

**Scrutiny Inquiry Panel - Protecting,  
Preserving and Promoting The River Itchen  
in Southampton**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Thursday, 16th February, 2023  
at 5.30 pm

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATED TO THE LISTED  
REPORTS

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Hi Mark

Please see attached responses to the question you have raised regarding angling on the river Itchen and Southampton Sea Angling club.

## **Southampton Sea Angling Club**

Southampton Sea Angling Club was started in 1935 and is still going strong. We currently have around 50 adult members and around 10 Junior anglers and cater for anglers of all abilities. We are a very friendly club and all help each other. We regularly fish on the river Itchen in the form of roving competitions along with boat competitions, so not only do we fish on the river Itchen Banks but also on the water itself.

We currently have a boat compound which is situated at Cross House Car Park on Cross House Road, this currently houses around 25 anglers fishing boats which are regularly used. This is a perfect location as we have access of two slipways, one which is shared with the other Sea Angling club (Shirley Sea Angling Club), the Sea Scouts and two rowing clubs. The other slipway is the public slipway which is the public slipway which is by far the best slipway in Southampton being one that can be used in most tidal states. This is also used by some of our members who travel down to Southampton with their boats on trailers. You also need to remember, that whilst we have around 60 members, this only makes a tiny majority of anglers who fish and use the river Itchen, with many, many more who do not belong to fishing clubs also benefitting from living in and around Southampton and having access to the water.

## **Issues Facing Anglers**

Some of the issues and challenges we face are all the housing developments being built by the water. These were areas that we have fished over the years, but since the new developments have been built, fishing is actively discouraged by the security guards, Ocean village being a prime example. While technically we are still legally allowed to fish there as it is a public right of way, the security guards are adamant that we are not! I see fishing has been actively discouraged down on the new development Centenary Quay, despite it being a perfect place for Angling. I note that planning permission has also been granted for a hotel and new flats to be built on Town Quay. This is currently a very popular spot for angling due to the ease of access to the water and easy parking. No doubt when the developments have been built it will go the same way as other developments where anglers will be forced to leave and not fish there.

Fishing is the most participated sport in the country. This was acknowledged and identified by central government as after all the Covid restrictions, Angling in all of its various forms was one of the first things that we could go back to due to the benefits on mental health and wellbeing.

Flood defences – How can these be built without impeding access to the water, especially around the slipways and beaches? Building the proposed sea defences will obviously

impede access the existing slipways and anglers spots. Anglers with disabilities will now have even fewer spots to fish.

Introducing more Bivalves into the river, how can these be managed so they do not become widespread and in fact become a nuisance. Certain beaches are now already difficult to fish as for example rock oysters have very sharp edges, which is danger when bait collecting and also when fishing as it will cut the anglers fishing line?

My question to you councillors, is what are you doing and can you do to protect our rights to fish our local shores and actively encouraging anglers to go fishing? It appears so far in all consultations and information provided, angling both on the river and along the banks of the river Itchen appear to have been overlooked and is something that I would like to see addressed.

Thanks

Bill Baynes  
Chairman Southampton Sea Angling Club

**Scrutiny Inquiry Panel; Protecting, preserving and promoting the River Itchen  
Meeting 16 February 2023; Recreation, community use and access  
Presentation by Graham Linecar, Southampton Commons and Parks Protection Society  
(SCAPPS)**

Southampton is a coastal city and a thriving port. Port security unfortunately, but understandably, means restricted public access to the water. Only a small part of the Itchen frontage is within the Port itself (in ABP ownership) but safety considerations mean restricted public access on other stretches where there are working wharves and marine industry. Elsewhere there are stretches of the Itchen in Southampton you can get to, and enjoy being by, water, but long stretches with no access.

SCAPPS, long established, campaigns for protection and promotion of Southampton's parks, footpaths and 'green' spaces. Benefit for physical health and mental well-being of being in 'green' surroundings is now widely appreciated and recognised. Personal experience supports the conclusion that benefit is enhanced when the 'green' is by 'blue', green spaces alongside water – the attraction of moving water, reflections of light and sky, the ever-changing view. Along the Itchen, try to find more places where people can enjoy being by the river, not just access but space and opportunity to sit and enjoy being there. Safety and security an anxiety - there are places with public access, but some people don't feel safe using them. They look (well, unfortunately some are) neglected and are perceived as attracting anti-social behaviour. Many people feel insecure when paths are overgrown and they cannot see who is around. Paths need to be maintained with clear lines of sight, so other can see you, and you know who else is nearby. Keeping riverside sites and paths well-maintained and encouraging more people to use them helps reduce feelings of insecurity and problems from fly-tipping. Balance against that keeping some places where it's possible to feel connected with nature, to feel away from the busy urban surroundings. Plus sport and leisure activity on the water itself. Various outdoor and water sports activity centres. Boat clubs. Rowing clubs. Marinas and leisure moorings. Seven 'public slipways' on the Itchen where can carry in and launch small craft; not all are well-maintained. Other places not formally designated (can give rise to issues with vehicles wanting access, eg Woodmill).

