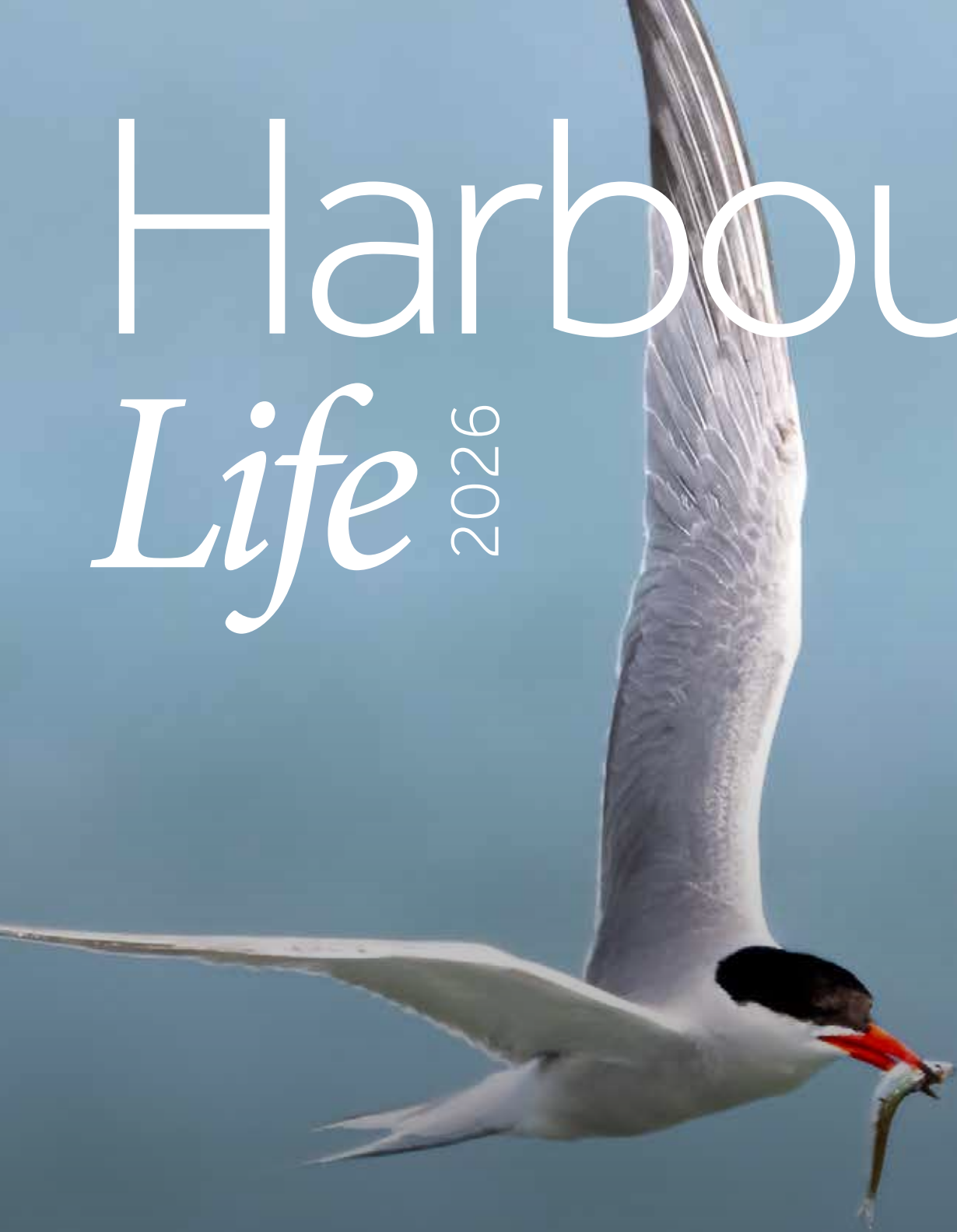


Harbour *Life* 2026



www.conservancy.co.uk



CHICHESTER
HARBOUR
CONSERVANCY



Welcome to Chichester Harbour

We have recently published our latest 5-year Management Plan, outlining how we will work toward the overall vision for 2050 set out in the Chichester Harbour Conservancy strategy.

The plan comes at a critical time, given the biodiversity crisis, climate change and development pressure impacting our precious harbour habitats and water quality. There will be no quick turnarounds here; several 5-year plans supported by all our efforts will be necessary if we are to achieve our prime goal of reversing the ecological decline by 2050.

The 28.2 square miles of Chichester Harbour is a complex environment; a delicate balance of interests from internationally important habitats and species to tourism, leisure and a long and proud history of sailing, boating and marine businesses. They all require a healthy and beautiful harbour to thrive. As our Chairman Pieter Montyn said:

“Chichester Harbour has always been a place where people come to relax, reflect and enjoy the surroundings. Our efforts have one overall purpose – to try and keep it that way. No matter whether you sail, boat, walk, live, run a business, visit or otherwise.”

We will continue to enhance the facilities for those that use the water and landscape for recreation. The opening of the new jetty at Itchenor has been a resounding success, attracting high numbers of boating visitors and locals to step ashore in safety and enjoy all the harbour has to offer. A flagship element of Chichester Harbour Conservancy, our Education Team, will



host more than 9,000 young people for educational visits this year, supported by a team of volunteers. The High Sheriff of West Sussex, Dr. Timothy Fooks, praised the inspirational work of the team during his visit, describing the centre as “a fabulous resource and a community jewel in the crown of both Hampshire and West Sussex.”

I hope this edition of Harbour Life gives you a flavour of what makes Chichester Harbour so special and encourages you to make time to get out and explore it for yourself in 2026.

Learn more about our Management Plan here:
www.conservancy.co.uk/managementplan

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Find out about what's happening in the harbour by signing up to our e-newsletter at www.conservancy.co.uk. Contact Chichester Harbour Conservancy at info@conservancy.co.uk or **01243 512301**.

