

*Draft press release*

## **CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY INSTALLS NEW TERN RAFTS**

*Project will support tern breeding after population decline*



*Chichester Harbour Conservancy staff and volunteers launching a raft at Thorney Deeps, West Sussex*

Chichester Harbour Conservancy has installed a new tern raft in Thorney Deeps to help support the future breeding of the birds. Although historically Chichester Harbour has offered good tern breeding sites, in recent years the tern population has suffered following tidal flooding, human disturbance and predators such as foxes – hence the need for the rafts.

Thorney Deeps, a large semi-tidal lagoon that separates Thorney Island from the ‘mainland’, is ideally placed for breeding terns. The raft has been placed on relatively sheltered waters, and will provide easy access to the feeding sites around both the harbours.

Three species of tern breed in Chichester and Langstone Harbour; the Common Tern, Sandwich Tern and Little Tern. All three species have fared poorly in Chichester Harbour in recent years, and in particular Little Terns have experienced poor breeding success.

Peter Hughes, Ecologist at Chichester Harbour Conservancy, said, “We hope that the terns will nest successfully on rafts in Chichester Harbour in the coming years, giving a major boost to the tern population in this special area. The rafts should also offer an excellent opportunity for the local community to see these fabulous birds up close.”

The rafts, which were funded by Sussex Ornithological Society, were granted MoD permission and consent from Natural England. Thorney Deeps is owned by the MoD, designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is part of the Chichester and Langstone Harbour Special Protection Area.

-ENDS-

**For further information or high res images please contact Maria Court, Chichester Harbour Conservancy**  
[Maria@conservancy.co.uk](mailto:Maria@conservancy.co.uk) | 01243 512301

### **Notes to editors**

#### **Chichester Harbour Conservancy**

Chichester Harbour Conservancy is the statutory authority for Chichester Harbour and, as a team, manages the Harbour and surrounding areas. The Conservancy focuses on recreation and leisure, conservation and landscape protection, making it a destination for visitors to enjoy. It also runs an annual programme of events and an Education Service for families and schools.

#### **National and International Designations**

Chichester Harbour is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Conservancy and the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NAAONB) work closely with the Government, landowners, environment organisations and local communities to ensure the Harbour is conserved and cared for. The intertidal areas across Chichester Harbour are also designated at national (Site of Special Scientific Interest), European (SPA, SAC) and international level (Ramsar site) in order to protect the diverse and fragile range of habitats.

[www.conservancy.co.uk](http://www.conservancy.co.uk)