the only relationship between the trust and the residents was 'contractual' it was felt that representation on the board would be inappropriate". The SHRA have also been told that the trust has no obligation to publish the details of how the money is spent. In other word, the only function the residents have to play is to provide the funds.

In a more recent response to a letter from SHRA chairman, Rick Runalls, the Secretary made it clear that the trust's income is not used to protect the welfare and property of residents. He goes on to say that the objectives of the Trust are to preserve the environment and, in this context, the environment does not mean either individual residences or the development as a whole; the primary benefit must be for the public, not members of a specific group, such as the residents of Sovereign Harbour. If this principle is breached, he says, then the Trust will lose its charitable status. This is the basis for his assertion that a Trustee who has a personal interest is likely to be in conflict with his duty to the charity.

We find it difficult to reconcile his view that the objectives of the Trust do not involve protection of the property and welfare of harbour residents when this seems to be a clear objective from the M of A.

Further, it is not clear why a resident of the harbour cannot be relied on to represent the Trust's objectives and the interests of the public in general. Nobody has questioned the integrity of the three Carillion nominees because they are, or were employees of Carillion. Neither has anybody questioned why the Environment Agency have three nominees on the Trust Board when they are the single largest recipient of Trust funds.

None of the three Trustees so far in place have any association with the harbour and, between them, have about 200 other declared company interests, so it would seem reasonable to assume that business of the SHT is not their key priority.

The Secretary has agreed to put our request for a resident Trustee to the board at its next meeting, probably in the Spring. We await their reply with interest.

So, where does the money go? The main beneficiary of the trust is the Environment Agency, which is responsible for the sea defences; they got a whopping £314,487 last year. The EA has the responsibility for maintaining of all of the sea defences between Eastbourne and Bexhill, in order to protect the coastal wetlands. It receives government funding for this whole stretch of coastline, with one exception. You've guessed it, Sovereign Harbour residents are the only people who have to contribute, through the Trust, to the cost. Of course, they also have to contribute through their taxes, **a double whammy!**

Then, there is the item of £217,984 for 'Marina Maintenance', what is this for? The marina is a commercial operation run by Sovereign Harbour Ltd, for profit, and marina users, the vast majority of whom are not harbour residents, pay a charge for the services it provides. If Trust money is being used to support this operation then, one might assume, that we are subsidising the profits of SHL, and boat owners.

And, what about administration costs, £34,621, up a massive 700% since last year, with absolutely no explanation?

There are so many unanswered questions. It does not, therefore, seem unreasonable to us that residents, as the sole providers of the Trust's income, have a representative on the board of Trustees.

If you believe that residents **must** be represented on the board of the Trust, write to:

**The Secretary,
Sovereign Harbour Trust,
Wallside House,
12 Mount Ephram Road,
Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1EG**

Watch the Birdie

Don't know your tits from your peewits? If you've always intended finding out more about the local bird-life, this is the opportunity you've been waiting for. A short course in "basic bird-watching" is on offer – aimed at the complete beginner.

What's more – it gets better! – the course will be run by the RSPB's Alan Everard, a name already familiar to many SHRA members. Alan has already shared his expertise with us on more than one occasion – and is looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible.

Initially, there will be four sessions. The first will concentrate on the birds you're most likely to find in your gardens (or small patches of shingle!). Alan will be giving advice on how best to attract more garden birds, through your choice of both plants, and birdseed. He will move on to the birds perhaps most of interest to harbour residents: the birds of seashore, and inland waters. And he will go on to cover woodland and farmland birds, as well as birds of prey. He'll also have lots of tips about the best places locally to see the various species – plus, in his words, "anything else that comes to mind"!

The emphasis will be on informality: Alan will be using slides, with CDs to illustrate different birdsongs. But he wants as many questions as possible from the floor!

The sessions will be held at the Underground Theatre, in the town centre (under the library, at the end of Grove Road, opposite the Enterprise Centre). They will be on **Tuesday mornings**, at fortnightly intervals: February 7th, February 21st, March 7th and March 21st. Each session will begin at 10:00am, and will last until 12:15pm. There will be a break, during which you can buy tea, coffee and biscuits. The entry fee will be £2.00 for each session.

The Eastbourne branch of the RSPB is backing the course, and it is hoped that more sessions will follow if the initial four are a success.

To help assess demand, a phone call from anyone interested would be much appreciated. Please ring Geoff Morley on (01323-) 470026. If you find yourself addressing an answerphone, perhaps you could just leave a name, and the number of weeks you are hoping to attend. Of course, this does not bind you to actually turning up.

Finally, a reminder that anyone interested in birds – beginners or otherwise – will be most welcome at the Eastbourne RSPB's monthly meetings, also at the Underground Theatre. A range of speakers address the group on the first Wednesday of most months (not July or August). There is an afternoon session at 14:30, which is repeated at 19:30. The group also runs an extensive programme of local walks, as well

as visits to reserves further afield. More details from the group leader Ian Muldoon on 01273-476852.

