



Horizon Scanning

July 2021

Background

The Solent Forum operates within a 5 year Business Plan, currently we are working within the 2020 to 2025 Plan. The Plan recognises that each year the Solent Forum needs to respond to emerging issues of importance to its members. To do this, a horizon scanning process takes place annually. Horizon scanning helps identify a range of key coastal and marine issues, events, consultations and plans, to help members stay informed and solve challenges; it also seeks to understand any organisational changes that Solent Forum members may need to consider in response to new challenges.

Horizon scanning is preceded by our Annual Members Survey and report. [The Members' Survey Report 2021](#) has been published and this report provides an evaluation of the findings.

Horizon Scanning

This horizon scanning paper is put together by taking responses from the Members' Survey and the knowledge of the Solent Forum team at the time of writing over a range of sectors. It summarises key events taking place over the year; it does not review every project or initiative in the Solent.

The following sectors are covered this year:

- Government Policy and Direction (to include some information from sectors below)
- Coastal Management
- Habitats and Species
- Marine Industry
- Cultural and Heritage
- Coastal Settlements and Transport
- Fishing and Aquaculture
- Water Quality and Catchment Management
- Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management
- Military and Defence

Government Direction and Policy

The Government is still progressing the **Environment Bill** which will establish a comprehensive legal framework for environmental improvement and will represent opportunities to improve the marine environment. As well as setting out policy direction and a strategic framework it will create a new Office for Environmental Protection. Through the Bill, Defra will introduce a mandatory approach to

biodiversity net gain. This will require developers to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced, with a 10% increase in habitat value for wildlife compared with the pre-development baseline.

The Bill was introduced in 2019 and was expected in Spring 2020 and subsequently delayed. The bill returned to parliament on in May 2021 and is now at the house of lords committee stage.

The re-introduced bill includes several amendments and these new elements include:

- Setting out new legally binding targets on species abundance for 2030.
- Re-focus the Habitats Regulations towards our objective to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and the Government will publish a Green Paper on these reforms later this year. This will look at how the regulatory framework will be fit for purpose to drive the delivery of the new 2030 biodiversity target and reverse declines of species.
- Bringing forward amendments later this year to reduce the harm from storm overflows to rivers and coastlines. New duties will require the government to publish a plan to reduce sewage discharges from storm overflows by September 2022 and report to Parliament on the progress towards implementing the plan.

Earlier in the year the Government announced a binding commitment to **reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050** and will host the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference of the parties (COP26) in Glasgow in the Autumn. Net zero refers to achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. There are two different routes to achieving net zero, which work in tandem: reducing existing emissions and actively removing greenhouse gases. Government will need to incentivise different ways that energy can be used and policy changes on this will be seen over the coming years, which will affect marine industries particularly shipping. This builds on the government's [Clean Maritime Plan](#), published July 2020, which provides a Route Map for Maritime 2050, setting out in more detail how government sees the UK's transition to a future of zero emission shipping. [Nature based Solutions \(NbS\)](#) have a key role in climate change mitigation in removing gases from the atmosphere. These include actions that involve the protection, restoration, or management of natural and semi-natural ecosystems and the sustainable management of aquatic systems and are designed and implemented with the full engagement and consent of local communities.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan continues to shape national coastal and marine policy, progress has been made on:

- *Reviewing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and creating Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMA)* – In June 2020, the Benyon Review of HPMA was published, and in June 2021 the Government responded to each recommendation. Defra has confirmed that a list of potential HPMA sites will be drawn up by the end of 2021, and the first HPMA sites will then be designated in the first half of 2022. Currently, the 'Blue Belt' of MPAs covers 38% of UK waters. HPMA sites may not all be within the existing MPAs as recommended and the Government is determined to account of socio economic factors to an extent.
- *Develop natural capital decision making* - There has been no significant updates on the marine pioneers [Marine pioneer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- *Nature Recovery Strategies* - Since 2020 the Government and Natural England have developed the concept of a Nature Recovery Strategy (NRS) and to form a Nature Recovery Network (NRN). Local areas are expected to be mandated (and funded) to develop local NRS

