

**IMP Solent  
Meeting Notes  
8<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

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**Attendees:**

**Karen McHugh (KM) – Solent Forum  
Kate Ansell (KA) – Solent Forum  
Jess Taylor (JT) – Natural England (NE)  
Julie Sims (JS) – Bird Aware Solent  
Peter Hughes (PH) – Chichester Harbour Conservancy (CHC)**

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KM introduced this second project meeting and Jess Taylor (NE) as a new project group member.

KM explained that the project is being tracked via the IMP Solent website. [Solentems - Impacts and Management of Paddlesports in the Solent \(IMP Solent\)](#).

The meeting agenda was formed of the actions set out in the project brief.

The following is a summary of the meeting.

**The project is focusing on the action to understand the incidence of Paddlesports and arising bird disturbance.**

Chichester Harbour Conservancy will be a case study to achieve this and the aim is:

*To develop a methodology to record paddlesports counts and incidences of bird disturbance over one year at different states of tide and times using Chichester Harbour as a pilot. This data will be fed into the forthcoming Natural England SPA condition assessment for the harbour to help evaluate whether this activity is affecting the condition of designated sites.*

Once this methodology is agreed, it will be rolled out to other sites in the Solent. CHC will start collecting data in Autumn 2021.

**Paddlesports Categorisation**

Key Point - IMP will look at 'paddlesports', to include paddleboards, kayaks and canoes. For disturbance issues we will look at paddlesports as one group as it is difficult in practice to distinguish differences in the field and all paddlesports create similar disturbance issues. However, where practicable, craft counts will distinguish between paddleboards, kayaks and canoes.

**Jess Taylor - Natural England**

NE will be gaining a new member of staff who can sit on the IMP group from October 2021. NE need more than one year worth of data for their use, and would need to cross reference data gathered with other bird information to see if there are links. For condition assessment NE would lead but subsequent management would have to be with the Relevant Authorities. New SPA condition assessment now available and is being trialled, possibly a Solent site can be used. Condition assessment can use all data sources with confidence limits given.

NE are keen to use the information from the IMP work to feed into the future condition assessments for Langstone and Chichester Harbour SPAs.

**Action: NE used strava data with an active survey in the Fleet, JT will share the findings.**

**NE to continue to support the group to guide the data collected to feed into the condition assessment process.**

#### **Peter Hughes - Chichester HC**

- Planned counts of paddlesports in the Harbour with volunteers.
- Baseline data on number of paddleboarders is first step.
- Disturbance events harder to categorise for specific craft.
- Annual vessel survey undertaken in Chichester Harbour may be able to tap into this.
- Revision of CoHC powers and charges to harbour dues so might influence how data collected for paddlesports.
- Observations recorded need to be kept simple for volunteers, e.g. tick if birds take flight when craft approach.
- He has anecdotal evidence of bird disturbance every time sensitive areas are accessed when he is out on the coast.
- He undertakes monthly Webs account with volunteers but volunteers need to focus on birds. He does record vessel traffic too, but this is variable currently in terms of location.
- Need to do survey at diff times of day and tidal states.
- Main use locations are channels. Also could use a volunteer at key launch points that can see the wider harbour too.
- Start survey Autumn 2021 and run for a year.
- He has been asked for other reasons to look at the proportion of different types of paddleboard craft in the Harbour.

**Action: PH will send through methodology and also look at using Facebook to gather data and Strava use. Investigate hire companies to share booking numbers.**

**Action: KM to update data from the SEMS 2021 AMR of where paddleboarding takes place. Approach Langstone Harbour Board to shadow the project.**

#### **Julie Sims - Bird Aware Solent**

Strava data, might increase disturbance? Just need to be cautious.

Bird Aware record if there was an incidence of disturbance and what caused it. Have three to four years data. But just on general ranger viewing not actively going out to record this information. They can share their data for Chichester Harbour. Can talk to Bird Aware Team to support Peter's work in methodology.

**Action: JS to share existing Bird Aware data and liaise with Bird Aware Team to support Peter's Survey work.**