



**Members only – Annual General Meeting,
on Tuesday 9th May,
at the Haven School, Atlantic Drive.
Starting at 7:30pm, doors open at 7:00pm.**

The Annual General Meeting of the SHRA will be held on 9th May, only paid-up members are eligible to attend. Although it will be possible for new members to join, and for existing members to renew, on the night, the proceedings will run much more smoothly if this could be kept to a minimum, and memberships were already in effect. All current members should have received a renewal form, new members may use the application form included with this newsletter.

It is not a coincidence that this meeting will take place on the day after the deadline for B&Q to submit their appeal against the refusal of the

Planning Committee to grant them permission to build a warehouse on the land adjacent to Pevensey Bay Road (commercial site 1).

At this meeting, the current committee will stand down and submit themselves for re-election. Any other member who wishes to stand for election, or who wishes to nominate another member for election to the committee should notify the secretary, in writing, before the meeting.

This notice satisfies the constitutional requirement to provide at least four weeks notice of the AGM. More details will be published in the May issue of Waterlines.

Fives sites, people power forces rethink.

There has been a further 'Five Sites' application, this time for Site 5, the site of the Carillion offices in Harbour Quay. This is an outline application for a much needed, and long awaited, medical centre. We have been told that the reason that no detailed application has been submitted, is that the final configuration of the medical centre has not yet been determined. Although we welcome this development, it is amazing that, with twenty years notice, the PCT are still unable to finalise their plans.

Because of the delay in bringing this plan forward, it has been necessary for Dr Adoki's 'Harbour Medical Practice' to apply for an extension of the permission to operate from a private dwelling house in Barrier Reef Way. Let us hope that he will not have to continue working under these circumstances for too much longer.

After a week in which the deputy chairman of the planning committee put a limit on the number of objectors who would be allowed to speak at the meeting to hear the applications for sites two and three, and then reversed the decision after huge protest from residents, we have now heard the very good news that the applications have been withdrawn. We have to thank our elected representatives on the EBC for putting pressure

on the developers to take another look at the future of the 'Five Sites'.

The latest position, as we know it, is that Carillion have agreed to further dialogue with residents before submitting simultaneous applications for sites 1, 2, 3 and 4. The application to build a medical centre on site 5 will be pursued, but Carillion have indicated that they will re-examine the proposal to see how community facilities may be incorporated into the proposal.

The Development Control Manager has also indicated that these four applications will probably be heard at a special meeting of the planning committee, similar to the meeting to hear the B&Q application.

The use of the 'Five Sites' is crucial to the future of the harbour and we will continue to fight, with your support, for the social infrastructure that is necessary to turn the harbour into a community of which we can all be proud. There must be no further residential development on the harbour.

On the face of it, this seems to be a victory for common sense. However, we will continue to monitor the situation very carefully and will keep you informed of developments

Marina mums

'Marina Mums' is a group, set-up by harbour resident, Sam Skull, to provide a social network for mums and 'mums to be' and their babies, toddlers and children. Initially, meetings will be held on a monthly basis, to create a social network, and provide an opportunity to get together, to chat, provide mutual support and to discuss local issues and concerns.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 24th April, from 11:00 until 12:00, in Simply Italian on the Waterfront. The only cost will be for refreshments, if desired.

If you would like to go along, or would be interested in future events, please contact Sam directly.

Phone or text: 07949-687996

Or e-mail: marinamums@yahoo.co.uk

Harbour Friends

About 40 people attended the March meeting of Harbour Friends at Simply Italian on the Waterfront. Those who went along thought it was the best meeting so far.

The next meeting of Harbour Friends will take place in Simply Italian on Monday 24th April, starting at 7:30pm. For information on future meetings, or if you are interested in becoming part of this group,, please contact Bev Adams on 01323-79797, or e-mail Bev at: adams.associates@btconnect.com

Remember the hosepipe ban

We know it's inconvenient, and we know that the water companies have neglected the infrastructure leading to enormous wastage, but the hosepipe and sprinkler ban that was imposed last summer is still in effect. Additionally, Southern Water might apply for emergency powers, that would also restrict commercial use of water. This would mean that boat owners who are currently able to hose down their boats using copious amounts of Sovereign Harbour Ltd's commercial supply would no longer be able to do so.

We are not on the side of the water companies, but please try to be responsible with your use of water for the good of the whole community. Also, be aware that SW are likely to be looking for a few transgressors to make an example of, and remember, the maximum fine for ignoring the ban is **£1,000**.

Members surgery

Don't forget the members' surgery on the first Saturday of the month. Next surgery 6th May from 10:30 am in Simply Italian on the Waterfront.



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Art exhibition and sale

The East Dean and Friston Art Group will be holding an exhibition and sale of their members' work at the East Dean Village Hall over the May Bank Holiday weekend. The exhibition will be open on:

Saturday 29th April, from 2:00pm to 6:00pm
Sunday 30th April, from 10:00am to 6:00pm
Monday 1st May, from 10:00am to 4:00pm

Free admission. Refreshments and Grand Raffle.

