Harbour *Life*

Summer 2020

wildlife in splendid *isolation*

Also in the issue

Spotter's Guide

Solent Sunbeams

The History of the Harbour

www.conservancy.co.uk

CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

NATURAL ENGLAND

The Countryside Code

Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways are clear
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Follow paths but give way to others where it's narrow

Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit, take all your litter home
- Don't have BBQs or fires
- Keep dogs under effective control
- Dog poo - bag it and bin it

Enjoy the outdoors

- Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures

Welcome

A very warm welcome to the summer edition of Harbour Life. During the calm of lockdown an empty Harbour sparkled, mirroring only the clear blue skies above. Wildlife took its cue, and, in this edition, we look at a success story for nature.

With the full return of boating, the Harbour is once again a vibrant mix of sails, paddles and pootling craft. We have increased the Patrol Team numbers in anticipation of a busy summer and to help ensure mariners have a safe and enjoyable time on the water. We have also embraced new ways of working and have had surprising success in engaging with Harbour users at Itchenor with the help of a big blue box which is acting as a temporary office!

There is an awful lot going on in this pocket sized but nationally important landscape. This has been picked up by BBC Countryfile who have paid us a visit in early July to take a closer look at some of our projects, including habitat restoration, scientific research (most notably our focus on microplastics) and some of the success stories we've had with seals and common terns. Catch up with the episode (which aired 26th July 2020) on BBC iPlayer.

In the meantime, do enjoy reading!

CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

Richard Craven,
Director and Harbour Master

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We'd love to hear your stories about what you love about Chichester Harbour, and how you use it. Share your thoughts and photos on our social media channels or contact us at the Harbour Office.

Cover Photo © Flycatcher

Springing into action

Phil Walker, Lead Patrol Officer at the Conservancy, gives a personal view of the Harbour over the most unusual Spring of 2020.

Our Patrol team are used to an ever-changing dynamic environment, which constantly keeps us and all Harbour users excited, and occasionally challenged. Change this year has been unprecedented - for obvious reasons.

One notable result of the social distancing requirements has been the Patrol Team de-camping from the Harbour Office to a temporary operation in a blue Portakabin outside! Thankfully it didn't take long to get up and running with electricity, connectivity, VHF, water, a kettle and a clock, in order to leave the Harbour Office staff with more space inside our characterful building.

During lock down I had the privilege of patrolling the Harbour without another person or vessel in sight, all under crystal clear azure skies. Without any propeller disturbance the water was gin clear with an eery but serene silence. I was amazed at how quickly the birdlife celebrated the lack of any recreational disturbance and meandered freely over the water channels usually buzzing with boats. The resident seals also took advantage of some new undisturbed haul out sites, basking in the extra quiet and spring sunshine. Whilst the peace was breath-taking it felt very wrong without the walkers and boaters who usually share this wonderful natural environment.

A combination of fantastic weather and the release of lockdown for some meant the Harbour went from gentle sleep to a party in literally days. It was the busiest Spring Bank Holiday Monday many of whom have been around the Harbour for years can remember. Thankfully, whilst there were many vessels of all types afloat, there were very few incidents.

Interestingly, despite the crowds and the heat, everyone appeared relieved and thankful to be back out enjoying the Harbour with people being especially patient and jolly where queues had formed to launch vessels, pay Harbour Dues and

where yachts vied for a perfect anchoring spot at East Head.

It must be true that when something is taken away and returned it is more appreciated. This was certainly endorsed by so many people I came across in the early part of the season whose relief and joy to be out soaking in the beautiful environment and weather was overwhelming.

We hope and trust that this new found appreciation of our surroundings, and joy in sharing it courteously, is a long and enduring one. Please do enjoy the summer season!

5 top common sense tips for a safe and enjoyable summer afloat

- Always wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid
- Make preparations – ensure your vessel/kayak/paddleboard is in good condition and that you have ample supplies of water, sun screen and fuel etc
- Know who to contact if things do not go to plan and have the means to do so i.e. keep a VHF or a charged phone in a waterproof case
- Have a good knowledge of the Collision Regulations and adhere to them
- Check weather and tides, have a plan and also have a back up plan!

Chichester Harbour at its best

Image courtesy of Sue Kent

What can be more sublime than slipping the mooring for an evening of sociable yacht racing in a stunningly attractive classic keelboat on the beautiful waters of Chichester Harbour?

The Solent Sunbeam fleet has a long held tradition of evening racing, running every week from May to September. The boat owners themselves are responsible for organising the hour-long race and the prize – a bottle of wine – usually handed out during the post-race supper at Itchenor Sailing Club.

The origin of these races is particularly enchanting. It was a chance encounter one June evening in the late 1980s between V2 Joy, sailed by Jerome and Elizabeth O'Hea and V1 Dainty, sailed by Peter and Sally Nicholson. One boat offered the other boat a glass of wine which was duly passed between the yachts as they sailed past East Head. They decided to encourage others in the class to sail on a Thursday evening and the now well-established and hugely enjoyed tradition of evening racing began!

From the outset the races were organised by the class members in turn, with the organiser presenting a bottle of wine to the winner over a lively and friendly supper at the sailing club. Guests are welcomed to enjoy this delightful tradition, giving them the opportunity to experience the peaceful and beautiful Harbour in the setting sun.