and this will be led by Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs). Hampshire County Council are expecting this may happen soon. The lessons learnt from the five pilots has just been published, and these should inform the way forward. [Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilots: lessons learned - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- *Mandating a system of Net Gain with underlining metrics system* – Net Gain is expected to be mandated in the Environment Bill. The NRS should help form the requirements for Net Gain. In June 2021 ABPmer was funded by the Offshore Wind Energy and Change (OWEC) Marine Net Gain Task and Finish Group to look at 'Strategic Targets for Net Gain, what are the priorities for restoration and enhancement for the UK's marine and coastal environments. A survey has been sent out to local stakeholder to gain their views on what net gain was required in their areas. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects are now to be included in the requirement for Net Gain.
- *Extending the Catchment Based Approach (CoBa) to transitional and coastal waters* – The national Coastal Partnership Network (CPN) has been reviewing how CaBa, used in the management of river catchments, may be adapted to the coast. A paper has been published exploring this idea ([Home \(coastalbasedapproach.org\)](#)). This has been endorsed by the Solent Forum. This paper is being used to apply for funding for CoBa through the Environment Agency's spending review or its Flood and Coast Resilience Innovation Programme.
- *Enhancing public engagement with the marine environment* – The government has published a report on ocean literacy. [15131_ME5239OceanLiteracyHeadlineReport_FINAL.pdf \(oceanconservationtrust.org\)](#)

To achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) of UK waters by 2020 a **Marine Strategy** was developed and adopted by UK Governments. The UK marine strategy is revised and updated every 6 years. In August 2020, the Government published Part Two of the updated UK Marine Strategy. It set out the proposed monitoring programmes to be used to provide the evidence for the 2024 assessment of progress towards achieving Good Environmental Status (GES). Following the public consultation, in March 2021 a summary of responses and updated UK Marine Strategy Part Two were published [updated UK Marine Strategy Part Two \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#). In 2021, the UK Government is due to publish part three of the Marine Strategy UK. This document will outline the programme of measures undertaken or planned by Government and devolved administrations to make sure UK marine environment achieves GES.

Coastal Management

The Coastal Partnership Network (CPN), of which the Solent Forum is a member, is to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation so it is a legal entity by end of July, The Thames Estuary Partnership (TEP) currently fronts CPN bids, but this will change to CPN once it has legal status. It will then make a bid for new staff. Likely to be able to bid for Defra money for coastal projects.

Habitats and Species

The following work has been highlighted of regional note. Local site initiatives have not been included as too numerous to list. The Solent Forum have designed [Habitat Restoration](#) Webpages which shows on a range of national and Solent initiatives including progress on Solent Seagrass restoration and the work of REMEDIES.

Natural England have highlighted their priorities for the year. This includes increased responsibilities that could be relevant to marine and coast such as:

- Delivering policies expected within the Environment Bill, including strategic solutions through the planning system, developing Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain
- The Nature Recovery Network - restoring sites, species and landscape quality through our Nature Recovery Network Delivery Partnership
- Project Speed – becoming a strategic statutory consultee on planning as part of ‘Project Speed’, a new Infrastructure Delivery Taskforce which aims to cut down the time it takes to develop, design and deliver vital infrastructure projects.
- Farm advice work – for example supporting Catchment Sensitive Farming and continuing to support Defra in designing the new Environmental Land Management Scheme
- Landscapes – new landscapes designations as part of the commitment to protect 30% of our land by 2030
- Accessibility – connecting people with nature by investing in our National Nature Reserves and making them more accessible.
- Natural England will be front and centre in the nation’s recovery efforts with our boosted remit and funding. The Government’s vision in the 25 Year Environment Plan is for England to become the healthiest and most beautiful place in the world in which to live, work and bring up a family. This vision is embedded within our aims and objectives for the year ahead.

Natural England’s Action Plan for 2021/22 will contribute to thriving terrestrial and marine wildlife, achieving net zero through Nature-based solutions, such as peat restoration and tree planting, and increasing the sustainability of farming and fishing.

There has been a focus on Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration work and the Solent Forum have now set-up a new website hub to cover work including Restoring Estuarine and Coastal Habitats (REACH) and Restoring Meadows Marsh and Reef (ReMeMaRes). [Solent Forum - Habitat Restoration](#). The hub provides links to information on LIFE ReMedies, Natural Capital, Net Gain, Building Biodiversity in the Solent Hub, Blue carbon, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Solent Seagrass restoration, and Solent Oyster Restoration Projects.