If you would like to advertise in future publications, please contact info@conservancy.co.uk.

Editor: Kate L'Amie
Cover image: Paul Adams - Harbour Photography. With thanks to all those who have contributed their stunning photographs with particular mention to Brian Bracher, Paul Adams, David Dobrijevic, Joan Risley, Shirley Rushmer, John Evans, Martin Davies, Alison Mayor and Peter Hickson Photography.



A season with the Marsh Harriers

Early morning and across a reedbed the dawn light catches on the reeds as they swish softly in the breeze. In nearby Emsworth people start to stir, make tea, prepare for the day ahead. But here, on a path beside the reeds, stands an early riser. In this moment of perfect calm, he scans the horizon, tripod and camera at his side.

Then out of the reedbed emerges a bird. Large and brown-grey, wide wings beat lazily as it glides over the reed tops, in search of prey. This is a male Marsh Harrier. Down below, on a nest hidden in the depths of the *phragmites* sits the female. She has been there for days, brooding eggs which will take over a month to hatch. She will barely leave, relying on her partner to bring food.

Some time later the male returns, wings upturned in a distinctive "V". Hanging from his talons a waterbird; is it a coot or moorhen? Then, something extraordinary happens...

From the depths of the reedbed the female emerges, speeding towards him. She gets closer, her body tips back, wings outstretched and in an impossible moment he drops the prey straight into her upstretched talons.

John Evans is ready; with split second precision he clicks the shutter to perfectly capture this moment of avian wonder, the "food pass". This shot is no accident; John has been watching for months. From cold December mornings to warm summer evenings, he has waited with patience, observing the details of the Marsh Harriers' lives together.

He has seen "sky dancing", a courtship display of aerobatics where the pair swoop and dive through the air, showing off their agility, fitness and teamwork. In early spring he watched as the pair brought nest material into the reed bed, and noticed the male was building more than one nest. This building of "false nests" by the male distracts predators and provides extra protection to the real nest. ▶



Marsh Harrier fact file

Diet: Waterbirds, small mammals, frogs.

Wingspan: 1.2m.

Historical decline: Persecuted and with decades of agricultural pesticide use; in 1971 there was just one breeding pair left in Britain.

Recovery: Since the 1970s their numbers have increased, and 2023 marked the first year that a pair successfully bred at Chichester Harbour.



John has even seen the rarest of moments, when a food pass doesn't go to plan, the apparent fury on the face of the female as the prey drops to the ground.

John is no stranger to the patience required to take a great image. After exploring the world of photography as a young lad, he picked up a camera again several years ago. With a passion for capturing wildlife on camera, he has travelled far and wide to photograph Grizzly Bears in Canada and Golden Eagles in Finland. The Covid lockdowns forced John to look closer to home for inspiration. Inspiration he has found in abundance, from Barn Owls quartering a harbourside field each night in search of prey, to a young male fox in Warblington Cemetery.

Back to the reedbed... It's now early July. After weeks of food passes and feeding, John knows the chicks are due to fledge any day now. With deep brown plumage and gingery heads, the chicks take their first tentative flights. Clumsy at first, John's images capture the comedy of their misjudged landings.

Through months of regular observation, John has followed this family journey. He has taken some incredible photos along the way, planning with care the light conditions, timings and camera settings. He's met many people down by the reedbed, regular walkers and runners, many of whom have

stopped to ask about the birds he photographs. The result is a beautiful record of a season of Marsh Harriers, once almost extinct across Britain, now breeding once more within Chichester Harbour.



Thanks to John Evans for sharing his experiences and images for this article.

New films spotlight environmental issues in Chichester Harbour



Grab your popcorn and set aside a few minutes for a film viewing. Chichester Harbour Conservancy has produced three exciting animations explaining the issues affecting our precious coastal habitats and what we can do to protect them. Narrated by "Terri the Tern", the short films take you over, under and alongside the waters of Chichester Harbour, providing a unique view into the threats facing our wildlife.

Each animation is just a couple of minutes long. Watch by scanning the QR codes or visit www.conservancy.co.uk/nature-recovery-animations

Nature in Chichester Harbour is under threat. Native oyster reefs have disappeared, saltmarshes and coastal bird colonies are declining and seagrass meadows are threatened. Find out why it matters, and what's being done to protect and restore nature here in Chichester Harbour.

We know that sea level rise is worrying for people who live and work by the coast and it's having an impact on nature too. This film explains how habitats like saltmarsh are being "squeezed out", and what we can do to protect them.

Water quality is a serious issue within Chichester Harbour and waterways across the UK. This short film explains the different pollution sources impacting our water quality, as well as some of the actions we can take to improve it.

Common Tern Fact File

Terri is a Common Tern, a seabird that breeds here in Chichester Harbour. Each year you can watch these birds live-streamed from our tern rafts on Tern TV. Here are some tern facts:



They typically live for 12 years, but the oldest bird recorded was over 33 years old!



They are monogamous and pair for life, although they don't spend the non-breeding season together. Instead they re-unite at their breeding ground each summer.



They lay between one and three eggs which are incredibly well camouflaged against shingle.



In the winter they fly thousands of miles south to the west coast of Africa.



Time to Fly

Moving gracefully, flying above the water, wingfoilers have become a regular sight in the harbour over recent years.

Wingfoiling is an exciting water sport which is fast growing in popularity; the flat water and light winds in Chichester Harbour make it an ideal place to learn. And for those keen to try the sport, Hayling Island Sailing Club and Chichester Yacht Club offer excellent conditions.

Wingfoiling is one of the easier wind sports to begin with. Most first timers can get up and ride on the board after a few hours of tuition, although like all sports it takes time to become proficient.