One enthusiastic owner describes how the yacht 'ghosts in a zephyr, sparkles in a breeze and exhilarates in a near-gale'

The racing takes place in Solent Sunbeams, a class which was designed in 1922 by Alfred Westmacott who was based on the Isle of Wight. Over 30 of this classic fleet are still actively sailing today including several of the original 96-year-old yachts including V1 Dainty who remains an active Thursday evening competitor at Itchenor Sailing Club, with Peter Nicholson still at the helm.

Owners, or 'keepers' of Solent Sunbeams, as they often feel they are, attest to the perfect balance of the boat and her supreme sea kindliness. One enthusiastic owner describes how the yacht 'ghosts in a zephyr, sparkles in a breeze and exhilarates in a near-gale!' The deep, solid keel and acclaimed design of the yacht means she is so perfectly balanced that she can be helmed to within an inch of her destination.

The class is extremely welcoming and sociable with very supportive owners who are encouraged to race and join in with post-race suppers and who also have a common passion for the design, heritage and sportsmanship of the fleet.

For more information about the fleet, events and racing please visit www.solentsunbeam.co.uk.

News in brief

Welcoming the Next Generation of Harbour Visitors

Earlier this year we launched Harbour Tots, a new group for pre-school children. The group was set up to encourage young children to explore the natural environment with their parents and carers and discover some of the Harbour's wildlife. The sessions, held in January, February and March, saw the children taking part in a variety of games and activities including muddy walks down to the shoreline, making bird food kebabs, matching birds into pairs, listening to stories and colouring in Brent Geese chalkboards. It can be difficult to get out with children during the winter months so it was lovely to be able to offer families a chance to enjoy some fresh air and find out more about our Harbour wildlife. We hope to run the sessions again in 2021.

Seasonal patrol team members Fran Sprules and Alex Sayers outside the temporary patrol office at Itchenor.

Seasonal Patrol

We've recently welcomed our new team of seasonal summer staff. The recruits have been operating seven days a week supporting our core team during the busy season. This year, due to the restrictions, they are based in a temporary portakabin just outside the Harbour Office, which has been working well, enabling fast payment of harbour dues through the kiosk window.

Responding to COVID-19

The Harbour was a much quieter place this spring, following the coronavirus restrictions. During late March and April the area was open only for walkers and cyclists who could travel from their homes and the traditional start of the sailing season was delayed leaving the waters empty despite the lovely weather. The Harbour Office was closed to visitors and our office staff began working from home. Those who usually work outside continued to do so, just without accessing all our usual facilities.

After the initial lockdown was relaxed in May, recreational boating and watersports returned and there was a rush to check on vessels and get out on the water. After a very quiet couple of months it was encouraging to see both boats and people back and enjoying this beautiful area. At the time of writing, restrictions on movement have been lifted and the Itchenor ferry and both Emsworth and Bosham water taxis are operating. Overnight stays are now permitted but the showers at Itchenor remain closed. If you are visiting do please check the latest advice on our website, always maintain social distancing and take note of the latest government guidelines.

My favourite walk

Nutbourne Marshes to Cobnor Rithe

Maria Court, Shared Services Manager

When walking in the Harbour I'm seeking open vistas and a sense of solitude. My walk begins at Farm Lane in Nutbourne at the very north of the Harbour, picking up the footpath which runs along the side of Nutbourne Marshes, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Flooding is encouraged here to make it a good habitat for waterfowl, including teal.

Approaching the sea wall brings the first sight of the water, with the curve of Prinsted Bay enclosing a wide area of shallow water at high tide and an expanse of mudflat at low-tide. In the winter it would be full of Brent Geese and waders feeding on the mudflats, but during the summer months it's the haunt of gulls and oystercatchers.

Walking along the footpath eastwards gives views across the farmland with the spire of Chichester Cathedral visible in the distance. Westwards is Thorney Island, with the Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth peeping up from behind.

The footpath then turns away from the shore and along a bund that edges a meadow. If you're here in the winter, you might catch a glimpse of a short-eared owl, hunting. There are many ground nesting birds here in the spring and early summer so please keep to the bund and keep dogs on the footpath. The song of skylarks dominates the senses in the summer along with the gentle buzzing of bees. More incessant are the chirping of crickets and the swallows speeding after insects right in front of you. There is a lovely sense of solitude here as the elevated path makes the views over the farmland and sea particularly far reaching.

The footpath re-joins the shore at the end of the peninsular, bringing you to the very centre of the Harbour. From here your view is directed towards East Head and the mouth of the Harbour and on clear days, the Isle of Wight seems tantalisingly close and very much part of the landscape. On hazy days it slips into the distance and takes on an almost otherworldly quality.

Returning back the walk feels very different with views over the farmland to the Downs in the distance. The lone tree in one of the fields is striking and emphasises the feeling of solitude. The views are incredibly far-reaching, with glimpses of the buildings at the top of Portsdown Hill possible when the sun is shining.

Reaching the footpath leading back to Farm Lane brings a good view of Nutbourne Marshes reed beds and grazing area. If you're lucky, you might see the charming belted Galloway cattle that are used here to manage the vegetation and enhance the habitat; a great sight to bring about the end of the walk.

This 5.5km walk forms part of the longer Chidham Circular walk in the Walking section on our website.

CHICHESTER BAR

Improving the Chichester Bar Beacon

The Chichester Bar Beacon is an important aid to navigation, positioned between Eastoke Buoy and West Pole at the entrance to Chichester Harbour. It warns mariners of the shoaling sand bars to the west and guides vessels drifting leeward while navigating the notorious waters.

