

BLAKENEY HARBOUR ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN/WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our latest newsletter. We hope you have managed some time out on the water given some of the challenging weather we have had this year.

Navigation

Our team continues to monitor buoyage and beacons in the harbour but we have not been as active this season due to some issues with our lifting kit. Thanks as always to our members and particularly our volunteers who continue to support us in this vital work.

The changing shape of Blakeney Point

There have been huge changes to the spit over the last couple of years and it has become increasingly evident this year when seen at high tide. The new far point which has been growing southward for the last 30 plus years has become an ever-decreasing island and a new spit has emerged from the Gap to the north near port buoy number 10. This new spit will most likely grow in height and length as it too makes its way south before the cycle begins again in the coming decades.

The Bar and Harbour entrance have remained relatively stable throughout this year although we are expecting the entrance to move back to the West. Hopefully it won't spend too long over the Hjordis wreck!



The beginnings of a new Point?

It's been fascinating to see so much change in such a short period.



Drone photography by Neil Thompson.

Abandoned Boats

We continue to work with the National Trust to support their efforts to remove abandoned boats from Morston quay and the Trust has recently disposed of 14 or so boats. Please [contact us](#) with proof of ownership if you have a boat that needs to be removed.

Beach clean at Blakeney Point

A successful beach clean took place in September with 20 volunteers and staff from the BHA, National Trust and Norfolk Wildlife Trust. We hope to repeat this in February/March 2024.



Volunteers after the beach clean

Safety Workshop

BHA held a safety workshop in June aimed at raising awareness on all things relating to safety on the water. Our thanks go to Mandy Humphreys from the RNLI for her contribution.

AGM

Our AGM was held in August and thanks to those of you who came along. Members raised questions about wash awareness, safety for paddleboarders, kayakers and swimmers in Blakeney Creek and the replacement of sponsored buoys.

Elsewhere ...

Blakeney West Quay

BHA were delighted to support Mervyn Williamson's initiative to repair the West Quay staging in Blakeney. The work was completed to a high standard and has restored a valuable section of mooring as well as significantly improving the appearance of Blakeney's picturesque waterfront.

Stiffkey Bridge

BHA has written to the National Trust asking for an update on progress and timelines for the new bridge at Stiffkey Marshes.

Kayaks and Paddleboards

Given the marked increase in the numbers of people enjoying the Harbour from paddleboards and kayaks, we are working on publicity around safety and good practice. Meanwhile, here is some advice from our resident paddleboarding expert Sam:-

Stand Up Paddleboarding

The ease of access and calm looking waters in North Norfolk are very tempting for those picking up their paddle for the first time. Here are some top tips to consider when paddling around Morston, Blakeney and Cley:-

- ***Check the tide time and heights!*** It may seem obvious but understanding the tides and how they work is so important to keep yourself safe, we have large tides which create strong flow so get familiar with tides.

- ***Wear a Quick Release Waist Leash!*** Current guidance and research shows that ankle leashes pose a risk, as reaching the ankle in flow is hard to do. So, make sure you have a quick release waist leash as it's easier to reach should you need to ditch your board.

- ***Avoid Blakeney Point!*** There are so many reasons to avoid the Point when you are stand up paddleboarding, one of which is the movement of sand around the mouth. New channels are being created which can catch you out. Another issue is that paddleboards (and kayaks) look like predators from below and this can frighten and unsettle the seals. The best way to see the seals is by booking an organised boat trip.

- Finally, think about other water users - our waterways are busy so check the timing of the seal trips and avoid paddling at the same time. The creeks can be quite narrow and it's easy to get in the way or catch the wash from a boat...not ideal if you already have wobbly legs!

Please enjoy the water safely!



PARTNER ACTIVITIES

Cley Harbour had another successful season with the usual Harbour Day and Cockle Fleet visit providing highlights, together with an excellent Sailing Tester Day which gave less experienced sailors some supervised time on the water.



Cockle Day in Cley



Harbour Day

In the months ahead, the Cley team hopes to carry out further maintenance work on the channel and repairs to the slipway.

In the meantime, come along to Carols on the Quay on Sunday 10 December and follow Cley Harbour [online](#) or visit in person to enjoy the opening of some beautiful advent windows through December.

Gallery

And finally, some photos for you to enjoy...

Thank you for your continued support.

The BHA Team



Stormy weather



Northern lights over Cley
(photo courtesy of Kathryn Lord)