



# SOLENT PROTECTION SOCIETY

*Protecting the Solent and its environment for future generations.*

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AGM 02 December 2025

Dear Members

I have pleasure in enclosing the Society 2025 newsletter, together with my yearly report of the Society, our Hon Treasurer's report, and our Agenda for our AGM on 02 December 2025. The AGM is to be held at the Voco Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn) Herbert Walker Avenue, Southampton, SO15 1AG, to which all members are welcome.

I regret to report the sad loss of Rob Crighton, one of our Council members, on 25 July 2025 after a long illness. Rob was a hardworking member who is sadly missed. He looked after Southampton Water East and was our link with Solent Forum.

This year has seen the proposals by Associated British Ports (ABP) on their development of the Dibden Bay site adjacent to the former military port, known as Gateway 1. Members may recall that 20 years ago ABP lost a Public Enquiry to develop the whole site as a container terminal. The proposals threatened to erase fragile environmental habitats, including a designated SSSI and RAMSAR wetlands. SPS had put forward proposals to develop only part of the site leaving the remainder as a wildlife area accessible to the local community. ABP proposals now show just over a third of the site will form the Gateway 2 Development, mainly for import and export of vehicles, leaving the remaining area in its natural form and not disturbing the wildlife. SPS support this proposal, subject to the second transparent community consultation in the spring of 2026. SPS are cautious over proposals for a Development Control Order (DCO) overriding community consultation.

SPS have analysed the last 5 years of data on sewage spills, based on the 38 worst polluting CSO's in the Solent area, with data provided principally by the Environment Agency (EA). The details in our Newsletter have been presented in several graph forms together with overall rainfall comparison. The spills data is published annually which makes it difficult to assimilate in real-time. There are now several detail CSO maps, which give more statistics including repair costs and target dates. The dry, hot summer of 2025 shows an apparent improvement compared with the wet summer of 2024, but this is largely attributable to reduced rainfall rather than systemic improvement.

The government has introduced emergency legislation in the form of the Water (special Measures) Act 2025, providing the EA with new powers with immediate fines. SW have a Water Resources Management Plan, that proposes fixing failing pipework, increased sewer holding capacity, pump optimisation and addressing surface water issues. There is presently little confidence that they will deliver their proposals. There is no simple answer to a "reset" of the Water Companies. Their "Fix or Fail" approach to leaks, is a clear example of the lack of past investment.

The ongoing supply of drinking water is a major concern, with future supply well below predicted demand. Current proposals including high- tech and expensive Reverse Osmosis treatment, rather than Natural Nature Based Solutions. SPS are pressing the water companies to reconsider their approach to water supply and sewage treatment.

Global warming presents a real threat to the Solent region, more frequent flooding of our rivers and shores, more extreme rainfall followed by drought, plus continuing pollution from sewage outlets and agricultural runoff. Housing Development is continually being built without the necessary infrastructure in place. Our wildlife is declining as a result.

We all need to be aware of what we are doing to our Solent area by way of our Carbon Footprint and pollution by everyday activities. SPS have a ongoing challenge to monitor pollution, in its many forms, and to campaign for the protection and retention of our seas, coast and countryside.

We encourage new membership to support our ongoing work in safeguarding the Solent's environment and look forward to new Council members joining our team in 2026.

**Chris Edmond** Chairman, Solent Protection Society, November 2025.

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