Following an incident with a dredger last winter, the beacon was badly damaged and needed repair so we took the opportunity to go back to the drawing board when designing the new beacon. We approached Walcon Marine, Southampton to oversee the project and between us came up with a bespoke design.

The size and visibility of the structure was increased, following feedback from sailors, and the ease of access for maintenance was improved. The beacon was also fitted with a LED light that can be remotely monitored from anywhere in the world and allows the team to access data such as battery voltage, solar panel output and to confirm the light is operational, it can even be activated remotely in poor weather and fog if required.

Bar beacon fabrication

Bar beacon fabrication

Walcon Marine commissioned OBE Fabrications in Chichester to manufacture the main platform and top mark, assembling all the components at their workshops. The Walcon Marine team began the installation in May using their vessels Walcon Wizzard and Walcon Warrior with support from our workshop team.

The new Chichester Bar Beacon is now a striking feature at the Harbour entrance and will soon become as familiar as the old mark, standing sentry for many years to come.

Walcon marine installing the bar beacon

Reviewing our work

Every year we take some time to look back on what's been achieved, in line with our Management Plan, which governs every aspect of our work. The latest Annual Review, which considers the period of April 2019 to March 2020, concluded with us entering the global pandemic, which impacted so many aspects of all of our lives. Despite the challenges, many of our teams kept working to ensure that the Harbour was well maintained, and ready and able to welcome visitors as the restrictions lifted.

The full report can be read on our website and there are a number of positive events to note. Firstly, the Education Centre won the prestigious Bowland Award in July 2019. The Award is presented to the best initiative across the UK's 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and was particularly welcome given it was the Centre's 20th anniversary.

The Conservancy hosted a Microplastics symposium, also in July, in partnership with the Friends of Chichester Harbour and the University of Brighton. It was a very successful event, with expert discussions about tackling this environmental problem in Chichester Harbour and beyond.

In other developments the Manor of Bosham, an estate including a significant amount of intertidal mudland, Bosham Sailing Club and a meadow north of the boat park, was purchased by a local resident of Bosham, and we are looking forward to working with the new owner.

Finally, September bought about the results of a national review of all our AONBs and National Parks. The findings were very positive, with calls for greater powers, increased funding, the need to engage a wider audience with our protected landscapes and a commitment towards the recovery of nature. The next step is a response from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) at the end of this year, which we await with interest.

Thanks, as always, to the Conservancy team, along with the Friends of Chichester Harbour, Chichester Harbour Trust and the Chichester Harbour Federation, who have all excelled with their help and support throughout the year.

Jeremy Hunt, Chairman
Chichester Harbour Conservancy

PADDLE POWER

Kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) and canoeing have increased in popularity dramatically in recent years. This is particularly true in Chichester Harbour where the sheltered waters see people taking to these sports in increasing numbers, often for the first time.

The Harbour offers a fantastic opportunity for you to enjoy the water with a kayak, canoe or SUP but there are some important things to take note of before you set off.

- Check that your equipment is in good order; look for hull breaches or punctures in inflatable craft and ensure that paddle leashes are sound.
- Wear a buoyancy aid or life jacket. Wake and wash from larger vessels can tip or swamp your craft even on calm days and falling into the open water can bring on cold water shock which could prevent you from holding on to your craft. If you choose a specifically designed buoyancy aid it will allow full movement.
- Pay your harbour dues. Dues contribute to the upkeep of the Harbour jetties and launching sites, maintenance of navigation marks and provision of the Patrol Team. It costs from as little as £4 per week or £12.89 per year and you can pay in person or over the phone at the Harbour Office. Do note that charges vary depending on length of vessel.
- Keep your distance from seals and other wildlife. Part of what makes the Harbour so special is that it is a safe haven on the south coast for wildlife. Seals haul out onto sandbanks at low tide and birds seek refuge from high tides on shingle roosts; both are important periods of rest in their daily lives. Please keep your distance at these times, staying 100m away and moving off if birds fly off or seals enter the water.

Paddle Boarder © Paul Adams

Getting started

Consider taking some lessons to begin with or hiring equipment before you buy. There are a number of companies offering watersport lessons and equipment hire in the area to help you get started safely.

Our leaflet '***Enjoying Paddlesports***' is available from the Harbour Office or online in the ***On the water*** section of our website.

The big Butterfly Count

Understanding how the environment is faring is vital in our work to conserve and protect Chichester Harbour. We use lots of ways to check how things are doing, and this year's Big Butterfly Count offers a great way to get involved from a local and national perspective.

Butterflies are known to react quickly to any changes in their environment. As a result they are brilliant biodiversity indicators, and studying their numbers and behaviour can tell us a lot about what's going on in a wider context.

Run by Butterfly Conservation, the Big Butterfly Count provides a useful pulse check. Now in its 10th year the count is the world's biggest butterfly survey with over 113,500 people taking part in 2019.

This year's event, which runs from **Friday 17 July** to **Sunday 9 August,** will form a unique survey helping identify trends in different butterfly species. The timing of the count means that most butterflies will be at the adult stage of their lifecycle, so hopefully lots will be around to spot! The results will be used to help protect certain species from extinction and provide information about the effect of climate change on wildlife.

Getting Involved

- Download the count form at www.bigbutterflycount.org
- Pick a bright, ideally sunny day and count the butterflies you see, recording the details on the form
- Even if you don't spot anything please record your count – it's all useful information
- Feel free to count just once – or lots of times!
- Submit your counts throughout July and August – either online or by using the Butterfly Conservation's free App

All photos © Paul Adams

Some of the most common species of butterfly in Chichester Harbour include:.