Itchen, 'taken for granted' but gives identity/sense of place. Strong element in Southampton landscape. Views from bridges. Views across valley from higher ground, (Peartree Green, rising up from Bitterne Triangle).

**Take a trip from where the Itchen enters City to Southampton Water.** Gaters Mill, though A27 near, semi-natural, can get to river. Clear, fast flowing chalk stream, verdant banks. White Swan. Mansbridge, historic bridge and Itchen Navigation, swimming in river. E bank, Riverside Park, one of Southampton's much appreciated and much used bigger parks with range of leisure and sports provision. Riverside path, still semi-natural feeling landscape, fast flowing, clear water. Popular with fishermen (registered as 'village green') and for wild swimming. W bank, historic Woodmill and site of last downstream lock on the Itchen Navigation. The cafe at Woodmill is well-used, with customers enjoying sitting outside with views down the Itchen – one of regrettably few such facilities with waterside tables.

There is at Woodmill, South Stoneham an almost forgotten Capability Brown landscape, now in the divided ownership of University and City Council. South Stoneham House and immediate grounds are owned by the University of Southampton, and standing empty. The Capability Brown landscape extends across the Monks Brook, taking in the Fish Pond and Salmon Pool, now used by the Southampton Water Activities Centre. The Activities Centre has a launching platform for kayaks on the Itchen. SCAPPS has tried to encourage the two landowners, University and City Council, to manage the area in a way which would recreate at least the spirit of the Capability Brown landscape, of lawn sweeping down from the House to the Monks Brook with views across the Fish Pond and Itchen to trees on rising ground the other side of the valley. SCAPPS remains anxious about how the University intends using the House, and what its plans are for the garden and grounds.

**Below Woodmill**, change in landscape character because tidal, but also more activity, on the water and along the banks. E bank, Riverside Park path and still fairly natural 'feel'. W bank, University Watersports Centre. Scope for increased natural management (does University ownership extend to sewage treatment works?). Mid way through Riverside Park, increased provision for formal recreation. W bank, increasing residential, starting with a short section of riverside greenspace at Saltmead. Increasing water sport use, canoes, kayaks, paddleboards, dinghy sailing. St Denys Boat Club. Feeding swans from pontoon. One idea SCAPPS put forward is footbridge at Saltmead giving traffic-free access from north Portswood into Riverside Park.

**Cobden Bridge**, landscape/identity. Upstream E bank, S end of Riverside Park (on reclaimed land). Losing the 'natural' feel. Below Cobden Bridge, E bank no access, just glimpses from Whitworth Road. Railway bridge, feature in views up and down stream. W bank, short stretches of unconnected and difficult-to-find riverfront green space. Built development presses in on both banks. River widens, large area of water at high tide, big landscape feature. E bank, Bitterne Manor Park, an underused and under appreciated park with, unfortunately, a somewhat neglected feel. Otherwise, developed, increasing number of moorings. W bank, first of the designated 'public slipways', and a small amenity space, Priory Road Hard. Planning permission for river-front redevelopment secured a path linking from the Hard to the riverside boardwalk by the railway from Horseshoe Bridge. Sweeping views up and down river. Poor quality environment on path by Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate and Inland Homes development.

**Northam Bridge**, a big change in character. Northam Bridge restricts navigation, below, commercial shipping and wharves and marina berths and moorings. River widens, and bends, hence dramatic views over wide expanse of water at high tide. What are ABP's plans for more moorings? The W, Northam, bank is mainly commercial wharves. But the E is a surprise. Below the Kemps Quay marina and moorings, the railway cuts-off the river from the suburban development on the rising ground (Athelstan Road, up to Bitterne). Information to Panel already about Chessel Bay LNR and nature conservation importance of the inter-tidal mud. SCAPPS would like to see formalising, in legal rights and in physical provision, of extension from downstream end of the Chessel Bay green space of a path, perhaps part a boardwalk, to link to the top end of Hazel Road, giving a continuous pedestrian route from Northam Bridge to Woolston. Hazel Road, unlikely to secure access to the waterfront through redevelopment of more than a minority of the industrial sites, even though only some are marine industries, so little hope of a continuous waterfront path.

