



**Welcome from Richard Parkinson,
Port Director, Solent Gateway**

Welcome to the first edition of the Solent Gateway newsletter

We're excited to launch the first edition of the Solent Gateway newsletter, where we'll be sharing regular updates about Solent Gateway and the proposals for Solent Gateway 2.

I wanted to share with you information about the development of ABP Solent Gateway which continues to move at pace, with several key milestones already achieved – and more on the horizon:

- Phases 1a and 1b are now complete, delivering 30 acres of open storage on site. This marks a major step forward in expanding our operational capacity and ability to support MOD operations.
- We are delighted to have delivered the footpath link between the port and Autumn Road in Marchwood village. For the first time, this provides a safe and accessible walking route for staff, military personnel and port users who walk or cycle to the port. We've also improved the cycle crossing from Old Cracknore Close into Cracknore Hard Lane and have installed an island at the top of Cracknore Hard for safer crossing of the road.

- Phase 1 also saw us deliver our habitat enhancement obligations. We have completed landscaping works inside the port and funded enhancement works on 24 acres of New Forest land to ensure we have delivered above the required bio-diversity gain of 10%.
- Phase 2 is now complete, safeguarding the long-term operational capability of the Falklands Jetty for both commercial and military use. This project was recently recognised with the Best Project Award at the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) Awards – a testament to the quality and impact of the work delivered.
- Phase 3 is about to begin, bringing an additional 17 acres of development.

The development of ABP Solent Gateway enables it to be used to support automotive and other roll-on/roll-off import and export operations. It has been used over the last 18 months in this role, with newly developed areas being occupied as soon as available. This reflects the demand for space in the Port of Southampton, of which Solent Gateway is an integral part.

It was a pleasure to meet members of the local community at our recent public consultation events, where we shared our emerging plans for Solent Gateway 2 – the proposed expansion of Solent Gateway on the northern section of the reclaimed land between Marchwood and Hythe.

Our non-statutory consultation closed on 13 October, but this is just the beginning of our engagement. We are committed to working with the local community, Parish Councils, and other key stakeholders throughout 2026, as we prepare for the formal public consultation in Autumn 2026.

As Port Director at Solent Gateway, I also have the role of Head of Defence Engagement for ABP. We have a strong relationship with 17 Port and Maritime Regiment and together, we ensure the MOD requirements are always met in the port. We have an agreement in place with the MOD to provide access to our other ABP ports to support sea mounting operations. Whilst Marchwood remains the MOD's primary sea mounting centre, there may be occasions when an additional port access is required, so this agreement gives the MOD assured access within assured timelines to meet their operational planning guidelines. You can read more about our ongoing collaboration with the MOD and our future plans in this edition of the newsletter.

I hope you find this newsletter useful and if you have any feedback or suggestions for future editions, please contact us at abpsouthamptoncommunication@abports.co.uk

Yours sincerely,

Richard Parkinson
Port Director
Solent Gateway

Solent Gateway 2 – our emerging plans to expand the port

Solent Gateway 2 – our emerging proposals for a considered port expansion

On 16 September, we launched the Solent Gateway 2 non-statutory public consultation, marking the first step in our planning journey. This consultation was designed to share our early ideas and gather feedback, helping us shape our emerging proposals ahead of a second consultation in Autumn 2026.

Consultation highlights

The consultation ran from 16 September to 13 October and included:

- 7 in-person community drop-in events
- 2 live webinars, with Q&A session

We were pleased to meet local community members, each providing valuable feedback on our initial proposals.

Key elements of the proposal

- New marine facilities – A new jetty located near the existing jetties at Solent Gateway.
- Automotive terminal space – Operational buildings, storage areas, multi-decked vehicle storage, and administration facilities.
- Environmental enhancements – Recognising the ecological value of the Waterside area and the adjacent National Park, we're exploring ways to preserve and enrich the landscape. This includes green buffers between the development and nearby residential areas.

- Improved road access – A new access route connecting directly to the A326, allowing vehicles to bypass Marchwood and access Solent Gateway more efficiently.
- New community green space – A major new country park and environmental improvements equivalent to over 300 football pitches (based on current estimates). This space would offer new and enhanced walking and cycling routes, linking Marchwood and Hythe.