A **Meadow brown**
A very common brown and orange butterfly of rough grassland, its upper wings have a black eye-spot with a white 'pupil'.

B **Peacock**
Peacock butterflies are very colourful with large spots on their wings like those on a peacock's tail.

C **Speckled wood**
The speckled wood is a common butterfly of open woodland glades. They can be seen flying in sunny areas and will defend a favourite spot by chasing other butterflies away. Their colours of brown with cream spots camouflage them among the trees. When they rest with their wings together they look like a dead leaf.

D **Common blue**
The most widespread blue butterfly in Britain and Ireland, found in a variety of grassy habitats.

Photo © Paul Adams

Wildlife in lockdown

With restrictions placed on people going out and about, it has been an interesting time to observe wildlife and how it has responded to the general lack of human presence in otherwise busy places...

An Avocet bird on the shoreline with two chicks © Shirley Rushmer

One of the most interesting developments came this spring, as the avocets appeared in force at Snowhill Marsh, next to East Head on the West Wittering estate. Avocets winter in the Harbour in small numbers and have bred in various locations along the Sussex and Hampshire coast for several years now, but have not previously nested adjacent to the Harbour. Although their appearance at Snowhill is unlikely to have been due entirely to the 'lockdown', it's likely they benefited from the fact that the West Wittering car park was closed at exactly the time when they were starting their breeding season in April.

As a result this year they have bred on the shallow lagoons, and have raised a number of chicks to fledging. Thankfully they've also not been put off by the increase in the number of people using the seawall during the post-lockdown period. Avocets are beautiful and charismatic birds, so hopefully what we've seen this year will now become an annual event!

It's also likely that the birds that breed in the dunes and seawalls around the Harbour, such as linnets, stonechats, meadow pipits and skylarks, will have made their nests in places that would have otherwise been too busy with people. All these species nest on or very close to the ground, or in low scrub and generally avoid very busy areas. As the restrictions on people's movements were lifted during the middle part of the main nesting period, it may have been that many birds found themselves suddenly in the wrong place, although currently it is too early to say how these species have fared.

Have you seen signs of wildlife in unusual or different places this year? Do get in touch, or share your photos on social media, to let us know.

An Avocet chick in the shallows
© Shirley Rushmer

A male Linnet bird in flight
© Paul Adams

A Stonechat bird at East Head
© Paul Adams

what's *on?*

Getting out
and about safely

Events Update

We will not be running any of our planned guided walks or talks until the autumn. We have made this decision to provide a clear message and avoid some ongoing uncertainty in all our lives.

We plan to resume our walks and talks programme in September, but of course this will be reviewed in line with the Government advice nearer the time. We are all looking forward to a time when we can get outdoors to enjoy and learn about wildlife in like-minded company once again, albeit with some new social rules.

At the time of writing the Government advice was that we could now get out and enjoy the outdoors as much as we would like to, whilst keeping to ourselves and respecting social distancing. With this advice in mind, here are some things to enjoy in Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Photo © Paul Adams

Walking in Chichester Harbour

Itchenor Circular
4 mile walk
This walk begins and ends in the pretty village of Itchenor. Parking is easy as there is a pay and display car park near the start of the walk. Along the route you can enjoy views of the Harbour with boats moored in the channel, some lovely houses, quiet farmland and a wonderful shoreline path passing by woodland and saltmarsh. There is a viewing platform in Itchenor which you reach at the end of the walk, the perfect place for a picnic, or you could visit the pub or café. This route is now downloadable as a PDF from our website.

Thorney Circular
9 mile walk
A recommendation for a longer walk is the circumnavigation of Thorney Island. You can park in Emsworth - there are pay and display car parks on South Street and behind Tesco on the north side of A259 roundabout. Along the route you will see one of the mill ponds, pass through Emsworth Yacht Harbour where the Victorian Oysterboat Terror is berthed, and then head out to reach the shoreline path around Thorney and enjoy splendid views of both the Thorney and Emsworth channels and to the Harbour entrance. It's a good idea to check the tide before you set out. On a very high tide the route can flood near the church for an hour or so and you want to aim to be near Marker Point at low to mid-tide, that way you will have a chance of seeing where the seals haul out onto the mud. If you have a light pair of binoculars it is definitely worth carrying them with you.

Villages with a view
If you'd like to enjoy just a short stroll to see a view, then perhaps choose one of the following:

The public car park next to Langstone Bridge. Currently free parking. Situated next to the Ship pub. From here you can walk along the shore, past The Royal Oak and behind Langstone Mill where you can see the ducks and other birds on Langstone Millpond.

Quay Meadow at Bosham. Park in the pay and display car park and take a short stroll to Quay Meadow which is owned by the National Trust and one of their smallest properties. From the car park, take the church path next to the art centre or take the road next to the café by the shoreline.