Hayling Island Sailing Club has been supporting the "She Flies" movement which brings women into extreme sports. Rachel Dobrijevic, founder of the local She Flies 'flock' shares her experience...

"It all started with an idea back in 2021. Just three of us were wing foiling from Hayling Island Sailing Club at that time. I'd often see women supporting their husbands and families sailing while not having any fun on the water themselves, and I felt a call to action."

That call coincided with Rachel meeting Josie West, creator of a global initiative empowering women and improving participation in extreme sports. Rachel was happy to take on the role of She Flies South Coast Wingfoiling Ambassador.

That decision has led to great results; Rachel's initial small group of three has grown to over 50 women wingfoilers in just two years!



"I've organised women-only wingfoil days and events, kindly hosted by Hayling Island Sailing Club. We've welcomed Duotone with demo kit for the women to try, and Josie has joined many of our sessions, offering her unique female-focused coaching to help us all build confidence and passion for the sport."

At one event, we had 62 women wingers attend - the largest gathering to date. You may arrive alone, but you always leave with a friend. It's a wonderful community of

women supporting and inspiring each other on the water."

The reason for this success is simple: Chichester Harbour offers the ultimate playground. Its open, flat water makes learning much easier than on the seafront. There are many excellent spots, from Hayling Island and Emsworth to Chichester Marina all offering sheltered, beginner-friendly conditions at high tide.

"Having wingfoiled in many places and even competed at UK Windsurfing Association events (often following my son, a three-time national wingfoil champion, around the UK and abroad), I can honestly say I've yet to find a better location for wingfoiling!"

And Rachel's advice to anyone thinking about giving it a go - do it!

"It's not as hard as you might think. We have women and girls from age 12 to 60+ enjoying the sport in Chichester Harbour and more She Flies spots continue to pop up around the county. Wingfoiling is only growing in popularity so why not make it your goal for 2026 to fly?"

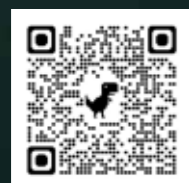
With thanks to Rachel Dobrijevic and SHE FLIES www.she-flies.com



What lies beneath?

Stand on the shoreline and take in the vast views across the harbour waters... The surface shimmers, changing from blue to green to grey. You may get a little closer to the water by sail or boat or even immerse yourself for a swim. But have you ever wondered, what lies beneath?

We hear tales of seahorses, seals, sea bass and seagrass meadows, but very few get a glimpse of life below our harbour waves. Last year, divers from the citizen science Project Portunus opened a window into this watery world. Here is a brief peek into what they found...



"As divers, we're privileged to explore a hidden world that few ever witness, a realm of breath-taking beauty and extraordinary biodiversity. Beneath the surface, marine life has established a vibrant, intricate ecosystem. Yet this environment is also fragile and increasingly under threat. By sharing our experiences, we hope to deepen understanding and inspire action to protect the heart of our harbours."

Alison Mayor, Project Portunus

Small Spotted Catshark (*Scyliorhinus canicula*)

This is a small-spotted cat shark (or lesser-spotted dogfish). Part of the shark family and despite the name humans are safe from these predators. They prey on fish, crabs and molluscs and at up to 1m long they're small compared to some other shark species.



Spiny Seahorse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*)

Seahorses are unique in the animal world; the male carries the young through pregnancy! Seagrass meadows like the ones in Chichester Harbour are critical for seahorses; despite living in shallow coastal waters, they're not that great at swimming. Instead, they use their tails to cling to seaweed and seagrass, gaining shelter from these habitats.



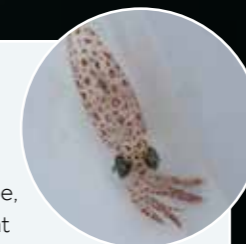
Mermaids Glove (*Haliconia oculata*)

Not actually a glove, or even a plant but a species of sea sponge, which are multi-cellular marine invertebrate animals. They are hermaphrodites and brood embryos within the sponge before free floating larvae develop and are released into the sea. These sponges feed on small particles in the seawater, sucking water into a network of canals in their body where food particles are captured.



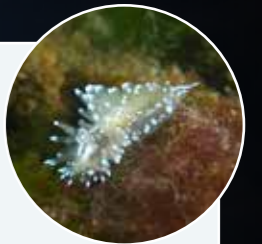
Squid Games (*Loligo vulgaris*)

Astonishingly beautiful, this European (or common) squid turned up on a fish survey. This one is a juvenile, but adults grow up to 40cm long and can be found at depths of 500m. They feed on small fish, crabs and shrimp, catching their prey with two long tentacles.



Crystal Sea Slug (*Janolus cristatus*)

Forget the scourge of the avid gardener, the crystal sea slug is astonishingly beautiful. Also known as nudibranchs (meaning naked lung), the gills of a sea slug are on the outside of their bodies. These tentacle-like projections come in an astonishing rainbow of colours depending on the species. Crystal sea slugs reach up to 7.5cm and live in shallow, sheltered waters.



Leaches Spider Crab (*Inachus palangium*)

Often found at the base of a snakelocks anemone, this small crab gains protection from predators by sheltering below the anemone's tentacles. They feed on particles of food dropped by the anemones! This crab can be hard to spot because they are often encrusted by other marine life and algae, like the legs of this one.



What is Project Portunus?



Project Portunus is a citizen-science diving project, launched in 2024 by local diver, Alison Mayor. With permissions from Chichester Harbour Conservancy and Langstone Harbour Board, the dives have involved 25 divers from local clubs, collecting high quality data about the underwater species and habitats.

After a successful first phase of dives, the team plan to continue diving on key sites in both harbours, building up more data and a picture of how marine life may be surviving or thriving.

With thanks to Martin Davies - InDepth Photography and Alison Mayor for sharing images and their dive discoveries.

Farming together, farming for nature

How farming cluster groups can unlock
landscape-scale nature recovery

It all started with the Grey Partridge...

So says Andrew Gentle of Hale Farm when asked about the formation of the Manhood Farming Cluster. They're an iconic bird for farmers, a classic farmland breeding species. Forget pear trees, Grey Partridges breed and feed on the ground in open farmland. More than just a bird, they're an indicator of a healthy farm ecosystem, including the availability of insects, seeds and other wildlife food sources. But their numbers have plummeted by 92% since the 1960s, linked with intensive farming methods and increased predation.

A fourth-generation arable farmer, Andrew is passionate about his role as custodian of the land; he missed the grating scratch-like call of the Grey Partridge over his fields. Then he got a call from fellow local farmer, Tom Monnington. It was time for action. During the Covid lockdown they set up an online call with more farmers on the Manhood Peninsula; they all felt the same way and a farming cluster group was born.

Now there are nine farmers in the Manhood Farmers' Cluster Group, all committed to growing sustainable food for the nation, whilst working with wildlife. The facilitation costs have been funded through Chichester Harbour's Farming in Protected Landscape (FiPL) Programme offering grants to farmers and landowners for environmental projects.

But how to help the Grey Partridge? The group took visits to successful recovery projects at Peppering Farm near Arundel and the Rotherfield Estate in Hampshire. They met specialists from the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and world-leading expert Francis Buner. They learned how it is possible to take targeted nature recovery action across the landscape, whilst still producing high-quality food to feed the nation.



With FiPL grants and other DEFRA schemes, they set out to increase the area of suitable habitat for the Grey Partridge. Nearly 50 hectares of scientifically designed seed mix was planted in strips across the cluster farms. These have grown to provide year-round food for the partridges: flowers to attract the insects partridge chicks feed on and seed-rich plants to feed adult partridges through the winter. The strips also provide essential cover for them to rear their broods and protection from predators. An astonishingly beautiful mix of wildflowers and other plants, they support a wealth of biodiversity from insects to other farmland birds and mammals.

Andrew has also constructed a "beetle bank". A long, raised mound, planted with native wildflowers and long grasses, surrounded by strips of the partridge-friendly seed mix. Sitting squarely in the middle of an arable field, the raised ground will provide an ideal nesting area for Grey Partridges. The arable crops surrounding the bank provide added protection against predators.



Watch the farmer films!

Scan this QR code to visit the Manhood Farmers' Cluster Group website and find out more.



It's not just the Grey Partridge, the cluster group farmers are committed to connecting wildlife habitats and improving water quality across the peninsula. Hedgerows are a key component; as well as planting kilometres of new hedgerow habitat, the farmers are restoring existing sections using traditional skills like hedge laying.

Andrew points out the ditches running through land he manages near West Wittering, hundreds of metres flowing into the harbour. These have been buffered by 6-8m strips of flower-rich, species diverse planting, wildlife corridors that will prevent fertiliser run-off and leaching into harbour waters.

These targeted actions are paying off and farmers share their bird sightings on the cluster WhatsApp group. Linnets, Meadow Pipits, Yellowhammers, Skylarks, finches, Whitethroat and more are reaping the benefits of this nature-friendly approach to farming.

So are the farmers. In a high-stress way of life the group provides a shared sense of achievement, communication and collaboration. Andrew describes how after a stressful day, spending time in the wildlife margins absorbing the sights, sounds and smells of nature offers a welcome break.

"I think the biggest delight of these margins for the group is the amount of other bird and insect life we are seeing in them. They are alive with insects and a wide variety of wild bees."

But what of the Grey Partridges? With critically low numbers across the UK, they could have taken decades to return here, so Andrew introduced a handful of birds to his land. He heard them call but rarely got a glimpse amongst the crops and field margins. Then during harvest last summer, the proof was running amongst the stubble. Seventeen chicks from two broods; the targeted nature recovery steps had worked and Grey Partridges were once more breeding on the Manhood Peninsula.

It's clear that Andrew and the farmers of the Manhood Farmers' Cluster Group are deeply committed to the land they farm, the food they produce and the wildlife they support. They are proving that it is possible to work together to grow sustainable food at the same time as enhancing wildlife habitat and supporting nature recovery across the landscape.

The LAPWING Initiative, farming with nature on the Manhood Peninsula

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| Habitats | Visitor Amenities |
| National Landscape Boundary | Boat Trips |
| Saltmarsh | Jetty |
| Mud Flats | Parking |
| Woodland | Food & Drink |
| Sand Dunes | Toilets |
| Urban Areas | Launch Point |
| No access, nature reserve | Watersports Hire |
| Transport | Crabbing |
| Roads | Bird Watching |
| Railway Line & Stations | Beach |
| Bus Route 700 | Rail Link |
| Bus Route 52 / 53 | Bus Link |
| Footpaths | Shops |
| Salterns Way Cycle Path | Harbour Office |
| Permissive Path | Itchenor Ferry (route to Bosham Hoe) |
| Itchenor-Bosham Ferry | View Point |
| Marinas | Chichester Harbour Education Centre |



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Nature recovery updates

Nature recovery is at the heart of what we do here in Chichester Harbour. We have four nature recovery focus areas within our nature recovery partnership – saltmarsh, seagrass, coastal birds and water quality. Here's a brief update from each area:

Seagrass

Seagrass meadows are a haven of biodiversity, providing sheltered homes for seahorses, crabs, anemones, molluscs, young fish and more. Seagrass also stores carbon and stabilises sediment and at low tide provides a feeding ground for over-wintering birds like Brent Geese and Wigeon.

Through our Solent Seascape Project work, there's been a full survey of Chichester Harbour's intertidal seagrass. We now have a clear picture of exactly where the intertidal seagrass is.

Our focus now is developing plans to protect the seagrass meadows. Boaters and sailors can play a part following RYA best practice guidance when anchoring. There is also a new Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority byelaw relating to hand gathering in the intertidal area protecting seagrass.



Saltmarsh

A real habitat hero, the green and grassy saltmarshes fringing Chichester Harbour are a haven for biodiversity, providing a natural coastal defence, filtering water and even sequestering more carbon than tropical rainforests!

Creating more space for saltmarsh is a priority for restoring this vital habitat. Plans have been drawn up for the Fishbourne Footpath to Nature Recovery at Apuldram Meadows for a new footpath and saltmarsh creation project. Work is underway identifying other opportunities around the harbour to ensure the coastline remains resilient to climate change whilst creating space for nature and people.

Monitoring of the saltmarsh restoration trial site at Itchenor continues, where dredged sediment was used to raise the elevation of an area of foreshore in 2023. Glasswort (samphire) and other saltmarsh plants have started to colonise the upper reaches of the site and summer 2025 saw a healthy density of saltmarsh plants at the higher reaches.



Water Quality and Oysters

Water quality is something we're all passionate about; it's impact on people, wildlife and habitats are significant and worrying. As well as working with partners to better understand and control the sources of pollution, work is taking place to restore native oysters to the harbour. A single native oyster filters up to 200 litres of water a day, making them a great nature-based solution to water quality issues.

This year Harbour Oysters will be installing more oyster cages to jetties and pontoons around the harbour (read more on page 26).

The Solent Seascape Project will be bringing "wild" native oysters back to the harbour, creating a habitat area within the harbour where oysters form in shallow reefs. The project has already created a successful oyster reef on the River Hamble which has become a haven for marine biodiversity; images gathered by the Royal Navy's Diving and Threat Exploitation Group show how the oysters have settled and have begun to form a complex and thriving marine ecosystem.

Coastal Birds

Last summer saw great success for our seabird-focussed nature recovery work. The Return of the Tern project in 2022 was funded by the Chichester Harbour Friends through the National Lottery Heritage Green Challenge Recovery Fund. With the aim of providing safe breeding habitat for Little Terns, Stakes Island was raised by 500 tonnes of shingle to a level above high tides and storm surges. Good news! These threatened seabirds nested there with success for the first time in 2025, with two chicks fledging from the island and another two chicks raised on another harbour island.

Four chicks may not sound like much, but Little Terns have experienced decades of decline, pressured by disturbance, predation and rising sea levels. As well as those that successfully bred in 2025, many Little Terns were spotted investigating the shingle island so we're hopeful that the coming years will see more chicks reach maturity.

Common Terns also breed in Chichester Harbour but their numbers had plummeted in recent decades. The introduction of rafts has provided a safe space for them to breed and 2025 saw the best year yet with up to 75 chicks fledging!





Emsworth

Welcoming visitors by land and sea

The picturesque waterside town of Emsworth in Hampshire is a perfect destination for sailors, food lovers, and anyone seeking the timeless charm of a traditional harbour community.

Wander through streets lined with historic cottages and independent shops, where you'll find everything from locally made art to fresh produce and bakery treats. The town square and quayside have plenty of cafés, pubs and restaurants; Emsworth's reputation as a foodie destination is well-deserved.

Stop by the Emsworth Museum, where you can uncover the town's rich maritime heritage. Discover how the oyster industry once made Emsworth famous in the late 1800s and learn about connections to author and one-time resident P.G. Wodehouse. If you've arrived by road or rail, why not explore by water. Step aboard **Solar Heritage**,

Chichester Harbour Conservancy's quiet, solar-powered tour boat which operates from Emsworth Jetty during school holidays. It's a relaxing way to spot wildlife and enjoy panoramic views of the harbour. For a taste of history, book a trip on the **Terror**, one of the last surviving boats from Emsworth's oyster fleet, now beautifully restored and offering heritage sailing experiences throughout the summer.

However you visit, you'll find Emsworth a welcoming harbour town, rich in maritime history, brimming with independent spirit, and perfectly placed to explore the beauty of Chichester Harbour.

Benefits for Boaters

Emsworth is located at the northern end of the Emsworth Channel and offers excellent amenities for those arriving by boat throughout the season.

- The **visitor mid-stream pontoon** provides overnight berthing in a beautiful and peaceful setting. Shore access is by tender, or pre-booked water taxi.
- For shorter stays, the **walk-ashore pontoon** offers direct access to the quayside, ideal for lunch, shopping or a brief stop ashore.
- Emsworth is home to **two friendly sailing clubs**, a **marina**, and marine businesses offering repairs, chandlery supplies and boatyard services. The **Emsworth Harbour Office** is open from April to October and can provide advice on berthing, tide times and local navigation, as well as arranging water taxi services.
- As Emsworth Harbour is **tidal**, visiting skippers should always check tide times or seek local guidance before planning their approach or departure.
- The town is also well connected, with **Emsworth station** just a short walk from the quayside, offering regular services along the south coast and to London.



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Oyster Power: Community led nature restoration

In November 2022 Poppy Johns looked out of her Emsworth Yacht Harbour office window towards the historical oyster boat, **Terror**. About to join a local protest about water quality, she felt the spark of an idea...

What if native oysters could be restored to Emsworth, using the power of nature to help clean up our harbour waters?

Built in the 1890s, **Terror** was part of a thriving oyster industry; 100,000 oysters were shipped from Emsworth each week. But through the 1900s oyster fisheries collapsed. Overfishing, pollution and disease left Chichester Harbour almost devoid of native oysters. It was a serious loss; the native oyster is an essential part of a thriving marine ecosystem supporting a plethora of other marine life including fish, anemones, sponges and molluscs. They sequester carbon and critically, a single oyster can filter up to 200 litres of water per day.

Two weeks later Poppy had a plan, and her boss was on board. Together with her sister, Lottie, the idea was to bring native oysters to Emsworth Yacht Harbour. Oysters had been installed under pontoons elsewhere in the UK, but not at this scale. So they designed a trial to establish which sections of pontoon would offer the best chances of success.

Licences obtained, a few months later 40 oysters arrived by first class post. Following biosecurity with support from the Blue Marine Foundation, the oysters were put into onion bags and secured under different sections of Emsworth Yacht Harbour's pontoons.



The trial gave Poppy and Lottie the confidence to plan something big, with funding secured through the Chichester Harbour Friends. In February 2025, 60 Chichester Harbour Friends volunteers gathered at Portsmouth University's Institute of Marine Science where they scrubbed 4000 native oysters for biosecurity. Now living in purpose-built cages under the pontoons, at the time of deployment it was the largest installation of oysters in any marina in Europe – an incredible achievement for a small employee-owned marina!

Aside from the ecological benefits of the oysters, it's people power that has really touched the sisters. They grew up in Chichester Harbour, sailing out of Bosham Sailing Club, always in, on or by the water. Fascinated by the marine life encountered on their harbour adventures, a passion was born; now reflected as they engage people about the project. Volunteers, marina berth holders, members of the public and school children all share a sense of love and pride for improving the health of our harbour wildlife and habitats.

Now thriving in their Emsworth homes these oysters won't be released from their cages, but the larvae they produce will boost the chances of success for 'wild' native oyster restoration within Chichester Harbour.

None of this came easy; Lottie and Poppy spent years navigating the challenges and hurdles of getting such an ambitious project off the ground. That experience is being put to good use; Harbour Oysters has plans for several more native oyster installations across Chichester Harbour and beyond, including on the Chichester Harbour Conservancy jetties.

Small ideas can catalyse a community into action for nature restoration. The Johns sisters hope that their work will engender action across our harbour communities, inspiring people and fostering a better understanding of our coastal habitats and wildlife.



You can get involved with Harbour Oysters by volunteering or helping to raise the funds needed for oyster installation. Find out more at www.harbouroysters.com



Shaping the future

Every year 9,000 young people visit the Chichester Harbour Conservancy Education Centre. Those visits are supported by a team of dedicated volunteers who work closely with the Education Team teachers to ensure every young person gets the most from their visit to the harbour.



Retired teacher Sue Palmer shares how volunteering keeps her learning and helps to create special memories...

On the jetty at Itchenor, Sue is well wrapped up against the clear cold day as she welcomes children arriving for an educational boat trip onboard Solar Heritage, Chichester Harbour Conservancy's solar powered harbour tour boat.

Today's field trip is supported by Bird Aware Solent, arranged to give local primary school children an introduction to the harbour's bird life. It's the perfect time of the year; tens of thousands of wading birds and waterfowl arrive in the Autumn and spend the winter months in Chichester Harbour. Sue describes how volunteering gives her the opportunity to work face-to-face with young people again after a career in teaching; she particularly enjoys using her biology knowledge to support GCSE groups. Volunteering gives Sue a strong sense of personal fulfilment and she values the opportunity to learn from the other teachers, visiting school staff, and the children themselves.

"Junior Conservancy" is one of her favourite field trips, when children explore a topical environmental issue outdoors and then engage in a debate. She notes how fully the children step into their roles, responding to the setting and the energy of the discussion. For Sue, watching young people grow in confidence and curiosity throughout the experience is a rewarding reminder of why such opportunities matter, and she hopes these moments become lasting, positive memories.

Sue also stresses the broader importance of helping young people understand the natural world, including the challenges it faces. She believes that hands-on experiences outdoors are essential in shaping informed, thoughtful perspectives on the environment. Back at the jetty the boat trip returns, and happy, chatty children disembark. More great memories have been created, thanks to the enthusiasm and support of volunteers like Sue and Rob.



Long time education centre supporter and bird watching enthusiast Rob Wiggins shares his enthusiasm for volunteering and why the simple pleasures of nature are often the best...

Rob waves off a primary school class who have just finished their visit to the Chichester Harbour Education Centre at Dell Quay. There's lots of lively chatter and laughter as the happy group board the Conservancy's minibus home; they've had a fantastic time at the harbour!

Rob has spent the day with this energetic group of youngsters, exploring the shoreline. They've hunted for crabs, periwinkles, seaweed and plants, learning about marine and coastal habitats.

He jokes that although the children learn about lots of topics when they visit, it's often the simple things like hunting for crabs or a game of Pooh Sticks they find most exciting. It seems all children (and a lot of adults) just love searching for crabs!

After retiring from the Metropolitan Police Force, Rob started volunteering with the Chichester Harbour Education Team. A keen bird watcher, he also volunteers as a ranger at nearby RSPB Pagham Harbour. He loves sharing his wealth of bird and wildlife knowledge with the children. Rob thrives on meeting each new school group; he especially enjoys the enthusiasm and excitement of first-time visitors as they discover nature for themselves.

For Rob, one of the pleasures of volunteering is doing his 'little bit' to help young people experience the wonder and beauty of the harbour. By introducing them to harbour creatures and habitats, he hopes to share his love for nature and spark a lasting passion for nature in future generations.

Get involved...

Look out for volunteering opportunities at www.conservancy.co.uk

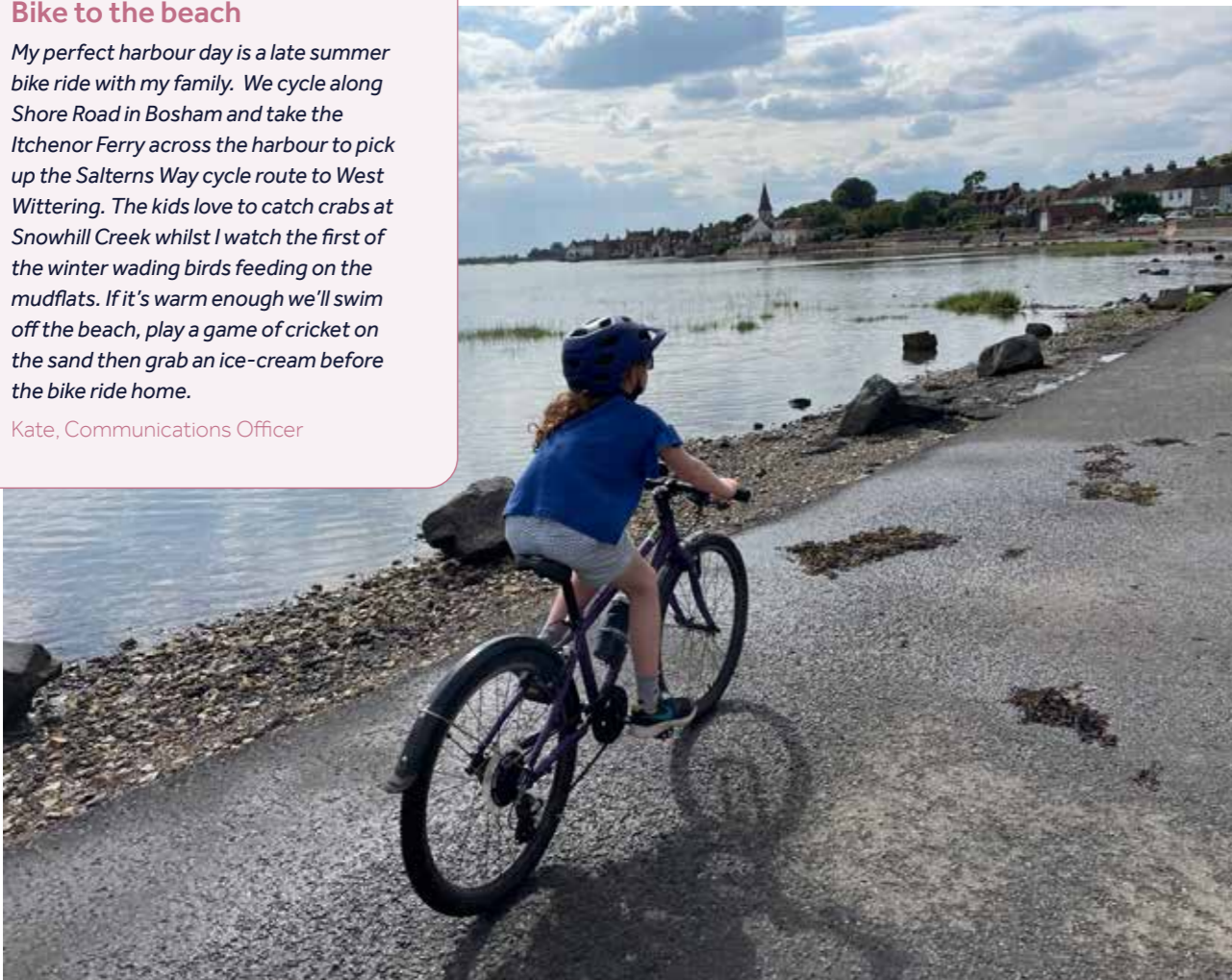
My Perfect Harbour Day

Chichester Harbour is a haven for recreation, both on the water and on land. With miles of footpaths, cycle paths and options for accessing the water there are so many ways to spend time outdoors and connect with the landscape and nature. Here some of our Chichester Harbour Conservancy team describe their perfect harbour day.

Bike to the beach

My perfect harbour day is a late summer bike ride with my family. We cycle along Shore Road in Bosham and take the Itchenor Ferry across the harbour to pick up the Salterns Way cycle route to West Wittering. The kids love to catch crabs at Snowhill Creek whilst I watch the first of the winter wading birds feeding on the mudflats. If it's warm enough we'll swim off the beach, play a game of cricket on the sand then grab an ice-cream before the bike ride home.

Kate, Communications Officer



A walk around Chidham

My perfect harbour day at any time of year is a walk around Cobnor Point and the Chidham peninsula. In the summer I'll have a swim at high tide and watch the boats go by; in the winter I enjoy watching the birds and wildlife. On the way back to the car I'll stop at the Old House at Home pub for a pint of bitter and a packet of crisps.

Sam, Harbour Support Officer



Sailing into the sunset

My perfect harbour day starts on my sailing boat, moored in the Itchenor Channel. I sail out of the harbour in the morning across the Solent to anchor in Priory Bay, off the Isle of Wight. Then lunch on board and swimming off the boat before sailing back to Chichester Harbour. The day finishes at my mooring, sipping a whisky, watching the sun set before spending the night on the boat.

Jeff, Moorings Officer

Windsurfing across the waves

My perfect harbour day starts from my home in Emsworth and a dog walk along the coast to Langstone at low tide. If it's winter and there are birds feeding or resting on the foreshore I keep her on the lead. The perfect afternoon brings a high tide and south-westerly winds so I can go windsurfing straight off the beach at the end of Warblington Road. If there's no wind I go out on my paddleboard instead.

Sarah, Nature Recovery Partnership Manager

Sailing and seals

My perfect harbour day starts and finishes on Hayling Island. Over the summer I keep my boat at Sparkes Marina. I set sail into the harbour with my friends and family, with no real destination in mind. For me it's about the joy of being on the water. If I'm lucky a seal will pop up. A picnic lunch and perhaps a spot of fishing from the boat before returning home as the sun sets.

Sam, Lead Harbour Technician

Paddling and picnics

My perfect harbour day involves getting on the water and in the water. I launch my Canadian canoe from the Hard at Itchenor and paddle down to East Head. Terns are diving into the water as we progress down the channel. A picnic on the sand, then if the tide is high I will don my snorkel and mask to explore under the waves. It's another world down there, seagrass, crabs, snails and each time I hope for a glimpse of a seahorse!