Next steps

Throughout 2026, we'll continue engaging with local parish councils and other organisations to discuss our evolving plans and answer any questions.

To stay informed and receive updates, please register your details on our website

www.solentgateway2.co.uk



ABP sign landmark agreement with MOD to boost logistics capability

Earlier this year we announced a new strategic relationship agreement that we signed with the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD). The agreement boosts the flexibility and resilience of the UK Armed Forces sea mounting capability.

The agreement provides the MOD with access to ABP's portfolio of ports across the UK for sea mounting (the loading and unloading of military hardware from vessels used to transport material across the world) at no additional cost to the original contract for the provision of such services at the Port of Marchwood.

The new strategic relationship agreement builds on the long-standing sea mounting capability at the port of Marchwood. In 2016, following a tendering process, the port was let to commerce on a 35-year lease, with the MOD as a lead customer. This model allowed the MOD to retain a sea mounting capability, but de-risk the infrastructure maintenance costs of a large and complex site. In a landmark deal, the lease also ensures that the MOD receives a share of commercial

revenue generated through the port.

ABP are investing £100M in the port infrastructure at Marchwood, including jetty improvement works significantly increasing the capability of the port both for defence and commercial activities. This includes allowing the world's largest car carrying ships to dock. Improvement and maintenance works at Marchwood will continue to ensure that Marchwood meets the MOD's requirement now and in the future.

Marchwood is one aspect of ABP's commitment to the Armed Forces and the defence sector more generally. Barrow, one of ABP's portfolio of 21 ports, is fundamental to the UK's submarine building programme. Other ports, such as Cardiff, Southampton and Hull frequently host naval vessels, not just from the UK but also NATO allies.



Henrik L. Pedersen, Chief Executive Officer of Associated British Ports, said:

"As part of our strategic commitment to supporting the defence sector, ABP is proud to provide the MOD access to our network of ports across Britain for both national emergencies and routine business. By doing so, ABP is confident it will increase the resilience and capacity of the MOD's sea mounting capability for the most demanding scenarios, whilst driving greater cost-effectiveness into routine deployments. We look forward to deepening our relationship with the Armed Forces and the strategic defence sector across the UK."

Vice Admiral Andy Kyte CB, MOD's Chief of Defence Logistics and Support (CDLS), said:

"This new arrangement greatly boosts the resilience, efficiency and agility of Defence's Sea Mounting Capability through access to ABP's national port estate. The relationship with ABP forms a key component of the UK Strategic Base which is critical to Defence's ability to mount, sustain and recover force elements."





ABP Solent Gateway wins Best Project at the Institution of Civil Engineers Awards

Along with project partners Boskalis Westminster, Knights Brown, and Ramboll, we won the Best Project Asset Maintenance Award at the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) South East Awards for the ABP Solent Gateway Marine Infrastructure project. This project successfully maintained and future-proofed the 40-year-old Falklands Jetty, ensuring its continued utilisation for current and future Ministry of Defence (MOD) and commercial operations.

This project, now complete, has maintained the Falklands Jetty, ensuring it remains capable of accommodating a wide variety of vessel sizes for at least another 40 years. The scope of works included deepening the berth, constructing two new dolphins, and increasing the load capacity of the existing mooring bollard and fixed fender configurations.

The engineering team at ABP worked with local supply chain partners to tackle the project's complex challenges, including a strict winter schedule from December to March to minimise the impact on salmon migration and other marine ecosystems. Preserving the existing infrastructure was crucial to avoid building a new berth. Due to its location, most of the work – such as site investigations, and pile installations – was conducted over water. The project's complexity earned it the Best Project Asset Maintenance Award for 2025.