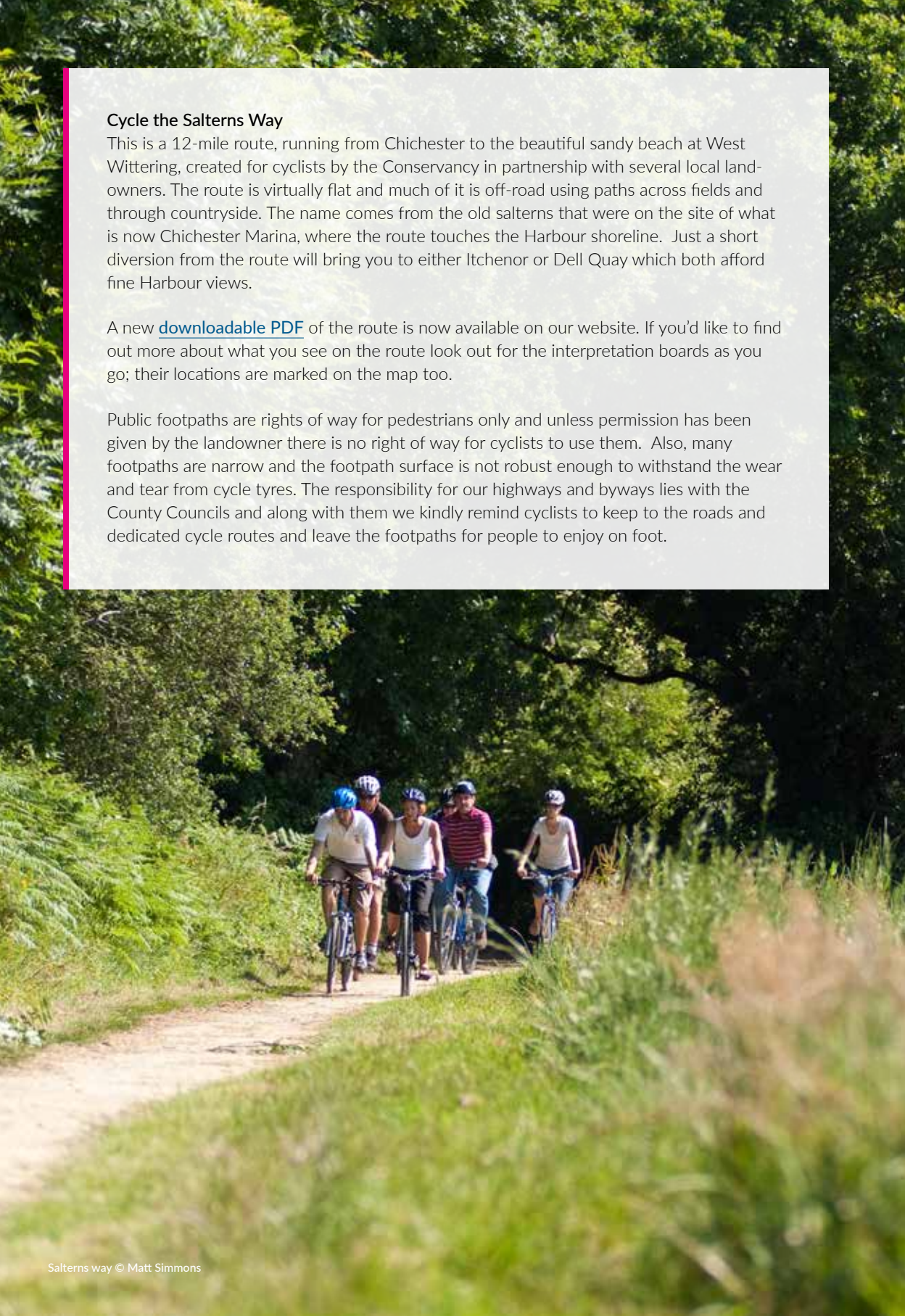
The viewing platform at Itchenor. Park in the pay and display car park just up the road. Itchenor is the home of the Harbour Office and has a busy hard where boats regularly launch so there is usually plenty to watch.

Cycle the Salterns Way

This is a 12-mile route, running from Chichester to the beautiful sandy beach at West Wittering, created for cyclists by the Conservancy in partnership with several local land-owners. The route is virtually flat and much of it is off-road using paths across fields and through countryside. The name comes from the old salterns that were on the site of what is now Chichester Marina, where the route touches the Harbour shoreline. Just a short diversion from the route will bring you to either Itchenor or Dell Quay which both afford fine Harbour views.

A new downloadable PDF of the route is now available on our website. If you'd like to find out more about what you see on the route look out for the interpretation boards as you go; their locations are marked on the map too.

Public footpaths are rights of way for pedestrians only and unless permission has been given by the landowner there is no right of way for cyclists to use them. Also, many footpaths are narrow and the footpath surface is not robust enough to withstand the wear and tear from cycle tyres. The responsibility for our highways and byways lies with the County Councils and along with them we kindly remind cyclists to keep to the roads and dedicated cycle routes and leave the footpaths for people to enjoy on foot.



Salterns way © Matt Simmons

Fun for *families*

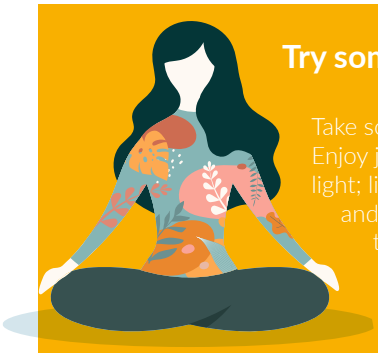
Have a splash at high tide

Look for when the tide is high at lunchtime. This is when the tides are especially high which happen roughly every other week.

Referred to as spring tides these often cover the tidal paths. Wear jellies or old trainers and enjoy a splash along the shoreline.