Bird life in the harbour (by Geoff Morley)

An initiative to attract more wild birds to the harbour has been launched - with the backing of the RSPB.

Residents of Dominica Court in South Harbour set the ball rolling - by devoting a March Sunday morning to putting out birdfeeders, and planting flowers and shrubs attractive to wildlife. They were helped by residents from other parts of the harbour, both North and South, including representatives of SHRA.

Also there for the occasion was Adrian Thomas of the RSPB's Regional Office, who welcomed what he called this "bold move" to improve the harbour environment.

"The more communities that can be encouraged to do this the better," he said. "Wouldn't it be great if people across the harbour and beyond took up the challenge? Nature improves the quality of people's lives, so it is a win-win situation."

The hope is to attract birds such as greenfinches, goldfinches, blue tits, great tits and house sparrows. But there were already indications on the day of the launch that the area has real potential for birds. Among the more exotic Dominica Court residents present was a rare black redstart - which has been in evidence almost daily throughout the winter. There are perhaps only twenty-five in the whole of the UK each winter. Two chiff-chaffs then appeared in the bushes - probably freshly arrived from southern Europe or Africa.

As Adrian Thomas explained: "Millions of summer migrants arrive in the UK over the next couple of months, after long and tiring flights from Africa. Sovereign Harbour will be the first land that many of them see after crossing the Channel, and some will drop straight down in search of a place to rest and feed. The wildlife-friendly gardening in Dominica Court may provide them with exactly what they are looking for".

The end of March also saw the conclusion of a short series of talks at the Under Ground Theatre (under the library in the town centre) on Birdwatching for Beginners. The talks, by Alan Everard, were hugely successful - and well attended by harbour residents, who are keen to further this interest as a group. Geoff Morley, who organised the talks, would be delighted to hear from anyone with ideas! (Phone: 470026 Email: GeoffMorley@compuserve.com)

The RSPB's Adrian Thomas would be happy to return to the harbour - to talk to residents about attracting birds to the area. But would we need a school hall, someone's spare room - or a stadium? SHRA is willing to help organise such an occasion - but we would need to have some idea of numbers first. So: please get in touch with Geoff Morley (details above) if you would be interested in coming along.

Eastbourne Epilepsy Awareness Group

If you, or a member of you family, or a friend suffer from epilepsy, or if you would like to help epilepsy sufferers, the Eastbourne Epilepsy Awareness Group would like to hear from you.

They will be holding three 'awareness days' over the coming months at the following venues:

21st April at St. Saviour's, St. Peter's Church, South Street, Eastbourne.

10th May at Prospects House, 7-9 George Street, Hailsham.

21st July at St. Leonard's Church, Seaford.

12th September at ESDA, 1 Faraday Close, Hampden Park.

More information can be found on the SHRA website, or call Andy on 01323-504893 or 07757-240331, or John on 01323-643130. You can also e-mail to eaepilepsygroup@aol.com

'Reliable Tradesmen'

Unfortunately, due to lack of space, this item will be held over until next month. Additions have been posted on the website, <http://www.shra.co.uk>

Support the Sea Cadets

The Eastbourne Sea Cadets are, contrary to popular belief, a charitable organisation that receives no funding from the armed forces. Their headquarters in Royal Parade was built in 1966 and is now in need of major refurbishment.

Also, having been generously given an outboard motor by the Eastbourne Outboard Centre, they now need a new inflatable rib on which to mount it; essential to their learning of boat handling skills.

The unit, which caters for local boys and girls holds two 'parades' each week, and engages in a whole host of activities, from boat handling skills to competitions with other units all over the UK.

There are a number of fund raising activities in progress, notable amongst which is an entry in the **London Marathon, on 23rd April**, by harbour resident **Barry Elliston**.

Please be generous in supporting this worthwhile cause by sponsoring Barry's run. You can pledge your support by contacting Barry's colleague, Toby Snow at home on 01323-767858, or at his office on 01323-413762, or e-mail him on tobysnow@btconnect.com

Household Maintenance

Tiling, painting and decorating, plastering etc
Paul Simants
01323-743083

Dog fouling, at last some progress

If you remember, almost a year ago, we sent a survey to every household on the Harbour asking for opinions on various matters. One of the biggest concerns for residents was dog mess, and the lack of dog bins. Well, after much negotiation with the Council, we have been advised by the EBC Deputy Leader, David Elkin that we can now have more bins. These should be installed shortly.

This has been a long hard fight, and we would ask all dog owners to ensure that they are used. Dog mess is not just unpleasant, it is hazardous, especially for children. Let's make the harbour a better place to live.

