

**PAGHAM HARBOUR LNR
MANAGEMENT PLAN ISSUES CONSULTATION**

**TRANSLATING OUTCOMES INTO
POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

MANAGING CONFLICT
Activities in general

Background

Pressure on the Reserve is steadily mounting as visitor numbers increase through a rise in the local population and a growth in the popularity of the site.

The results of the public consultation show that although some people (predominately locals) view people to be as important as wildlife, 73% agreed that the Reserve should restrict all activity that might be harmful to wildlife.

Policy

Monitor the impacts of visitors against interest features and site designations.

Actions to help support this policy

Action details	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partners (P)
Provide evidence of population growth	Medium Year 1	WSCC (L)
Publish findings of Incident Book	High Year 1	PHLNR (L)
Increase monitoring of leisure activities (e.g. counters at car parks, hides etc)	Medium Year 2	WSCC (L)
Establish methodology for assessing the impacts of leisure activities	Medium Year 3	EN (L)
Undertake environmental impact assessment to establish 'carrying capacity' of the Reserve through the use of habitat and species indicators	Medium Year 4	EN (L) EA (P) DEFRA (P)

MANAGING CONFLICT

Bylaws

Background

The bylaws are out-dated and inadequate in fully protecting the Reserve. Certain activities have developed in recent years that are not specifically identified in the current bylaws and so the exact needs of the Reserve are not being addressed. The language and structure of the bylaws is complicated and exact meaning in many cases is unclear.

82% of respondents wanted to see a revision of the existing bylaws to better control or prohibit activities such as kite surfing, illegal bait digging and fishing, and dogs out of control.

Policy

Revise and modify the bylaws to better protect the Reserve's habitats and wildlife from disturbance. (Working Group in place)

Actions to support the above policy

Action detail	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Re-write bylaws for consultation and adoption (including permit system – see separate sheet)	High Year 1 & 2	WSCC (L) EN (P) DEFRA (P)
Provide new on-site information and summary bylaws / code of conduct across the Reserve	High Year 2	PHLNR (L)
Undertake / increase promotional activity	High Year 2	PHLNR/WSCC (L)

MANAGING CONFLICT

Bylaw Enforcement over Lower Beach Area

Background

The lower beach area is part of the Reserve/SSSI/SPA but has high recreational use and controlling activities is much harder as the public perception is that the beach is 'open space' that everyone has a right to enjoy as they wish. A practical, workable approach is needed.

The results of the public consultation were inconclusive with an almost even split between 'continuing to enforce all bylaws on the lower beach area' and 'relaxing enforcement while increasing education and awareness'.

Policy

Continue to enforce bylaws in a way that is consistent with long established informal recreational use.

Actions to support the above policy

Action detail	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partners (P)
Discretionary enforcement of bylaws (dogs allowed off lead if under control. Kite surfing to be prohibited through revised bylaws to prevent coastal disturbance and conflict with the general public.)	High Year 2 (New bylaws)	WSCC (L) ADC/CDC (P) Crown Estate (P)
Implement education / awareness raising programme through publicity and events	High Year 2	PHLNR (L) Marine Conservation Society (P)

MANAGING CONFLICT

Permit System

Background

A permit system was established 40 years ago to control long established activities – namely bait digging, angling and boating. Permits allowed a limited number of people undertake activities that would otherwise be in contravention of the bylaws. However, there are two main areas of concern over the current system.

1. The conditions of the permits themselves are unclear, generally inadequate and open to interpretation / abuse, and as such they do not fully protect the Reserve from disturbance and depletion.
2. Permit holders tend to renew their permits even though they may not use them. This is because there is a lengthy waiting list and a fear that once relinquished a permit will never be regained.

Main issues identified from the Issues Consultation

A balanced view emerged from the consultation exercise with most people seeing the permit system as a good way to regulate activities and an opportunity to involve the local community in protecting the Reserve. Most agreed that there is a need to tighten the conditions under which permit holders are allowed to operate.

General concerns

- The impact of bait digging, particularly illegal digging for commercial purposes, on inter-tidal habitats and the taking of under-sized Bass and illegal Bass fishing in general.
- The lack of baseline data on marine habitats and species, and on-going monitoring.
- Although boating is not motorised some forms can cause considerable disturbance to sensitive areas and much disquiet amongst the visiting public.