On a local level there have been some notable initiatives where work has taken place:

- Blue Marine Foundation held a workshop to look at initiatives to restore habitat within the Solent.
- Chichester Harbour Protection & Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN) Workshop in March 2021 – This workshop highlighted actions required to restore habitats in the harbours.
- A Harbours Summit covering Chichester and Langstone Harbours was organised by Southern Water. Seventeen national and local organisations have committed to an evidence-led way forward, to devise a ‘natural capital’ plan for these harbours. This involves looking at water quality, pollution, wildlife habitats and more, with the aim of producing a clear vision to describe the condition of the environment in and around Chichester and Langstone harbours in 2030 and beyond. This will then enable all agencies to have their say in how improvements to the area can be made and biodiversity encouraged.

- The Green Halo brings together organisations from across the public, private and third sectors within the New Forest National Park Authority area to inspire by promoting best practice in protecting and enhancing natural capital and ecosystem services. It held a workshop in 2021 that was attended by the Solent Forum.

Marine Industry

The Solent LEP has published its 7 strategic priorities including: Becoming a world-leading marine and maritime economy; Pioneering approaches to climate change adaptation and decarbonisation; Developing UK's capital of coastal renaissance; Create a thriving visitor, creative and cultural economy; developing a world-class talent base; foster an outstanding business environment; putting health and wellbeing at the heart of economic success.

Maritime UK Solent (MUK Solent) is the sector's leading regional cluster, championing the maritime sector in the Solent and connecting with Maritime UK and wider stakeholders including HM Government, Local Councils and academia. MUK UK has published a recovery plan – [MUK Solent Recovery Plan \(solentlep.org.uk\)](#)

The UK Government is establishing Freeports around the UK and in February 2021 the Solent LEP were successful in their bid for a Solent Freeport. A Freeport is an area that is exempt from customs duties and tariffs to enable added-value processes to take place. Duty is only paid on goods upon leaving the Freeport area as a finished product and entering the UK market; no payment is due if goods are re-exported. Geographically the Solent Freeport area covers most of the Solent; it encompasses the New Forest waterside, Southampton, Portsmouth, the north coast of the Isle of Wight and most of the Solent's smaller harbours.

The Solent Maritime Enterprise Zone ([Solent MEZ](#)), was established December 2019, and is an umbrella organisation comprising a consortium of the Royal Navy, industry (including small and medium sized enterprises), government and academia working collaboratively in creating a centre of excellence for maritime research, innovation, education, skills and training. The Solent MEZ consortium connects networks regionally and nationally, collaborates on key maritime initiatives to support the maritime sector in its broadest sense. The Solent MEZ business manager has connected with the Solent Forum.

Solent Gateway (SGL) at Marchwood Port is part of the Solent Freeport and Fawley Waterside Partnership. SGL will be submitting a planning application in July 21 for the development of Marchwood Port. This will seek to make greater efficiency and effectiveness out of the already operational port but developing undeveloped areas and improving surfaces within the port.

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The Solent Forum continues to populate its Building Biodiversity in the Solent Hub. [Solent Forum - Building Biodiversity in the Solent \(BBS\): Information Hub](#). This features the work of national and local organisations working to increase biodiversity in coastal infrastructure. It links to the work of

the MARINEFF project. See: [The Marineff Project - Enhancing coastal infrastructure \(marineff-project.eu\)](http://The_Marineff_Project_-_Enhancing_coastal_infrastructure_(marineff-project.eu)).

The Solent Forum has been successful in bidding for funding from the Environment Agency's Water Environment Improvements Fund (WEIF) for the Beneficial Use of Dredgings in the Solent (BUDS) Project – Phase 3. This phase will focus on the Licensing and Operating Systems for Beneficial Use of Dredgings. [Solent Forum - Beneficial Use of Dredging in the Solent Project \(BUDS\)](#). It will be completed in March 2022.

Cultural and Heritage

The City of Southampton are bidding to become UK City of Culture under banner of SO25.

The Isle of Wight Council are considering whether to become a regional partner to the SO25 bid. The Isle of Wight was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere in 2019.

Coastal Settlements and Transport

Recreational Pressure

The Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) Scheme of Management continues to report on activities which may be affecting designated sites in the Solent. The SEMS website contains information on these activities and key projects such as work on the impacts of paddle boarding and bait digging/hand gathering. [Solentems - NEG Projects](#).

Bird Aware Solent continue to work with recreational users both on the shoreline and increasingly watersports participants to encourage good practice and raise awareness of impacts.