Haven Youth Group

In his 'Chairman's Footnote', Rick Runalls mentioned the need for better youth facilities on the harbour, which we think is self evident. However, the Rev. Martin Keenan, the minister at the Haven Church, wrote to Waterlines to protest that there is indeed a youth club on the harbour, and it is actually featured on the SHRA website.

We apologise to Martin, who does a splendid job at the Haven Youth Group, which meets every Friday evening throughout the year. However, the group shares the facilities of the Haven School, and Church. We would like to see a dedicated community centre that could be used for a whole host of community activities, including a youth club.

Until that day arrives, you can find further details of the Haven youth group on the SHRA website <http://www.shra.co.uk> or from Martin on 01323-416539 or 07921- 540170.

Martin also asked us to mention that there is a church on the harbour, at which he would be pleased to welcome harbour residents. Details from Martin, or the church website,

<http://www.the-haven-church.co.uk>

Sovereign Strollers

Harbour resident, Mari-Anne Elder, who is fully qualified, is offering a class for anti and post natal mums. This consists of a circuit of the harbour and, in addition, toning exercises

Classes, which are one hour long, cost £2.50 per session and start at 2:30pm on Mondays, and 9:15am on Thursdays.

If you are interested, call Mari-Anne on 479280.

Fly the London Eye

SHRA member Bert Leggett has negotiated a special price with Lynns Travel, of just £21.00 for a coach excursion to London, on 20th June, which is inclusive of a flight on the London Eye. Bert is on holiday at the moment, but put the date in your diary, and look out for more details in the May issue of Waterlines, and on the SHRA website <http://www.shra.co.uk>

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Your response has been magnificent!

During March, a letter from our chairman, explaining why it was essential that memberships should be renewed was delivered to every member. At the same time, the March issue of Waterlines carried an article explaining the benefits of SHRA membership. Your response was magnificent. At the time of going to print, over half of you had already renewed your membership and over 100 new members had joined the Association.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the 2006/7 membership year will have started and, if you have not renewed, your membership will have expired.

If you intend to renew your membership, please do so soon, if not, please let us know how we have failed to meet your expectations. If you have never been a member, now is your chance to join using the enclosed membership application form.

Money down the drain? (by Ray Battersby)

If a company charges for a service not supplied, it's embezzlement and you're entitled to a refund. If you're paying Southern Water (SW) for surface water drainage - a service not provided within Sovereign Harbour - you are entitled only to a refund for the overcharges made since the previous 1st April.

After being alerted to these fraudulent charges, I called SW and subsequently returned their claim form. SW agreed to rebate from April 2003 but having been overcharged since May 2000, I again claimed a rebate for the earlier years.

SW said "...the Director General of Water Services (OFWAT) has specifically confirmed that rebates are not to be retrospective... In accordance with the regulator's requirements, rebates are effective from the **beginning of the charging year (1st APRIL) in which the customer first indicates their wish to claim.**" (which OFWAT later confirmed).

In the topsy-turvy world of public utilities, it's the customer's responsibility to know the services received. And since April 2000, when OFWAT introduced rebates, it's been perfectly legal for SW to charge Sovereign Harbour residents for a service they knowingly haven't provided. And they only need to offer a rebate for the current charging year - and only on customer request.

Under these crazy OFWAT rules, there's no incentive for SW to make change; they happily continue to invoice hundreds of unsuspecting Sovereign Harbour residents for a non-existent service and rely on the *Caveat Emptor* shield (*let the buyer beware*). The longer this situation continues, the more profits SW accrue. Make your Point: Make your Claim

1. Request a Rebate Request Form on 0845 273 0845, or write to:

The Team Manager - Customer Services
Southern Water
P.O. Box 41, Worthing
West Sussex BN13 3NZ

Return the completed form to SW. I stated on my form:

"Sovereign Harbour has been built as a soakaway area. The surface water drains naturally and does not drain into the sewerage system.

You should not be charging me for its removal.

I claim a rebate for the charges you have made (and that I have paid) since _____"

2. You should receive a letter confirming your rebate entitlement.

3. You can also contact OFWAT and The Daily Mail, who watch the Water Companies' excessive profits:

Information Services Officer
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street

Birmingham B5 4UA
Tel: 0121 625 3642

Email: enquiries@ofwat.qsi.gov.uk

Sean Poulter - Consumer Affairs Correspondent

The Daily Mail
Northcliffe House
2 Derry Street
London W8 5TT

Tel: 020 7938 6000

Email: s.poulter@dailymail.co.uk

Ask OFWAT why it doesn't...

1. ... insist that water companies invoice customers only for the services provided?
2. ... require the water companies to rebate all overcharges?
3. ... require comprehensive customer records?

Questions for SW:

1. Do SW ever exceed their OFWAT obligations?
2. How many customers are SW charging for a service they don't receive?
3. Why doesn't SW keep accurate customer records including the services provided?
4. How much has SW profited over the years due to this loophole