Policy

To develop a fairer, more efficient and stricter permit system that fully protects the marine habitats and species of the Reserve, and reflects the site's status as an SSSI, SPA and European Marine Site. (Working group in place)

Actions to support the above policy

Action details	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Tighten conditions and redraft permit documentation and maps accordingly	High Year 1	WSCC/PHLNR (L) EA (P)
Change all permits from bi-annual to annual and increase charges inline with other sites / organisations.	High Year 2	WSCC/PHLNR (L)
Introduce annual returns (quantity, weight, size, location) without which permits cannot be re-issued). The potential impact of these returns to be monitored and reviewed.	High Year 2	WSCC/PHLNR (L) Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee (P) DEFRA (P)
Quota system - 80% of permits to be allocated to local people.	Medium Year 3	PHLNR (L)
As a condition, permit holders should agree to become casual Wardens (as opposed to formally trained Voluntary Wardens) responsible for the safe monitoring and regulation of their activity.	High Year 2	PHLNR/WSCC (L)
Consideration to be given to introducing limited day tickets (which could be issued by fishing clubs, tackle shops and / or Selsey Help Point etc.) and half price tickets and permits for children under 16 and OAPs.	Low Year 4	PHLNR/WSCC (L) EA (P) Fishing Clubs (P)
Research into and monitor the impacts of fishing and bait digging activity on the Harbour's marine resources and habitats, and in relation to its status as a Bass Nursery and European Marine Site.	Medium Year 3	English Nature (L) Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee (P) EA (P) DEFRA (P)
Collect baseline data on the marine habitats and species and establish a monitoring programme for key sites around the Harbour.	Medium Year 3	As above
Review total number of annual permits allocated at anyone time for fishing and bait digging	Medium Year 4	PHLNR (L) EN, EA, SSFC (P) Research

Changes referred to above are significant and will be phased over a 2 year period.

Year 1: Pilot scheme

Year 2: Implementation or withdrawal

MANAGING CONFLICT

Wildfowling

Background

Since 1991 wildfowling has been restricted to the foreshore of the Reserve. The Pagham and West Sussex Wildfowling Association are now seeking to extend shooting into the Harbour itself. A working group has been set up to discuss the issue.

The public consultation shows that two-thirds of people cannot reconcile wildfowling taking place on a Nature Reserve and want to see a complete ban. One third want the status quo to be maintained (shooting restricted to the foreshore only) and only 8 individuals wanted to see wildfowling extended to the rest of the Reserve. There is some recognition of the contribution that wildfowling in general can make to conservation, but many feel that due to its size Pagham Harbour itself is unsuitable for wildfowling.

Provisional Policy

Manage the Harbour as a refuge upon which activities on the foreshore and elsewhere do not impact.

Action

In considering the outcome of the public consultation alone, the options are clearly to work towards a complete ban or to maintain the status quo.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Background

The Reserve is served by a comprehensive network of footpaths and permissive routes to all areas. There is a need as an LNR to encourage access while at the same time protecting habitats and wildlife from undue disturbance. From the Visitor Centre there is a circular nature trail designed for wheelchairs and the North Wall also provides easy access for wheelchair users. 2 out of 3 bird hides allow for wheelchair access. There are further opportunities for enhancing access for the less mobile including a coastal route south of the Harbour at Church Norton and boardwalks across the shingle from Pagham Spit car park.

The results of the public consultation show that 65% of respondents want to see only appropriate forms of access (primarily on foot) allowed and restricted to the least sensitive areas. Many see the need for exclusion zones. There is a perceived need for more access for the disabled and routes for cyclists although the latter is difficult to accommodate due to a lack of bridleways and potential conflict with other users. However on the other hand people do not want to see the character of the Reserve altered by man made walkways etc.

Policy

To promote understanding and enjoyment of the site through a range of access opportunities while at the same time protecting the most sensitive areas from disturbance.

Actions to support the above policy

Action details	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Provide exclusion zones where either seasonal or permanent where sensitive habitats or species require particular protection.	High On-going	PHLNR (L) EN (P)
Use biological data to develop a site sensitivity index.	Medium Year 3 / on-going	PHLNR (L) EN (P)
Provide information to describe/explain sensitivity of different areas.	Medium Year 3	PHLNR (L) EN (P) EA (P)
Where possible increase access opportunities to all non-sensitive areas, including 'lay-bys' and interpretation for wheelchair users.	Medium Year 4	PHLNR (L) EA (P)

TRANSPORT

Background

To date parking facilities and entry to the Reserve have generally been free of charge but could potentially ease congestion problems, discourage misuse of the site and at the same time generate income.