Over 150 people attended a meeting called by Hazelvine Management Company at Haven School on Thursday 19 January to discuss the handover of maintenance of the **Water Feature** to residents of Phase 11 and 12 of the Columbus Point development at South Harbour.

Westbury Homes (recently taken over by **Persimmon**) are working on a snagging list compiled by points raised by residents, and from a report from **RoSPA**.

The Chairperson of Dominica Court Residents Association pointed out that responsibility for the Water Feature remained with Westbury until the Council issued certification of completion, upon which time residents of specific properties take on the cost of maintenance.

Directors of Westbury Homes are also directors of Columbus Point Management Company Limited, set up to oversee the handover. Whilst residents remain uncertain about the readiness for handover of the water feature the meeting suggested that these directors should be left in place.

The meeting discussed the many details of the future of the Water Feature and concluded that a further meeting was necessary. This will be arranged in six weeks time and all properties involved will be mailed with the details. A call was made from the Chair for any who was interested in serving on the Committee to step forward.

Would you like to make new friends?

In the December issue of Waterlines, we told you about an initiative by Bev Adams to encourage harbour residents to get together for social activities. At their meeting on 21st December, they were joined by **17 new members**, with others unable to get there because of prior commitments.

For information on future meetings, or 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, or

e-mail adams.associates@btconnect.com

The next meetings will take place in the smoking area of Simply Italian for drinks, or nibbles, or a meal, starting at 7:30pm on Wednesday, 22nd February.

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Call Graham on 07956-810790

The Eastbourne half-marathon will be run on Sunday 26th February 2006, starting at 10:00 in Prince's Park. The route will take in the seafront and the Meads and will cover a large number of harbour roads and walkways on the way to the finish, also in Prince's Park. Entry is open to all, and a form is included with this issue of Waterlines.

As the route will cross harbour roads and the entrances to individual developments, there will be some slight disruption, but there will be police and marshals to control runners and traffic. The organisers need to recruit a large number of marshals, so if you are able to help, please send your contact details to:

Berni Giorgo,
c/o The Tristore,
Grove Road,
Eastbourne
E-mail bmmg@hotmail.com

Marshals will need to be available from 10:00am until 2:00pm on the day, and be able to attend a briefing on the evening of 20th February at the Afton Hotel in Cavendish Place (opposite the pier).

Members' surgeries.

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

Next surgeries from 10:30 to 11:30 on Saturday, 4th February 2006, and Saturday 4th March 2006.

'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

Quality traditional French polishing and furniture restoration

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01323-849998

Mobile Motor Mechanic. Any make, full services, MOT work

Graham Haynes
07768-203264 (leave message if busy)
01323-762461

Outer Harbour Works

The revetments (sloping banks) around the inside of the outer harbour were formed from a concrete membrane laid over a granular base. This has become unstable and a permanent remedial solution is needed. This will be engineered by replacing the concrete with rock blocks in those areas effected. Carillion has contracted out this work to Kier Construction, and we have agreed to publish this notice to keep residents informed.

'Kier will be carrying out some dredging and rock placement works to the existing Outer Harbour

slopes. On the Eastern revetment a length of approximately 250 metres will be worked on, while 50 metres on the West revetment adjacent to the RNLI building will be effected and also a small section in the North West corner. The works will commence on 6th February and will carry on for approximately 16 weeks.

There will be a period when rock delivery will be taking place to provide material to carry out the works. The great majority of rock will be delivered by sea over a 2 week period as a 24-hour operation. The rock will be off-loaded on the beach adjacent to the Martello tower on the North Harbour and will then be transported to a stockpile between the East revetment and the existing beach.

The rock placement works are of a tidal nature, however the intention is to work around one low tide per day, which will be chosen to minimise the disruption to residents. For example, if low tides occur at 04:00 and 16:30 hrs work will be carried out around the 16:30 tide.'

We understand that around 10,700 tonnes of rock will come by sea, and about 1,500 tonnes of rock, of a different specification, by road, over a 4 week period. It is understood that the road deliveries will be no more intrusive than the lorry activity on current building works.

New year, new website

The SHRA website has been updated, and a number of new pages added. Please visit it and let us have your comments, and suggestions for improvement.

A very useful addition is the harbour street map. The work on producing this was very generously sponsored by Beckett newspapers, publishers of the Eastbourne Gazette and Herald.

There is now a 'Letters' page, which we hope you will use to share your concerns and opinions.

If you have something to sell, or are looking for a second-hand article, why not use the 'For Sale' or 'Wanted' pages.

If you have a digital, harbour related photograph that you would like to share, why not e-mail it to us at waterlines@shra.co.uk

We would like to take this opportunity to thank harbour resident John Levene for all his work on the previous site, and for all allowing us to access his very useful site www.snappy3.com which contains a wealth of very valuable information.

New sponsors

Finally, thanks to two new sponsors, London Taxi operator Graham Hull and the Natural Fitness Centre

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01323 732024

Natural Fitness Centre,
The Redoubt, Royal Parade,
Eastbourne, BN22 7AQ.
E: info@naturalfitnesscentre.co.uk
W: www.naturalfitnesscentre.co.uk