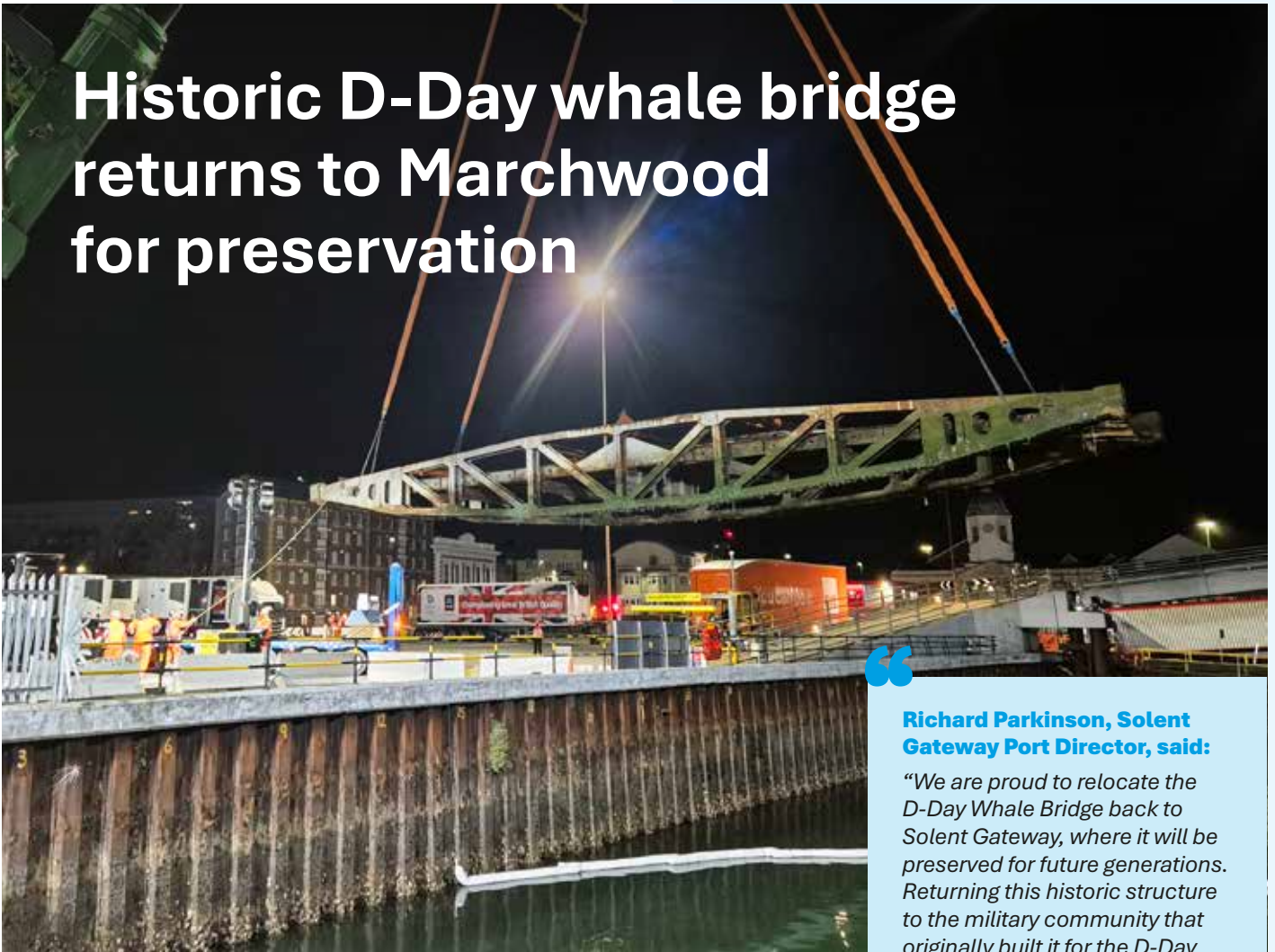


Jason Boulter CEng MICE, ABP Engineering Project Manager, said:

“I am incredibly proud to have led this project and to collaborate with our specialist supply chain partners to safeguard an existing asset that can continue to fully support both MOD and commercial operations at ABP Solent Gateway. Winning the award underscores our commitment and teamwork to deliver on time and achieve our goals. It has been a pleasure working alongside Boskalis Westminster, Knights Brown, and Ramboll.”