In spring 2021 the Solent Forum asked the Solent's Relevant Authorities, who are members of the Solent Marine Sites (SEMS) Management Scheme, to undertake a one-off snapshot survey about if and how recreational activities in the Solent impacted on designated sites over summer 2020. A short report details the findings of that survey. There were 18 responses. The Solent Forum carried out the survey in its role as the SEMS Secretariat. See:

[Covid Snapshot Survey summer2020 Report.pdf \(solentems.org.uk\)](#).

The Carbon Trust has released a report on the 'Roadmap for the Decarbonisation of the European Recreational Marine Craft Sector'. The report was commissioned by the Department for Transport and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. It contains research and recommendations from the Carbon Trust to European governments and recreational craft marine businesses on how they can decarbonise this sector. [Roadmap for the Decarbonisation of the European Recreational Marine Craft Sector \(storage.googleapis.com\)](#)

Planning and development

In August last year the Government proposed significant reforms of the planning system in its white paper 'Planning for the future'. The consultation responses are being analysed before the Government brings legislation to parliament.

The Government has released a Transport Decarbonisation Plan, designed to align all modes of domestic transport with the national net-zero target. The Plan outlines the Government's approach, in terms of timings and technologies, to decarbonising the UK's highest-emitting sector. It covers all domestic forms of transport including road, rail, shipping, and flights, but international shipping and aviation are not covered. As mentioned in Government Policy, this builds on Government's [Clean Maritime Plan](#).

Proposals for the redevelopment of Fawley waterside have been put forward. The development proposes an integrated approach to the provision of green infrastructure. The former Fawley Power Station is in an environmentally sensitive location that is adjacent to the internationally designated sites of the Solent (SPA, SAC and Ramsar site) and close to the New Forest National Park (SPA, SAC and Ramsar site). Potential impacts will be assessed through the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Feasibility Plans for the 4,000-home Tipner West scheme, now known as Lennox Point, are still being assessed. This scheme would bring about significant impacts to designated sites which would need to be addressed.

Hampshire County Council is developing the Hampshire Waterside Strategy which covers all the main modes of transport in the Waterside area of the New Forest. It aims to build on the adopted Waterside Interim Transport Policy of November 2017.

Harbours and Shipping

In July 2020 the Government published its [Clean Maritime Plan](#). This is summarised in the Government Policy section.

ABP, which operates the Port of Southampton, plans to install shore power for cruise ships. This will allow vessels docked at the port to switch off their engines and plug into shore-side power supplies, reducing carbon emissions and air pollutants. It is the first major commercial berth and cruise terminal using this technology in the United Kingdom.

Portsmouth International Port has been looking at possible low-carbon alternatives for its operations. It is part of the Interreg 2 Seas funding PECS project which has allowed it to explore ways in which this could be achieved.

Buckler's Hard Yacht Harbour reopens following completion of its major £2m redevelopment, fifty years after the marina was first built as a haven for boats on the Beaulieu River.

Water Quality and Catchment Management

The Solent Forum continues to build its Clean Solent Shores and Seas (CSSS) Hub to sign post initiatives in the Solent to over a range of sectors and topics. [Solent Forum - Clean Solent Shores and Seas](#). Sectors including Litter, Microplastics and Nutrients have now been completed. Topics such as Amenity and Public Health, and Boating have also been populated.

The issue of nitrate pollution and nitrate neutrality continues to be important in the Solent. The [Nutrients](#) chapter provides a summary of information on the subject.

The Solent Forum are launching a Solent Plastics Pollution Hub (SPP). The Forum are working in partnership with the Environment Agency (EA's) to deliver the hub which will link closely with the Clean Solent Shores and Seas Project, providing a legacy for the EA's Preventing Plastics Pollution Project. SPP will conclude in March 2023. The objective of the new hub is to "Provide a plastics and litter hub for the Solent and whole river catchments, to promote and share information and best practice on plastics and litter clean up and reduction, building on the community network created within the Interreg Preventing Plastics Pollution project".

A Private Members Bill introduced by MP Philip Dunne last year placing a duty on water companies to ensure untreated sewage is not dumped into inland waters has failed due to the time it took to reach the House of Commons. Mr Dunne has now confirmed the bill will not become law, after the parliamentary session was ended in May. The government has committed to take forward the aims of the bill in future legislation in the next parliamentary session. A taskforce was set to begin setting objectives for water companies to make them publish water quality test results in a transparent way and begin the process of investing in drain infrastructure improvements. In addition, the Environment Secretary gave a commitment to make annual reports to Parliament on the issue of water quality.

