

# The Poole Harbour Trails Project

## The place

Poole Harbour is a remarkable place - it has great natural beauty, scientific interest, historical association and cultural heritage. It is also one of the largest and most significant ecological sites on the south coast, with particular importance to bird life.

## What does the project want to do?

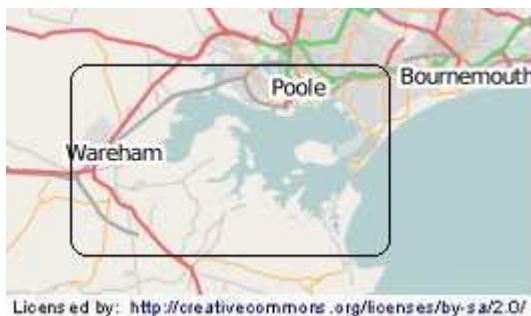
At the current time, there is not an easy route for pedestrians and cyclists to complete a circuit of the Harbour.

The vision for the project is to create a popular open access circular trail around Poole Harbour for walking, cycling and mobility vehicles that could be completed over a long weekend, or as a day cycle ride. This circular trail would form a 'hub' with additional routes leading to local attractions forming 'spokes'.



## Important considerations...

A number of 'values' have been identified that will help to shape the nature of the project. These values will influence decisions within the project about what is acceptable and not acceptable.



- Environment – that whatever happens is sensitive to the local environment.
- Equity – that the Harbour trail should be accessible to as many people as possible
- Sustainability – that whatever happens can be maintained in the long term.

## But aren't there already enough trails?

There are already a number of existing national and regional trails in Dorset. However, they are generally linear and tend to attract 'dedicated' walkers and cyclists. In addition, many of these trails are rather remote from the main centre of population in South East Dorset and are less well served by public transport.

A Poole Harbour Trail would...

- have a naturally beautiful and interesting location
- be circular
- be supported by a range of local attractions in the immediate vicinity
- serve a potentially wide demographic base that includes local residents (particularly families), people with varying standards of fitness and ability, holiday makers and visitors as well as the outdoor activity "specialists"
- cater to a wider range of 'motivations' or reasons why people go walking and cycling from people who just want to try a short section to enjoy the wonderful views to people who see completing the whole trail in a certain time as a challenge

## Benefits of the project...

Creating a Harbour trail could support a wide range of national and local objectives. However, strong links exist with the following key areas.

- Health - improvements in physical and mental health. Creating an environment for an active lifestyle and allowing people to 'connect' to nature.
- Economy - of the local area will benefit by the creation of jobs and investment in tourism.
- Transport – the route or routes that form the Poole Harbour Trail will connect communities for both leisure and work related journeys.
- Enjoyment – we often forget the importance of creating opportunities for people to have fun and take part in 'enjoyable' activities. If this is going to be a popular trail then it needs to 'tap into' what people find enjoyable.

## Who is going to do this?

Poole Harbour Trails Community Group has been established to develop this project. This community group is made up of local people volunteering their time.

## What needs to be done?

An outline of the key stages in the project can be seen in the diagram.

## The viability study

There are a number of reasons to carry out a viability study...

- It is an initial 'test' of the concept to see if it is valid and worth pursuing
- It would inform the preparation of the brief for the full feasibility study, identifying the most important aspects of the project that would require further detailed investigation
- It would act as a tool to secure funding for the full feasibility study by identifying the key benefits the project will bring and the likely scale of these benefits

## Publicity material

In a project of this scale good 'communication' is essential for success.

A range of high quality publicity material needs to be put in place to clearly communicate the projects vision and benefits to key local organisations and the general public in order to build support.

Publicity material is also needed to attract new volunteers to the Community Group to ensure there are the necessary skills, time and commitment within the project to successfully complete the later stages.