There is also the possibility of providing special incentives or rewards for leaving the car at home, bearing in mind there is a frequent and reliable bus service between Chichester (railway station) and Selsey.

From the public consultation 52% did not support introducing car parking charges. A third agreed providing charges are reasonable/nominal, the income is re-invested in the Reserve (particularly access) and a day rate is applied at weekends/bank holidays only. There was support for cycle racks despite the busy and dangerous nature of the B2145 making access to the Reserve by road undesirable.

Policies

To implement car parking charges over time where practicable - otherwise income to be generated through donations system.

To consider incentives for those not arriving by car once charges are in place.

Actions to support the above policy

Action detail	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Re-introduce charges at Pagham Spit car park with support of Residents Association (Pay & Display operated here for one season during 2002). Particularly important here to prevent misuse of the Reserve.	High Dependant on securing contractor or barrier system maintained by staff, otherwise status quo.	PHLNR / WSCC (L)
Introduce charges at Visitor Centre car park	Medium Year 4	PHLNR / WSCC (L)
Introduce a donations system at Church Norton car park in co-operation with the Church. (Charging not possible due to shared parking for the Reserve and St. Wilfred's Chapel.)	Low Year 4	PHLNR / WSCC (L) Church (P)
Install cycle racks at the Visitor Centre	Low Rear 4	WSCC (L) Sustrans (P)

VISITOR SERVICES AND EDUCATION Facilities

Background

Education is the key to successful visitor services and management. However the visitor facilities at Sidlesham have the potential to be greatly improved, including an all encompassing new Coastal Centre embracing green technology. A new Centre and its surrounds should attract and absorb visitors without significantly increasing visitor pressure on the wider Reserve.

From the public consultation 43% wanted facilities enhanced to deliver more educational activities, without increasing the overall number of visitors. Those wanting to promote the Harbour as a green tourism attraction or to maintain/promote existing facilities as they are were in the minority.

Policy

Seek to develop a new Coastal Centre and expand educational activities without promoting the Reserve as a tourist attraction or 'visit'.

Actions to support the above policy

Action detail	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Target under-represented groups through publicity, networking and outreach work.	Medium Year 2 / On-going	PHLNR (L)
Promote emphasis on education not leisure, reflecting importance of the site as a living classroom.	Medium Year 2 / On-going	PHLNR (P)

VISITOR SERVICES AND EDUCATION Information

Background

There are generic interpretation boards at strategic access points around the Reserve. These are supplemented by a range of signage, primarily referring to bylaws, and a number of seasonal and temporary signs relating to habitat and species protection. This information could be improved and extended to more areas of the Reserve. At the same time information could be rationalised to avoid clutter and standardised in design to become representative of Pagham Harbour. Discrete pictorial symbols are favoured over larger wordy signage where possible.

From the public consultation 75% felt the information available could be improved – this related more to current projects and studies rather than standard information and identification charts/posters in the hides. There was also a demand for different formats – large print and audio in the Visitor Centre. In terms of the number of information boards and standardisation of signs the feedback was inconclusive perhaps demonstrating that this is a low priority in the public's eye.

Policy

Provide a comprehensive and standardised suite of on-site and Visitor Centre information and signage accessible to a wide range of visitors.

Actions to support the above policy

Action details	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Develop an information and signage programme that allows for local site variability within an overall standardised design / house style	Medium Year 2	PHLNR
Extend the number of main interpretation boards containing key information to all areas and access points in new lectern format (as per Church Norton Castle).	Medium Year 3	PHLNR
Use recycled plastic to replace worn routed signage and pictorial images and disks to replace existing bylaw signs.	Medium Year 2	PHLNR
Provide interpretation and identification reference material in all hides.	Medium Year 3	PHLNR

VISITOR SERVICES AND EDUCATION

Promoting Pagham Harbour LNR's Value

Background

Pagham Harbour is worth approximately £125,000 p.a. to the local community and businesses, and more of the Reserve's resources could be devoted to outreach work.

From the consultation 61% of people wanted us to concentrate our limited resources on protecting the Reserve from within. The remaining 39% wanted to see all existing staff involved in community projects.

Policy

Support and develop a programme of outreach work if resources become available, i.e. additional Outreach Officer post.

Action	Priority	Lead
Explore external funding opportunities - e.g. HLF	Medium	WSCC

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Background

There is a desire to increase participation by the voluntary sector in the management of the Reserve. At present there is little support other than through the Friends stewarding the Visitor Centre and funding projects.