SCAPPS welcomes and supports Local Plan policy of requiring public access to the waterfront when proposals come forward for redevelopment of wharves along the Northam, west, bank, and designing in such a way that keeps opportunity to link them one to another to give continuous public access. We ask that is not interpreted as requiring only a narrow riverfront pedestrian walkway; it needs also to include soft and hard landscaping creating an attractive place for dawdling, for sitting and for enjoying looking-out across the river.

**Below Itchen Bridge**, W bank Ocean Village, a sad story of lost opportunity, waterfront difficult of access, some closed off. E bank, fragmented access from Itchen Ferry downstream under the Itchen Bridge. Could more be done to promote awareness of historic connections: the ferry, classic late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century racing yachts built and operated from yards here, Supermarine and flying boats and Spitfire? Scope for signing to link-up what is 'open'; sometimes difficult to know what is private and what is open to public access. SCAPPS and others have pressed to ensure development (including Centenary Quay) includes waterfront walkways. Finally, one more of Southampton's prime green spaces, Weston Shore; so much more could be made of Southampton's only 'beach' and 'seafront'.

**Some concluding thoughts.** Stretches most used are continuous routes, paths that connect from one place to another. Care and maintenance matters. Some people feel insecure on the boardwalk and on past Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate and the Inland Homes development because it looks and feels neglected. High quality landscaping and regular maintenance encourages use. The more people using a path, the less the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.

There are then the several riverfront greenspaces which are not connected, are not part of a continuous route. Although perhaps known and used by locals, some seem underused, and look neglected. Planning policy requiring redevelopment of riverside sites to provide public access to the waterfront will increase their number. We need to think about how to heighten awareness of these sites. In some cases it is not immediately obvious if it is a 'public' or private space, and means of access is hidden-away. Signing could help show links one to another, to encourage more use, and perhaps there is scope for Friends' Groups to become active in care and maintenance.

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# Celebrating our community groups

16 February 2023 – Meeting 5

A city of opportunity where everyone thrives



Agenda Item 7  
Appendix 2/3

# 'Friends of Groups' in Southampton by the River Itchen

- **The Friends of the Itchen Navigation**

- Aim is to preserve and develop the work completed in 2012 on the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project. The group has just over 1,400 members.

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- **Friends of Riverside Park**

- Aim is to maintain and improve the physical and natural environment of Riverside Park in liaison with SCC and other interested bodies. 50 paid up members and over 300 followers on Twitter.

- **Friends of Chessel Bay**

- Group whose aim is to protect and preserve Chessel Bay Local Nature Reserve. Over 60 volunteers helped at the Autumn clean-up.

# Activities

- **Litter picks** – eg Chessel Bay volunteers have removed substantial quantities of rubbish from the Local Nature Reserve for over 20 years
- **Maintenance** – eg Restoration of the banks, removal of non native species and clearing and preservation of the locks (Itchen Navigation).
- **Planting** – eg Spring bulb planting by Friends of Riverside Park
- **Information & Awareness** - Maintenance walks to report on areas in need of repair and improvement; newsletters; online material; interpretive panels.

## Events - On, in and alongside the River Itchen

- **All Aboard Festival** - Annual musical, art and theatrical event on and along the banks of the River Itchen in the Cobden Bridge area event presented by St Denys Boat Club.
- **Trifest** – Annual free community festival at Bitterne Park Triangle, held in Riverside Park and now part of the Friends of Riverside Park.
- **Toes in the water** - An open water swimming festival in February.
- **Numerous sporting events**

These events drive engagement and interest in the River Itchen

# Issues Raised

- **Maintenance**

- Improvements to the river bank, the towpath, the historic locks - making access for the public more difficult.
- Currently the jetty at Cobden Meadows is taped off due to damage and needs repairing

