

Notes of the Sovereign Harbour Residents Association Open Meeting

Held on 26 th January 2005

Environment Agency

Paul Metcalf introduced Ian Thomas, Pevensey Coastal Defence Ltd and Andy Gillam, Environment Agency, who spoke about the Sovereign Harbour Area.

Sovereign Harbour is within a flood plane but good standards of defence has significantly reduced, but not removed, the risk of flooding. The flood warning service constantly monitors coastal conditions and river systems. Those registered will receive flood warnings by telephone, email and text. The new system being introduced allows for better targeting of warnings rather than what previously covered i.e. whole towns. The Environment Agency web site has lots of information about flood risks. The floodline number is available 24/7. There is a strategic plan for the coastline for the next 100 years. Sovereign Harbour sea defences are considered essential and will continue to be maintained.

Ian talked about the shingle movement from the south to the north harbour. Bulldozers will be on the beach for most of the time to push the shingle back. The first 300m of the NE side of the harbour is the worst area. The shingle is also replaced. The beach replenishment shortfall is made up from new material collected from the shingle bank in Hastings. If anyone wants to be kept informed of what is happening with defences locally then they can email <mailto:pcd@pevensey-bay.co.uk> and you will be placed on a mailing list for updates.

Q. Would larger groins help?

A. No. In any case the replacement of groins in Eastbourne will probably have been the last ever in the country as hard woods can no longer be used.

Q. How do the flood warnings work?

A. They monitor predicted tides, forecast surges and Met Office weather reports from which they can calculate risk. This enabled them to give a minimum of 2 hours notice but in fact they will have a good idea 24 hours in advance that things are deteriorating.

Q. What impact with the Environment Agency classification of flood areas have with insurance companies?

A. Half of Eastbourne is now considered to be a high flood risk area. The EA have had extensive discussions with insurance companies and although some companies may require more information, they should not refuse insurance. Some residents have however seen a significant increase in their premiums.

Q. The EA maps are inaccurate because they are based on 1979 OS maps. What will they be doing to rectify errors?

A. it is hard to keep maps up to date in this area because of the continual development. They agreed that they will look at the maps and update and refine the data further.

It was pointed out that the EA have never issued a severe flood warning for Sovereign Harbour. A flood watch was issued on Christmas Eve 1999. at that time the sea defences were never overtopped.

Treasurers Report

The treasurer reported that the SHRA account balance was £1356.

Membership will be due for renewal at the AGM in May 2005. Membership is £10 per household.

Litter at Crumbles

The manager at Prudential who owns the site has been off on long term sick leave so nobody had been keeping an eye on things and the litter had got much worse. Since his return it has improved. This will continue to be monitored.

Health Centre

The SHRA was invited to attend a meeting with the PCT to discuss what residents would like to see in a health centre. Residents wishes to have a comprehensive bespoke primary care service for local residents. It was thought that meeting went well and the PCT was actively listening to residents views.

B&Q

Rumours have been circulating since Christmas that B&Q were intending to put in another planning applications for the Sovereign harbour site (opposite Millwood Homes). SHRA members were asked to attend a meeting with the Council, B&Q and other businesses. An application has not yet been submitted. SHRA requested that they hold an exhibition for residents to have a prior look of their proposals before they make an application. They agreed to hold a drop-in clinic/exhibition on the 9 th & 10 th February 4pm to 8pm so that anybody with questions can go along.