Historic D-Day whale bridge returns to Marchwood for preservation



The D-Day Whale bridge, a vital component of the Mulberry harbours used during the Normandy landings in 1944, has been carefully lifted from its current position near the Red Funnel terminal in Southampton prior to be transported to Marchwood Military Port.

Many of the floating roadway sections, known as a Whale bridge, played a crucial role in enabling Allied forces to land vehicles and supplies on the beaches of Normandy. Its return to Marchwood – where it is believed to have been constructed over 80 years ago – marks a significant moment in the preservation of British military heritage. This week, the operation, coordinated by a specialist team, involved lifting the Whale bridge out of the water using

a high-capacity crane. Once safely hoisted, it was placed onto a lorry designed to accommodate its size and weight for transport. The Whale has been transported to Solent Gateway, where the bridge will undergo cleaning and preservation to protect its structure and historical integrity.

Once restored, the bridge will be placed outside the port in Marchwood acting as a gate guardian.



Richard Parkinson, Solent Gateway Port Director, said:

“We are proud to relocate the D-Day Whale Bridge back to Solent Gateway, where it will be preserved for future generations. Returning this historic structure to the military community that originally built it for the D-Day invasion is a way of reconnecting with our past and paying tribute to the extraordinary efforts of those who served.”

Lt Col Tom Goodall, Commanding Officer 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC, said:

“We are extremely grateful for all of the incredible work done by ABP to return this historic artifact to Marchwood. It will serve as a poignant reminder of the important role the community played in the Nation’s history.”

Neil Chapman, Operations Director at Red Funnel, said:

“We were pleased to support the relocation of Whale Bridge as part of a collaborative operation between Red Funnel and ABP. Part of Red Funnel’s heritage, Whale Bridge was once used as a Red Funnel linkspan, and we’re delighted to see this historic piece of infrastructure undergo restoration and preservation.”





ABP Southampton supports 17 Port and Maritime Regiment with historic mural donation

We proudly supported the creation of a new mural within the Junior Soldiers' Dining Facility at the 17 Port and Maritime Regiment, Royal Logistic Corps.

The mural, which spans three walls, captures the rich and often unsung history of Army Maritime operations. It honours the legacy of the 17 Port and Maritime Regiment and its predecessors, showcasing their involvement in pivotal military campaigns including Operation Overlord (D-Day and the Battle of Normandy), the Falklands Conflict (Operation Corporate), and both Gulf Wars (Operations Granby and Telic).

The final panel brings the story into the present, highlighting the Regiment's current capabilities, including the Mexeflote facility (a large float created

to take cargo ashore), military cargo ships, and military diving operations. The mural not only serves as a tribute to the Regiment's operational excellence but also as a source of pride and reflection for those who serve and have served.

The 17 Regiment Dining Facility also hosts a monthly veterans' breakfast, offering former service members a chance to gather, reflect, and share their own stories – now surrounded by a powerful visual reminder of their shared heritage. This is extremely well attended, with retired Service personnel coming from all over the UK.



Richard Parkinson, Port Director at ABP Solent Gateway, said:

"We are extremely proud to support the British Army and work closely with the Ministry of Defence through our operations at Marchwood Military Port and beyond. Contributing to this mural is a small token of our appreciation for the vital role the 17 Port and Maritime Regiment plays both locally and globally. It's a visual tribute to their past and present achievements."

Lieutenant Colonel Tom Goodall, Commanding Officer said:

"The Regiment is humbled by the very kind donation from ABP; their generosity has made this incredible dedication to Army Maritime possible. With ABP and 17 Port and Maritime Regiment working so closely together at the Sea Mounting Centre, it is very poignant for them to help capture such significant events in the Regiment's past and we look together to the future."



ABP Solent Gateway supports Fawley Armed Forces day

In the summer, we were proud to contribute to Fawley Armed Forces day held at the Gang Warily Recreation Centre.

In its 12th year, the event featured live music, historic Army Aircraft, a fun fair, food stalls, and a Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Flypast.

It's a pleasure to support local events like this one, which brings together the Waterside community along with serving members and veterans of the armed forces.