Create a miniature shoreline

Take an empty ice cream tub or similar and when you visit the shoreline, think tiny and create a mini-shoreline. Make a note of the different zones that make up the shore, the water, mud, saltmarsh, shingle and hedgerow. Then slowly add some water and watch the tide come in.



Try some mindfulness

Take some time for yourself during this ongoing period of uncertainty. Enjoy just being out in the natural world, notice the colours and the light; listen to the birdsong or the lapping of the waves; try a new vista and take in the landscape from a different angle or at a different time of day. Let go of the news for an hour or two and perhaps turn your phone to silent too. Take time to enjoy this special place and let it calm your mind, if only for a little while.

See how many different types of tree leaves you can find

Look at the leaves on the trees that you pass. Try and collect lots of different ones and notice what makes them different. When you get them home, place them between sheets of kitchen roll and press them between heavy books for a few weeks then use them to make a picture or a greetings card or stick them in a notebook and build up a collection of different trees.

Emsworth Oyster Fisherman © Linda Newell

Standing • the test of time

During times of uncertainty, it can be reassuring to look to those things which offer a sense of permanence and security. And it's true to say that Chichester Harbour has certainly stood the test of time, with a rich and diverse history, from its origins in prehistoric times, to a bustling trade route in the Middle Ages and its significant role in the defence of Britain in WW2.

Looking out across Chichester Harbour today and you might see a timeless landscape and stunning stretch of water full of people enjoying leisure time and surrounded by open countryside dotted with picturesque villages. Yet multiple archaeological discoveries reveal tens of thousands of years of change – going back to the Prehistoric period (450,000 BC - AD 43) where the nearest sea could have been as much as 50km away!

An area rich in life

Far from the seals, birds and fish that call the Harbour home today, during the Prehistoric period the inhabitants would have been far more exotic by modern standards. Distant relatives of hyenas, lions and elephants would have roamed freely with bears and wolves; somewhat different to today's wildlife spots.

In more recent times, the coastal plain has supported human communities throughout history. Its location between the South Downs and the sea – however far away that may have been – means the area offered freshwater streams and rivers surrounded by an abundance of grazing – the ideal ingredients for supporting life. Sitting on rich sources of flint also offered the materials required to make the tools that enabled basic survival, making it an important part of the Neolithic economy.

A growing settlement

Permanent settlement around the Harbour is believed to have occurred during the Bronze Age with evidence on Hayling Island and in Bosham of round houses and domestic rubbish pits. As sea levels began to rise, the first signs of the harbour we might recognise today began emerging. Salt marsh developed, and the salt content of rivers and streams increased, giving rise to commercial activity with signs of salt works between Chidham and Thorney Island. Roman links in the upper reaches of the Harbour are well documented with Fishbourne Roman Palace, a cluster of other buildings near Warblington and the first examples of a road network connecting into Chichester and beyond. Some historians believe that the area was significant in the Roman invasion of Britain in 43AD. However, it was Bosham that, in medieval times, became centrally important; the Bayeaux Tapestry depicts King Harold II (1066) praying at Bosham Church which was built around AD 1050-1100.

The origins of a city

Chichester was established by the Romans and was significant in the Anglo-Saxon period and in the 10th century developed as a major settlement with Dell Quay acting as the principal landing point from the sea. At this point the modern-day geography establishes itself. On the eastern side of the Harbour, with Chichester as the focus, connections to the Harbour first by road and then later by canal, and a series of villages and permanent settlements, the area was not too dissimilar in layout to the present day – albeit supporting a far smaller populace. The Domesday survey of 1086 mentions many of the villages that exist today including Bosham, Thorney, Fishbourne, Birdham and Itchenor.

Fishbourne Roman Palace

Bosham Church © Paul Adams

Maps and early historical records chart the progress of the Harbour through to modern times, showing the growth of coastal and marine related businesses and the development of industries using the natural resources of the harbour (clay for bricks, an increasing number of windmills and salt making). Emsworth was granted the

right to hold a market in 1239 and by the Middle Ages had developed as a trading port importing wine from Europe and had a burgeoning ship building industry. Maps reveal the changing geography with Thorney Island earning its name in 1575; a Saxon Map shows it separated from the mainland.

Old Mill, Fishbourne © David Johnstone

Military significance

West Itchenor was the site of a prominent shipyard during the Napoleonic Wars from which a number of warships were launched. In more recent history, Thorney Island played a significant role in the Second World War with an airfield established in 1938 which became one of many acting as staging posts for sorties into Europe and as a first line of defence from enemy attacks. Another airfield was based at Dell Quay.

Two events from World War 2 are particularly connected with the Harbour. Outside the Harbour Office is a memorial to 32 men of 601 Royal Marines, based at Itchenor, who were killed returning after six weeks in Normandy as part of the D-Day landings. And at Northney Marina is a memorial for Operation Frankton; a Royal Marine commando raid involving a kayak squad, who trained in the Harbour before embarking on a mission to place mines on German warships. The brave story was recognised in the film The Cockleshell Heroes in 1955.

It's fair to say that few locations have such a varied and unique history; the CITiZAN and FIPAD projects and ongoing studies continue to unearth more evidence, giving us a far more detailed picture of the Harbour. Chichester Harbour has supported communities, employment and leisure over many years. Imagine how different the landscape might have looked a thousand years ago, and how it might change over another thousand years? One thing is certain; this very special area will continue to create its own rich history for many years to come – we are merely its custodians today.