Southern Water, was fined a record £90m in June for dumping billions of litres of raw sewage into the seas off the north Kent and Hampshire coasts over more than five years between 2010 and 2015. Instead of treating sewage at water treatment works, as required by law, the company collected large volumes in storm tanks before releasing it to the environment. It also manipulated its pollution reports to avoid financial penalties.

Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs) are the new way for organisations to work together to improve drainage and environmental water quality. Southern Water are developing 11 Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs) across the region. [DWMP \(southernwater.co.uk\)](https://www.southernwater.co.uk)

The Environment Agency and Natural England, in partnership with the Solent Forum, hosted a second workshop on boating and water quality in the Solent and Poole Harbour October 2020. Its aim was to look at ways to change recreational boating behaviour and improve waste disposal facilities to reduce the risk of pollution from discharges of 'black water'. All the workshop outputs have been uploaded to: http://www.solentforum.org/services/Current_Projects/Boating/.

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management

Coastal Partners, as part of Fareham Borough Council, has secured £556,000 from Defra Grant in Aid to commence the Hook Lake Coastal Management Study. This is a two-year study focusing on the future management of Hook Lake (part of the Hook with Warsash Nature Reserve) and opportunities to create new habitat at the site.

The Environment Agency is working in partnership with Portsmouth City Council to investigate options for a sustainable solution to flood risk management at Farlington Marshes. [Farlington Marshes Project information page - Environment Agency - Citizen Space \(environment-agency.gov.uk\)](https://www.environment-agency.gov.uk).

The Southsea and Portsea Island FCERM schemes continue to be built. Details can be found on the Coastal Partners website - [Portsmouth — Coastal Partners](https://www.coastalpartners.org).

Military and Defence

No significant changes reported.

Annual Members Survey and Solent Forum work Programme

The Annual Members Survey is published separately. The 2021 survey found that our members' key areas of work were recorded as follows, in rank order:

1. Habitats and Species
2. Ports, Harbour and Shipping
3. Marine Industry
4. Water Quality and Catchment Management
5. Coastal settlements and transport

Respondents were asked to detail any areas of work where they would like to develop partnership working with others in the Solent. The responses are shown in the table below. The Forum will take these into account when building its work programme. Column 2 shows current Solent Forum initiatives that can progress this partnership working.

Partnership working gaps	Solent Forum Initiatives
Industry partnerships - Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	Cover in News, Conferences
Nature Based Solutions - we are already working to some extent with University of Portsmouth and are aware of the work Blue Marine are taking forward.	Cover in News, Conferences and Website
Opportunities to enhance biodiversity both along the coast and into Solent cities. Public engagement with this.	Cover in News, Conferences, Website, BBS Hub
Always looking to work in Partnership with any relevant stakeholders.	Cover in News, Conferences and Website
We would be interested in collaborating with all agencies having an interest in coastal habitat restoration in the Solent.	Cover in News, Conferences and Website has specific hub for habitat restoration
Natural capital and valuing recreational/cultural/health services from coastal ecosystems.	Cover in News, Conferences and Website
We are keen to engage on green innovation and how Solent Gateway Limited can support the sustainable energy generation industry.	Cover in News, Conferences
Nature Recovery Networks, Local Authority Biodiversity Net Gain; Blue Carbon & Off-setting; ELMs & Farming Protected Landscapes - farmers/landowners in the coastal fringe; Natural Capital	Cover in News, Conferences and Website. Event planned for Autumn 2021

<p>ID areas of research and/or potential projects in relation to social benefits and the economic community (and thereby be a truly sustainable and all-encompassing forum). improving access to the seaside, particularly for the most disadvantaged etc. Also, with the mega Virgin cruise liner arriving in Portsmouth we're wondering how can some of the wealth associated with that industry provide wider benefits to local economies throughout the Solent sub-region (including the Island)? Doing so might open up the possibility of new members from a wider sectoral representation and a wider appreciation of the Solent. partnering with the Solent Local Economic Partnership?</p>	<p>Cover in News, Conferences and Website</p> <p>Forum does not specifically work with the public</p>
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The current Solent Forum Business Plan, 2020 to 2025, sets the context for the long-term work programme for the Solent Forum. The Forum currently has a small staff resource, and therefore there is a need to be selective as to what projects can be pursued and bid for. The work detailed in the Solent Forum's Annual Report for 2021/22 is shown below. [Annual Report \(solentforum.org\)](https://www.solentforum.org/annual-report)

Solent Forum Members' meetings and Special Events

The Forum runs two conference style meetings per year, these provide presentations and discussion on topical issues.

