

CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

4th November 2004

EAST HEAD – EROSION AT THE HINGE

REPORT BY MANAGER & HARBOUR MASTER

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the time of writing, there is about one metre of sand left in front of the rock berm at the Hinge, East Head and a breakthrough is imminent. Once this occurs, the rock berm, installed by the Conservancy in 2000, will be performing its design function of preventing a tidal channel forming through the Hinge. To remind members of the background and reasons for installing the berm, a copy of the Conservancy's statement released earlier this year is attached at Annex A.
- 1.2 Members were advised at the last meeting of the Conservancy that we were working with English Nature, Chichester District Council and the National Trust to develop a set of conditions for the renewal of the planning consent for the rocks which expires on 30 November 2004. We were surprised and disappointed to learn at a meeting held on 27th September that, owing to the position being taken by English Nature, this would not be possible. Arising from that meeting the letter at Annex B, which members should read, expressing the Conservancy's concerns, was sent.
- 1.3 At the same time, and in order to overcome objections raised by English Nature, we sent proposals for a programme of condition monitoring of the impact of the berm on East Head. These were aimed at ensuring the assessment of any environmental damage to the site caused by the berm was made on a measured scientific basis and not on an English Nature hypothesis. The responses to this correspondence were received on the day before these papers were despatched (a letter and an email). They are attached at Annex C but at the time of writing it has not been possible to subject them to any in-depth analysis. However, English Nature appear to be recommending a pause whilst other options for safeguarding our interests are examined.
- 1.4 Notwithstanding English Nature's objections, if a way forward acceptable to the Conservancy cannot be found, a planning application will have to be submitted to retain the rocks.
- 1.5 This report outlines the way that the Conservancy's planning application to retain the rocks at East Head may be actioned by Chichester District Council (CDC) and the possible consequences of that action. The report also highlights the importance in the longer term of the review that is currently being undertaken of the Coastal Defence Strategy (PAGHEAD) for this sector of coastline.