Apuldram Plane © Chris Thomas

Chichester Harbour

Spotter's guide

Photo © Pete Hughes

Photo © Paul Adams

Large skipper

What: A small orange-brown butterfly, sometimes mistaken for a moth, and in truth there isn't much difference!

Where: Whizzing over the long grass, or often found in the scruffy unmown bits of a seawall.

When: Flying in June, July and August.

Did You Know? The caterpillars feed on the grass Cock's-foot, so if you want to help them out, leave your lawn uncut until late summer!

Sea lavender

What: A shin or knee high, mauve-flowered plant, very common in Chichester Harbour.

Where: Saltmarshes, usually around upper reaches of a mean tide.

When: A perennial, but little noticed until it flowers; mainly late July, through August and into September.

Did You Know? Not a lavender at all, it just shares the same colour, and in Chichester Harbour actually represented by two species: Common sea lavender and Lax-flowered sea lavender.

Nature has made a comeback this summer, keep an eye out for some of these regular sights in the area.

Photo © Pete Hughes

Roesel's bush-cricket

What: A noisy brown bush-cricket, about 20mm long, with a distinctive yellow U-shape on its flank. You may never have seen one, but you will have almost certainly heard one!

Where: In rank, tall grassland all around the Harbour.

When: Adults usually present in July, August and September.

Did You Know? The species has undergone a large range expansion across southern Britain in the last 20 years, thought to be due to climate change.

Common tern

What: A small, mostly white, incredibly agile seabird with a black cap, bright red bill, with long, pointed wings and a long, forked tail.

Where: Hovering, swooping and diving anywhere over the Harbour, including the marinas, coastal lagoons and ponds.

When: Arrives in April and most will have left by the end of September.

Did You Know? An evocative old name for the terns are 'sea swallows', recalling their tail-streamers, the speed and agility of the birds and the timing of their spring arrival.

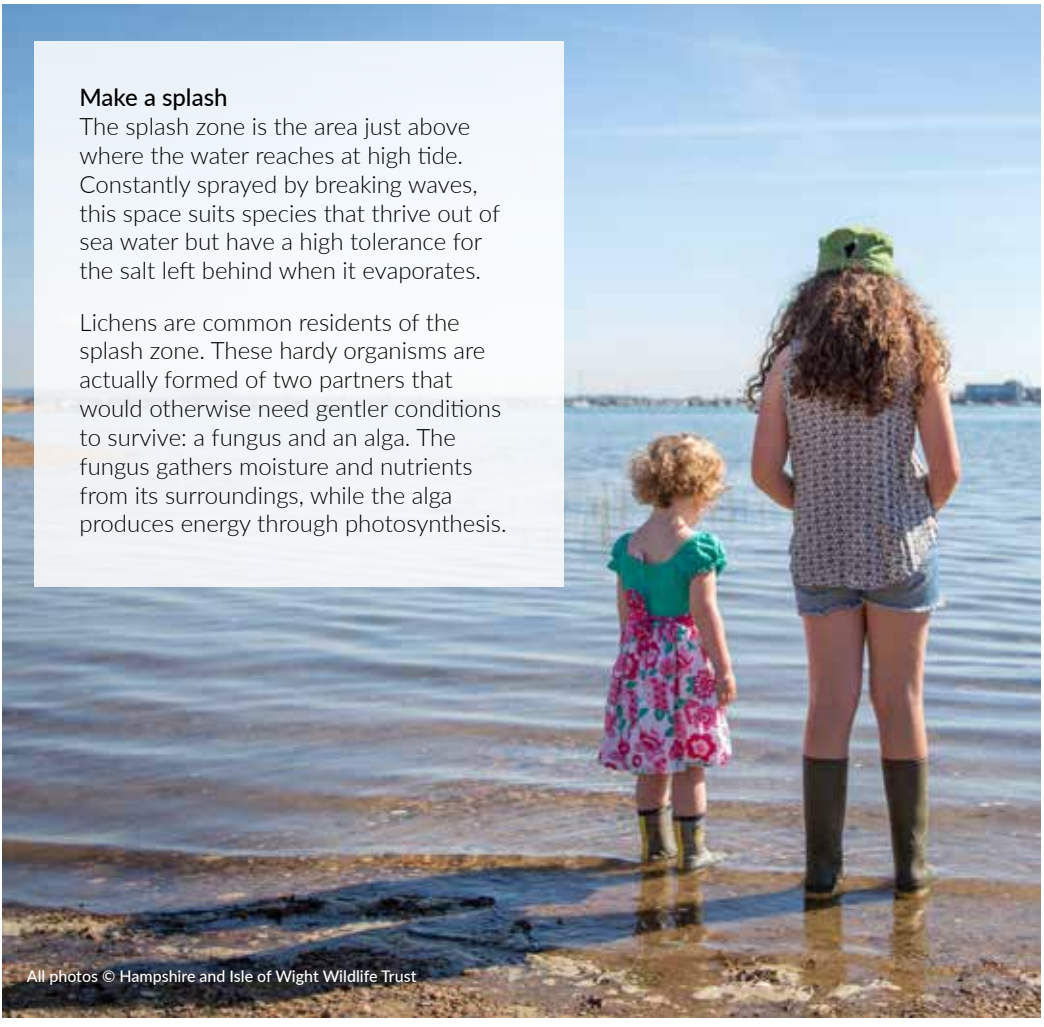
Friends & supporters

In the Zone

If you've been for a walk along our shores, you've probably noticed how varied they are. From sand to boulders, flat expanses to steep inclines, these spaces are as diverse as the wildlife that calls them home. Our friends at Secrets of the Solent, a project run by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, shine a spotlight on this vibrant marine environment:

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.