Workshop events can be put on to explore specific work areas/opportunities. A workshop on specific opportunities may be held. For 2021 a workshop is planned on Net Gain and Nature Recovery Strategies.

Solent Forum News Service

The bi-annual newsletter and the monthly e-news disseminate information on topical issues.

Building Biodiversity in the Solent Hub (BBS Hub)

This hub signposts resources related to enhancing the built coastal environment including net gain. Staff are working with the EU funded MARINEFF Project on their work to pilot the enhancement of coastal infrastructure.

Beneficial Use of Dredgings in the Solent (BUDS)

The second phase of BUDS is now complete with a feasibility study on offering a BUDS site at Lymington. Phase 3 has now begun and that will implement a system in the Western Solent whereby beneficial use of dredgings can be deposited by bottom placement.

Clean Solent Shores and Seas (CSSS)

This webpage resource is being developed into a sign posting hub for all Solent initiatives linked with Water Quality.

Solent Plastics Pollution Hub

This hub which will link with CSSS hub, will provide a legacy for the EA's Preventing Plastics Pollution Project, it will run until March 2023. The objective of the new hub is to "Provide a plastics and litter hub for the Solent and whole river catchments, to promote and share information and best practice

on plastics and litter clean up and reduction, building on the community network created within the Interreg Preventing Plastics Pollution project”.

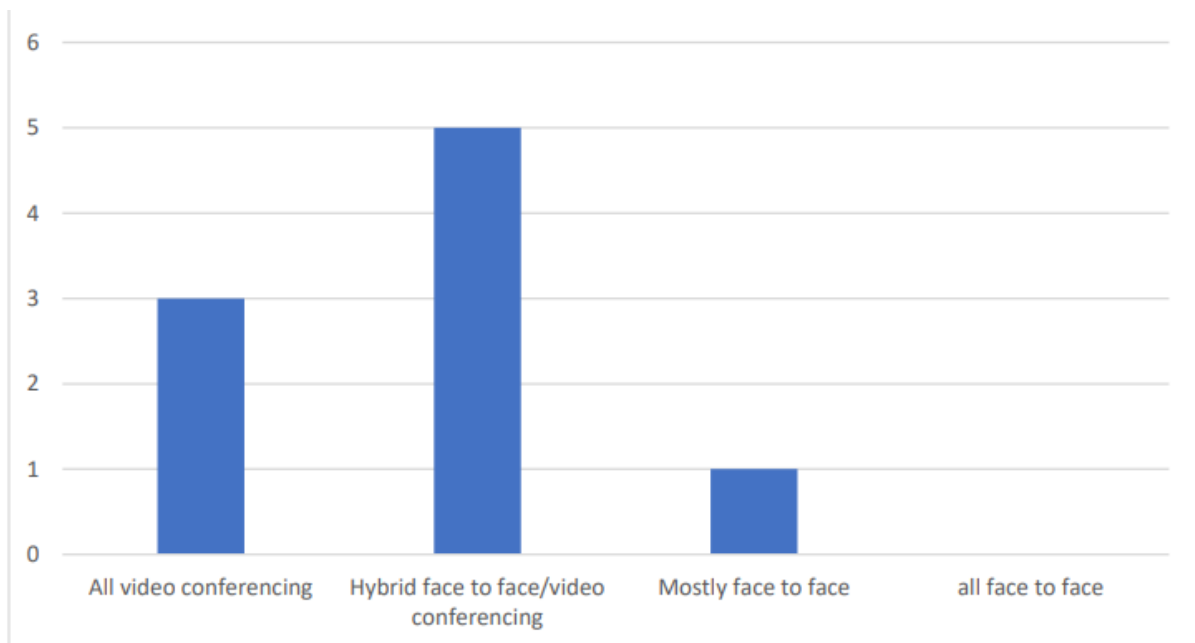
Solent Forum Natural Environment Group

The Solent Forum Natural Environment group is running projects addressing the environmental impacts of non-licensable activities that occur in the Solent’s designated sites.

Solent Forum Operations

Members were asked to provide their views on using video conferencing for meetings. Most preferred a hybrid model, although there is a slight preference to on-line meetings. Broader comments suggested that the meeting platform should depend on the type of meeting. Members’ Meetings for example are valued for networking and many enjoy meeting face to face.

Table 1 – Views on using video conferencing for meetings



There were no other notable suggestions for change in Solent Forum operations.