A screenshot of a virtual port tour interface. The top left shows the ABP logo and the tagline 'KEEPING BRITAIN TRADING'. Below this is a white box with 'Port of Southampton' and a blue box with 'VIRTUAL MAP'. At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'AREAS' with a location pin icon, 'FACILITIES' with a building icon, and 'CRUISE' with a ship icon. The background is an aerial view of a port with many blue and red shipping containers.

Explore the Port of Southampton virtually!

We're excited to introduce our brand-new virtual port tour, designed to give you a clear view of where our key operations take place across the port.

We're excited to introduce our brand-new virtual port tour, designed to give you a clear view of where our key operations take place across the port. From the UK's second-largest container terminal to the busiest automotive export terminal, and our five world-class cruise terminals, you can now explore it all from wherever you are. We have also included our other sites – Solent Gateway, Marchwood Industrial Park and Eling Wharf.

So, whether you're a resident, new to working at the port, a cruise passenger, an HGV driver, or one of our stakeholders visiting the port, the tour includes helpful information. You'll find guidance on routes, dock gate access, and how to reach the cruise terminals with ease.

We have developed this site in line with feedback received at our Community Port Tour held in April this year. This tour offers a digital way to view the port, particularly for those who couldn't attend the in-person tour during the Easter Holidays, and we hope it gives you a flavour of the scale and size of our operations and port.

We look forward to welcoming you – virtually and in person! Click the link below to open the tour!



www.abports.co.uk/locations/southampton/360

ABP Solent Gateway supports Marchwood Junior School fireworks night

We are proud to support the local community by donating £500 to the annual Marchwood Junior School Firework Display – a much-loved event that brings families together while raising vital funds for the school.

Over the years, the event has grown significantly, now attracting over 1,000 attendees from across the local area. In 2024, the display raised an impressive £6,000 for the school's Parents, Friends & Teachers Association (PTFA), helping to fund projects that directly benefit pupils.

The money raised will be used for new initiatives, including the creation of a sensory garden.

ABP Solent Gateway's contribution reflects its ongoing commitment to supporting local education and community engagement.

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Zara Cullen, Chair of Marchwood Junior School PTFA, said:

“We are truly grateful to ABP for their generous sponsorship of our community fireworks event. Their support helps bring our community together in celebration and ensures a memorable evening for all. As well as helping us raise much needed funds to support the school by creating a sensory garden for all the children to enjoy.”

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Inspiring the next generation: our Educational Outreach Programme



We're pleased to have launched a new educational outreach programme aimed at engaging schools and colleges near both the Port of Southampton and Solent Gateway.

Our goal is to inspire the next generation to explore the wide range of careers available in the maritime sector. From graduate programmes to apprenticeships, and roles in marine piloting, engineering, project management, cruise operations, commercial, property, and finance – there's something for everyone at ABP.

Through our Next Generation Educational Outreach Programme, we're offering:

**Port tours / Careers talks /
Careers days / Classroom activities**

If you're a headteacher, careers advisor, or student interested in learning more, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact nicola.denbigh@abports.co.uk to register your interest.

Careers day at Ocean Cruise Terminal

Save the date for the next Maritime and Transport Careers Day to be held at Ocean Cruise Terminal on Thursday 20 November. The event is co-ordinated by the Maritime and Transport Careers Programme (MTCP).

This will be the second year the port has hosted the MTCP careers day. Local schools within the Solent area have been invited to the port and meet industry leaders in maritime and transport. Fifteen local maritime and transport organisations exhibited at the event last year, including ABP, DP World, Carnival UK, Red Funnel, Meachers Global Transport, Southampton International Airport, Tesla, Solent Stevedores, and

Williams Shipping. During the day, students had the opportunity to meet each organisation and learn about careers, apprenticeships, and graduate programmes; they also had the chance to speak to employees from each organisation during a speed networking session. Outside of the terminal, pupils were able to get a "hands on" experience inside HGV cabins, the Tech Truck from Fareham College, and a Tesla car.



The event in November this year will follow a similar format.

For details contact Katie Bruce katie.bruce@hants.gov.uk – at Maritime and Transport Careers Programme, or take a look at the website



www.mtcp.uk/



If you have any feedback on this newsletter, please email absouthamptoncommunications@abports.co.uk