Intertidal zones are competitive worlds where conditions can be immensely tough, but for species with the right adaptations these watery 'Wild Wests' have much to offer.



Make a splash

The splash zone is the area just above where the water reaches at high tide. Constantly sprayed by breaking waves, this space suits species that thrive out of sea water but have a high tolerance for the salt left behind when it evaporates.

Lichens are common residents of the splash zone. These hardy organisms are actually formed of two partners that would otherwise need gentler conditions to survive: a fungus and an alga. The fungus gathers moisture and nutrients from its surroundings, while the alga produces energy through photosynthesis.

All photos © Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

High and dry

The upper shore is the area at the limit of high tide. It's exposed for most of the day, enjoying only short periods under water. Residents must be able to combat desiccation, heat, and plenty of sunlight, as well as collision with breaking waves when the tide is in.

Only a few specialised seaweeds can live this far up the shore. Channelled wrack can survive up to eight days out of water thanks to the eponymous channels along its fronds - in fact it dies if submerged for too long! Spiral wrack, though not quite as hardy, can survive losing 80% of its water content. As it dries, it curls its fronds into spirals to conserve precious moisture.

Best of both

The middle shore is a place of extremes, with residents having to be equally comfortable in and out of the water. They face desiccation when the tide is out, and buffeting by wave action when the tide is in, as well as long periods in dramatically different temperatures.

Animals with shells that can trap seawater are ideal candidates, as this ability can be used to both preserve moisture and maintain body temperature. The acorn barnacle clamps four hard plates over its opening, keeping them shut until the tide comes in.

Wet and wild

The lower shore is the last area to be uncovered by the tides. Only exposed for short periods, it's home to wildlife that can't stand a lot of air, heat, or direct sunlight.

The beadlet anemone uses special stinging cells called acrorhagi to deter predators and defend its territory; these bright blue beads are the source of its name. The fish known as a shanny, or common blenny, will also see off attackers and rivals - in this case with a bite from its strong, sharp teeth.

To learn more about our marine environment check out our project Secrets of the Solent: hiwwt.org.uk/SecretsoftheSolent

RNLI Update

Hayling Lifeboats with Portsmouth Lifeboat and the S&R Helicopter.

Stay Alert, Save Lives

With the lockdown rules being relaxed to enable sailors and swimmers to use the beaches and Chichester Harbour, the RNLI is calling on users to follow the Government guidelines.

Lockdown has been eased, but this presents the RNLI with a challenge. Although our volunteer lifeboat crews are fully operational, should they be needed, it is important that anyone visiting the coast understands the risk and takes the necessary steps to keep themselves safe. This will also help to reduce the demands placed on our lifeboat crews and other emergency services including HM Coastguard. In this way we can all work together to succeed in ensuring the coast is a safe place to visit.

Lifeboats

If you are planning a visit to the coast please follow the RNLI safety advice:

- Have a plan - check the weather forecast and tide times and read local signs.
- Ensure your boats/equipment are in tip top condition, and don't use inflatables or inflatable toys. The Coastguard Rescue teams have dealt with hundreds of incidents across the UK already this year.
- If you fall into the water unexpectedly, or struggle swimming, FLOAT TO LIVE. (Fight your instinct to thrash around - lean back, extend your arms and legs, and float).
- In any coastal emergency dial 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard.
- Please don't go if the weather and conditions pose too great a challenge.

"Enjoy being out but remember that we all want to stay safe".

A friendly word...

In a usual summer, the Friends would be enjoying an interesting program of events and a busy volunteer work party schedule. Unfortunately, the summer of 2020 has not turned out to be a usual one.

We had to cancel all our events until the end of August but hope to be able to pick things up in September. All the work parties are also currently suspended but again, we hope to get going in the autumn.

Hopefully our members have continued to enjoy being out and about in the Harbour during lockdown, especially since the restrictions have eased. We very much look forward to seeing everyone again once we are able to meet up more freely.

Photo © Paul Adams

Keep up to date with all of our news at www.friendsch.org

Make a difference

join the

Your subscription provides much needed funds for projects aimed at conserving and enhancing Chichester Harbour, improving accessiblity for all and providing educational opportunities.

Member benefits

- Opportunities for practical conservation work
- Enjoy exclusive members' talks and social events
- Receive a discount on selected Conservancy walks
- Regular newsletters

Join now - www.friendsch.org

Make a new home...

in **your** favourite destination

Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty offers the most idyllic setting for a mooring. We have vacancies available throughout the Harbour offering a cost effective way for you to enjoy being based in this special place.

Conservancy moorings

- Regular water taxi - Tender storage
- Toilets and showers (Itchenor)
- Maintenance piles - Fresh water - Pump out
- Locations at Itchenor, Dell Quay, Nutbourne and Emsworth
- Our friendly team on hand to assist you

Bosham Manor moorings

- Peaceful location with stunning views
- Quick access to the sailing area
- Ferry access from Bosham or Itchenor
- Beautiful historic Quay with full services
- Quaymaster customer support

All moorings are maintained by our team to the highest standard

For prices and locations visit
www.conservancy.co.uk

Contact – Anna Perkins, Moorings Officer
anna.perkins@conservancy.co.uk
or call 01243 512301

CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY