



Chichester Harbour Conservancy
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

10 July 2008

Chichester Harbour Conservancy Supports Coastal Defence Strategy for East Head

The Chichester Harbour Conservancy has resolved to support the current draft Coastal Defence Strategy (CDS) for the East Head frontage.

The strategy for East Head recommends a process of Adaptive Management of this important feature for the 100 year life of the CDS. The aim of Adaptive Management will be to maintain the socio-economic, amenity, environmental and navigation value of East Head but it will not try to lock the feature into its current size, shape and orientation. It will be based on regular monitoring of the feature and responding to changes that may damage its socio-economic and environmental value with a suite of measures.

There will be an initial scheme to safeguard East Head in the early years of the strategy and this will involve a significant recycling of beach material into the vulnerable hinge and neck at the southern end of the feature. It will also see the construction of a buried sill behind the recharged area to ensure that, if there is a catastrophic break through into Snowhill Creek, a tidal channel does not develop. It also promotes the controlled management of the groynes and breastworks to allow improved sediment flow into East Head and the development of natural beaches. These and other measures will be available in the medium and long term to manage and respond to the evolution of East Head in the face of predicted sea level rise and increased storminess.

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John Davis, Chichester Harbour Master said 'The Conservancy has worked closely

with other agencies to plan for the future of East Head. This proposed scheme has our full backing and we encourage all local residents and harbour users to support the Coastal Defence Strategy for East Head.'

Adaptive Management will be implemented by the existing regulatory authorities, Chichester District Council and the Environment Agency, and they will form part of an Advisory Group consisting of the West Wittering Parish Council, the land owners (West Wittering Estate and the National Trust), the main funders and the Chichester Harbour Conservancy. Local involvement will be key to the success of the process.

The Conservancy was in no doubt that in order to gain planning permission and other consents, it was essential that the management of East Head formed part of the Coastal Defence Strategy and that Adaptive Management, as described in the Strategy Document, represented the most sustainable and achievable way forward. It noted that central government funding was most unlikely to be available for any works at East Head and any measures to safeguard it for future generations would have to be funded from other sources.

The Conservancy urged the AONB and harbour community to support the Strategy for East Head.

ENDS



NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Photo of East Head was taken May 2008 by Matt Simmons Photography.

Contact Ali Beckett for a high-resolution jpg allie@conservancy.co.uk or 01243 510984

- Interviews can be arranged with John Davis, Harbour Master & Manager, contact Ali Beckett.
- Background information on East Head can be found at http://www.conservancy.co.uk/environment/east_head.asp

The Chichester Harbour Conservancy is the statutory harbour authority for Chichester Harbour with a legal duty to manage the harbour and the surrounding land for the purposes of recreation and leisure, conservation and landscape protection. It has a wide range of powers to control navigation, moorings, works and dredging, as well as to maintain and improve the wildlife value and the landscape.

The Conservancy also manages the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to ensure that it is conserved and enhanced for the enjoyment of all. AONB officers and their staff work with national and local government, environment organisations, landowners and managers and their local businesses and communities to ensure that these unique landscapes and the rare and wonderful wildlife living in them are protected and enhanced.

For more information please contact the Harbour Master - Lt Col John Davis OBE on 01243 512301.