The consultation showed good support for setting up a Voluntary Warden Scheme and a Trainee Warden / local student placement programme. However there was little enthusiasm for empowering the Friends to do more (perhaps they feel that they already do enough or people are reluctant to increase the influence of what they see as a pressure group) or for the creation of a web site.

Policy

Seek resources to increase opportunities for practical participation by local communities in all aspects of Reserve management, from the delivery of environmental education to practical conservation tasks.

Actions to support the above policy

Action detail	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Develop 'contracts' and handbook for employing local Voluntary Wardens under a pilot scheme	High Year 2	PHLNR / Bylaw Enforcement Officer (L) FOPH (P)
Explore links with agricultural colleges and universities to provide Trainee Warden / student work placements.	Medium Year 3/ On-going	PHLNR (L) Colleges (P) CMA (P)
Source funding for students through links with NVQ programme.	Medium On-going	PHLNR (L) SWT - Trainee Graduate Scheme (P) BTCV (P)
Facilitate skills / competency assessments to NVQ level	Low Dependant on above	PHLNR (L) BTCV (P)
Develop existing work placement provision	Low On-going	PHLNR (L) Local schools (P)
Target areas where help is needed from FOPH (education, wildlife recording etc).	Medium Year 2	PHLNR (L) FOPH (P)
Volunteers to help develop Pagham pages within WSCC web site (updated by staff)	Low Year 3	FOPH (L)

GROWTH OF NATURE RESERVE

Increasing land under management

Background

The full value and potential of the Reserve can only be realised if it becomes the focus for wider environmental stewardship of the Coastal Plain, rather than a wildlife oasis. To this end the Reserve must work with neighbouring landowners, land managers and agencies to increase biodiversity and good practice beyond its current boundaries.

From the public consultation there was overwhelming support for seeking ways to incorporate new areas into the Reserve and to be involved in wider conservation projects, as the way forward to secure greater protection for wildlife. Local concern that this may lead to restrictions rather than benefits is largely unfounded and should be addressed (this primarily relates to bylaws covering Rights of Way within the Reserve). Additional resources may also be required in acquiring and managing new land.

Policy

Seek to expand the Reserve landwards through advice to land managers, management agreements and land acquisition.

Actions to support the above policy

Action details	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Establish criteria for incorporating new areas of land into the Reserve – priority checklist.	High Year 2	PHLNR (L) EN (P)
Identify and prioritise such land (with potential for habitat creation or enhancement)	High Year 2	PHLNR (L) EN (P)
Approach landowners re securing suitable land for management in sympathy with or as part of Reserve.	High On-going	PHLNR (L) FWAG (P)
Seek external funding for the purchase of new land.	Medium On-going	WSCC (L) EA (P) SWT (P)
Promote funding for/ benefits of new agri-environment schemes to local landowners.	Medium On-going	PHLNR (L) DEFRA (P)

GROWTH OF NATURE RESERVE

Extending the Site Seawards

Background

Based on our increased knowledge of the marine environment and potential offshore threats to the Harbour as a Bass Nursery and European Marine Site, we would like to consider the establishment of a Voluntary Marine Nature Reserve extending seaward from the lower foreshore – the current limit of the LNR. This would depend on the practicability of such a proposal, and recognition and co-operation from all stakeholders.

The public consultation once again showed that over three-quarters of respondents supported establishing a Marine Reserve as the best way to secure environmental protection, if the waters off Pagham Harbour are shown to be of particular conservation value. There was some concern over resources, the imposition of restrictions and the usefulness of a *voluntary* Reserve.

Policy

Investigate the benefits and feasibility of creating a Voluntary Marine Reserve adjoining the LNR.

Actions to support the above policy

Action detail	Priority & Timing	Lead (L) Partner (P)
Baseline survey and monitoring of offshore features to establish marine conservation status – assessment report.	Medium Year 4	EN (L) Marine Conservation Society (P) Southampton Uni. (P)
Establish the significance and requirements of the Harbour as a Bass Nursery Site.	Medium Year 3	Sussex Sea Fisheries Committee (L) DEFRA (P)
Identify a programme of research as necessary	Medium Year 4	EN / MCS (L) Southampton Uni (P) CDC / ADC (P) Crown Estate (P)
Benchmark with other organisations / sites re the operation and effectiveness of Voluntary Marine Reserves (marine spatial planning).		PHLNR (L) MCS (P) Crown Estate (L)