Rosie, Lead Ranger

Hiking through history

My perfect harbour day involves a walk with a friend. I love to walk from Donnington across the fields to Apuldram, then south along via Dell Quay and Chichester Marina to Birdham Pool. I have walked this route so many times, but the view always changes with the seasons and weather. I also love the connection with history, thinking of how the Romans sailed up this very channel. At Birdham Pool I'll get lunch or coffee and cake at the Scuttlebutt Café before returning along the Chichester Canal.

Gill, Receptionist

Exploring with the children

My perfect harbour day starts with an autumnal walk around Fishbourne Meadows with my children. If there's puddles we'll splash, stopping to eat blackberries from the hedges. It's a great area to connect children with nature, what can they hear, what can they see? The bubbling call of the Curlew, the blue flash of a Kingfisher and maybe a Water Vole in the stream before a game of pooh sticks. A treat in the afternoon is a trip on the Solar Heritage tour boat. With bird experts on board the children love to see what they can spot, learning more about the wildlife on our doorstep.

Jenny, Administrator



An unforgettable *adventure*

Experience the thrill of taking the helm of a 125-year-old Oyster Boat! Enjoy a two and a half hour sailing on Oyster Boat Terror and take in the stunning beauty of Chichester Harbour.

- Available for private charters for up to 6 people.
- Sailings available from Emsworth or Itchenor.
- Gift vouchers available.

To book visit www.oysterboatterror.org.uk



www.oysterboatterror.org.uk

Reserve a mooring in beautiful Chichester Harbour

Locations at Itchenor, Dell Quay, Nutbourne and Emsworth

Facilities at Itchenor include electric charging points, toilets, showers and walk-ashore visitor berthing.

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- Tender chains.
- Maintenance piles.
- Fresh water & pump-out.
- Our friendly team on hand to assist.

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CHICHESTER HARBOUR CONSERVANCY

Nature Recovery Needs People Join Us Now



Photo by: Paul Adams



Scan to join today
chichesterharbourfriends.org



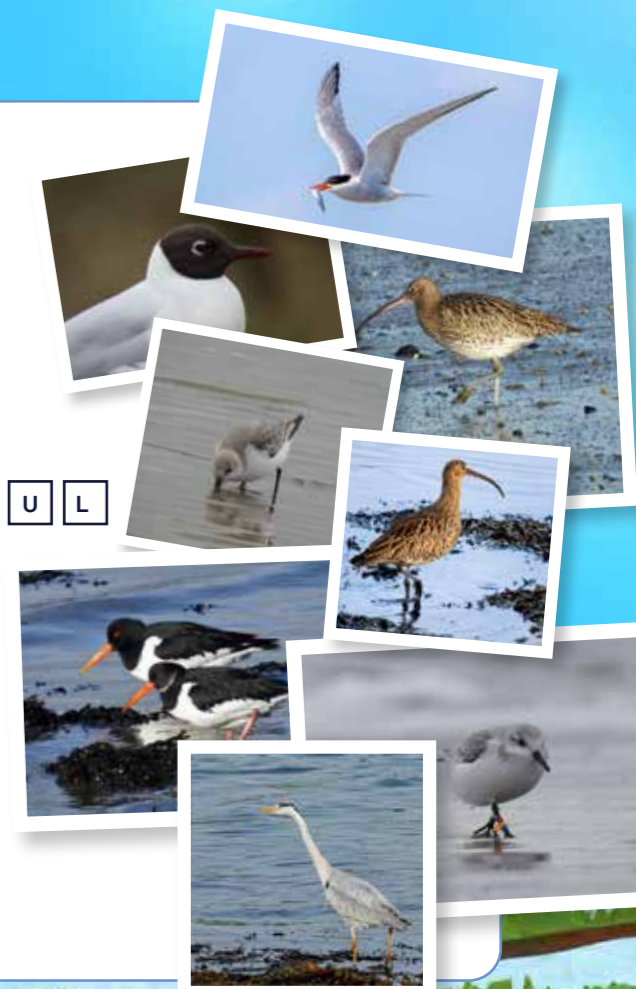
Family fun

Join Terri the Tern for some nature puzzles celebrating the amazing wildlife that lives in Chichester Harbour...

Bird Scramble

Can you solve the anagrams to discover some of the birds who make Chichester Harbour their home?

W E L U C R
D E D E H A L A K B C L G U L
M O C M O N N E R T
N L I G N A S R E D
T R E B N S O O E G
Y R E S T O C C R A E T H
L A R M D A L
R E O H N



Wordsearch

Can you find all these words in our word search?

- CONKER
- REEDBEDS
- WOODS
- SEAL
- SHELDUCK
- REDSHANK
- TERN
- SAIL
- ROWING
- KAYAK
- SEA
- ALGAE
- NEWT

K	K	A	L	E	L	O	S
N	A	L	I	A	S	D	H
A	Y	G	Z	A	E	S	E
H	A	A	P	B	T	S	L
S	K	E	D	Y	E	D	D
D	N	E	W	T	R	O	U
E	E	R	E	K	N	O	C
R	O	W	I	N	G	W	K

Bird Scramble answers: CURLEW, BLACK HEADED GULL, COMMON TERN, SANDERLING, BRENT GOOSE, OYSTER CATCHER, MALLARD, HERON

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Solar-powered sailings for families, nature lovers and eco-friendly explorers!

Sail quietly through Chichester Harbour and enjoy stunning scenery, wonderful wildlife and picturesque harbour villages. Solar Heritage seats up to 50 people with a spacious, stable deck which is ideal for all ages.

- Year-round trips.
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Harbour Discovery



Birdwatching



Seal Safari



Sunset Cruises



Themed family trips



Private hire

www.boattripschichesterharbour.co.uk