- **Pollution**

- Water quality, plastic pollution & litter

- **Protection and encouragement of flora and fauna**

- **Network potential – Respect River Campaign as umbrella group**



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# SOUTHAMPTON INQUIRY PANEL

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Recreation

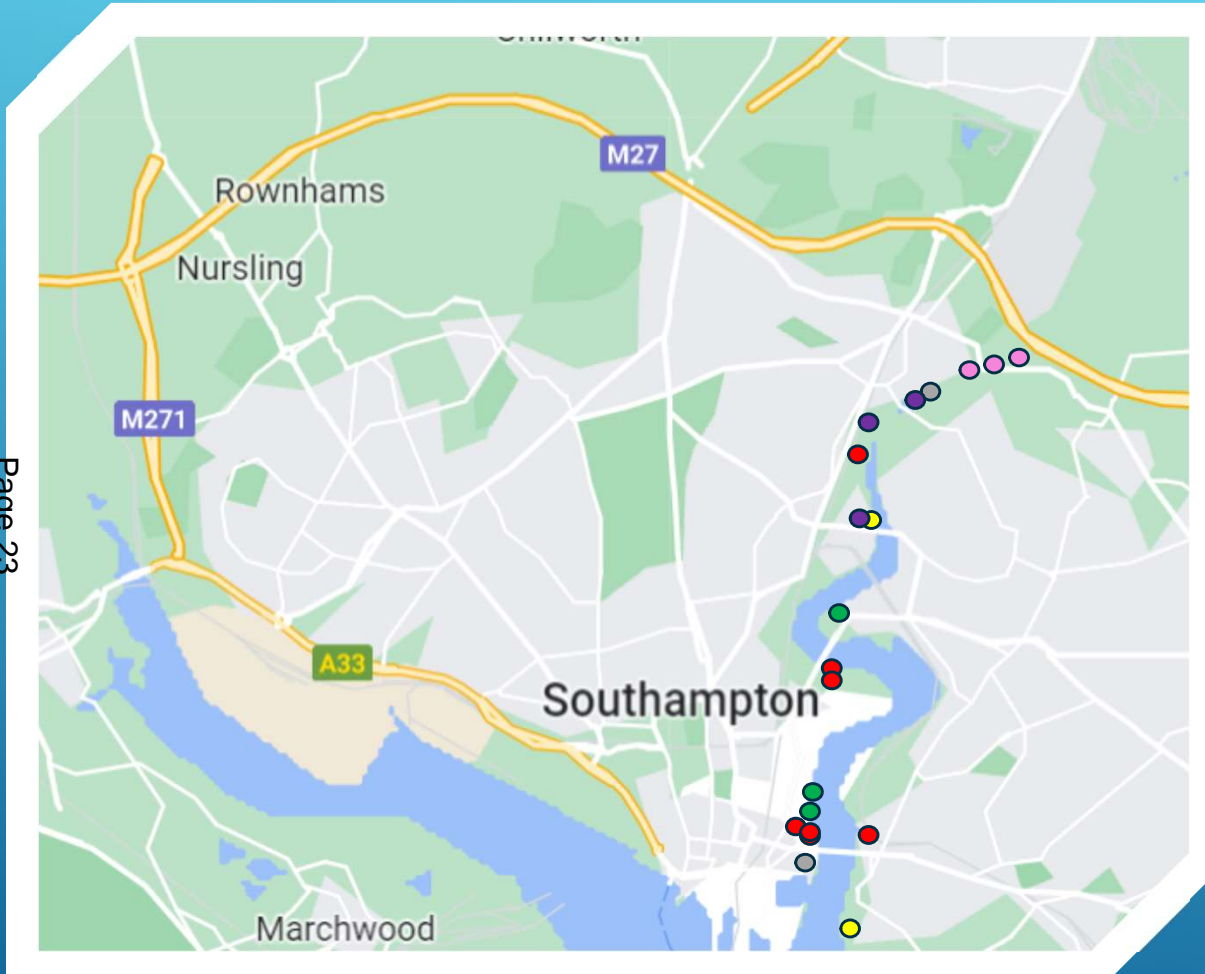
James Hives

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Appendix 21

- ▶ Over 20 Clubs, groups or venues concerned with the river
- ▶ Results of survey in to Water Users – 20,000
- ▶ The River is an awesome resource, however little understood or planned for
- ▶ Huge range in activity including Paddlesport, Sailing & Boating, Rowing, Swimming, Fishing

## FINDINGS





▶ Key -

- Rowing Clubs
- Sailing
- Paddle sports Clubs
- Open water swimmers
- Sea Scouts / Sea Cadets
- Activity Centres
- Anglers

- ▶ Economic
- ▶ Health and Wellbeing
- ▶ Sporting Success
- ▶ Link to People who care

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# BENEFITS

- ▶ Water Quality
- ▶ Toilets
- ▶ Access to the water
- ▶ Concerns about the Flood Alleviation Scheme
- ▶ Anti-Social Behaviour
- ▶ Perceived Lack of Support and Coordination from SCC

## CHALLENGES

- ▶ Both Bournemouth and Portsmouth have Blue Space Strategies
- ▶ Management of the River as a location such as a park
- ▶ Itchen River Group

## RECOMMENDATIONS