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# News Service

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AS BRANSCOMBE HOSTS SECOND NAPOLI INFORMATION PRESS-CALL...

## **Environment head is pleased with beach clean-up progress**

THE second in a series of three Press Calls aimed at improving the flow of public information about the clean-up operation surrounding the MSC Napoli takes place on Thursday 23 August at Branscombe.

Once again, journalists will have a chance to interview key players in the operation to find out what progress is being made and how the operation is expected to go in the coming weeks.

With an announcement still awaited as to when and how the stern section of the stricken container ship will be removed, councils and other agencies involved in Operation Napoli are continuing to meet on a regular basis.

The latest news on the beaches is that a number of car parts have washed up at Beer, Seaton and Branscombe. These have been collected by DRS staff and taken to the compound at Branscombe. There have so far been no further reports of oil coming ashore.

Councillor Graham Liverton, EDDC's Portfolio Holder Environment, who oversees the Council's beach clean-up operation, said: "I am extremely pleased with the way all of the agencies involved have worked together.

"EDDC's officers have been working closely with their counterparts at County Hall and with the salvage contractors DRS to produce sensible solutions to the various problems that the Napoli has posed over the past seven months.

### **Improvement**

"We have faced a number of challenges, not least balancing the need to protect the public from injury or soiling as a result of cargo or oil washed ashore from the ship with a desire to keep beaches open and allow people to enjoy their holidays.

"I believe the new system of information boards is a great improvement. As this situation wears on, so we are becoming more inventive and practised at keeping the flow of information going".

Councillor Mike Green, EDDC's ward member for Beer and Branscombe, said: "Whilst most people living locally should be up to speed with the latest information about the Napoli, at this time of year a lot of people come to our resorts for the day or for a few days. If they live in another part of the country, they may not be aware of the Napoli being here, or that there is a chance of stepping in oil on the beach. That is why we are concentrating our efforts on keeping everyone informed through our website and through the information boards on the seafront.

"There will obviously come a time when the ship's owners decide that the contractors have been working for long enough and the salvage operation on the beaches will be scaled down. We would hope that day is still some way off as the holiday season is still in full swing and it is important to keep the beaches in pristine condition for the rest of the summer. As we go into the autumn, dealing with oil and debris is still a priority for us, and we will need to consider very carefully how this is to be tackled".

While DRS and EDDC staff patrol the beaches to identify and deal with new patches of oil pollution, the information boards at local beaches give detailed information on the latest situation and are maintained by the onshore contractors.

Any sightings of oil should be reported via telephone to East Devon District Council on **01395 571 700**. The Council will immediately pass the details on to the contractors.

### **Reporting oil**

The public are asked to exercise care when reporting oil sightings and to do so promptly. Well-intentioned but outdated and inaccurate information has led to delays in identifying and responding to spills on local beaches.

If anyone is affected by oil on their skin or hair, or if a pet is affected, the oil is best removed by the use of baby or cooking oil, followed by washing with normal soap.

Next week, EDDC is inviting the Media to attend the third of this series of Press Calls on East Devon's beaches, to see the work that is being done and to talk to key people involved in the clean-up operation. There will be photo / filming opportunities, as follows:

#### **Week 3 - Thursday 30 August at 10 a.m.**

Come to Sidmouth Beach (Port Royal end) and meet Andy Borman, Devon County Council's Emergency Planning Officer, AND Councillor Graham Liverton, EDDC's Portfolio Holder, Environment..

### **Ends**

#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

The bow section of the Napoli has been removed to Belfast for recycling and the stern section will now be made safe and removed for recycling. It is likely that small amounts of oil will continue to come ashore or be released from shingle banks above and below the tide line over the coming

months. Whilst every reasonable effort is made to contain oil and to prevent further leakage, this cannot be guaranteed.

The Napoli carried light, medium and heavy fuel oils, a total amount of about 4,000 tons (4,000 cubic meters), and some 2,300 containers.

To date, all but 9 containers have been located and dealt with. The 9 missing containers do not contain any hazardous materials or cargo.

Operations to remove oil from the vessel were conducted and some 3,800 tons of oil was successfully pumped out and secured. The total spillage was about 200 tons (200 cubic meters). To put this in context, the Sea Empress in Milford Haven in 1996 spilled 72,000 tons (72,000 cubic meters) of oil. In Milford Haven, the environment was fully recovered within 18 months.

The responses to all pollution and the recovery of containers, container parts and their contents, oil spills off-shore and on-shore following protocols established between all interested parties. These protocols incorporate the use of booms, absorbents, heavy plant, manual labour and dispersants wherever beneficial.

The ship's owners undertook to manage and pay for the on and off-shore recovery and clear up operations. This has included, from the time of the vessel's arrival, onshore contractors, salvors and off-shore contractors, divers, aerial, surface and shore surveillance, of the Napoli and Lyme Bay. Divers continue to identify and clear container parts and cargo from the sea bed, from the deeper waters in the bay to the tide line.

People on the beach may observe rigid inflatable boats (RIBS), service boats and landing craft operating along the coastline. These vessels are working and so boating enthusiasts are advised to keep well clear. The onshore contractor is using heavy plant, manual labour, an ATV, 4WD vehicles and an inflatable in their efforts to monitor and to react to oil threatening the local beaches.

On and off-shore oil spills are attended to under internationally agreed protocols. These protocols exclude the use of chemical dispersants on-shore and focus on environmentally accepted methods including the use of inert absorbents and physical waste and oil removal. They also recognise the role and capacity of the natural environment to disperse oil pollution. Use of chemical dispersants is strictly controlled and their use onshore is prohibited.

Officers from East Devon District Council and Devon County Council have been involved since Day 1 of the Napoli incident. They have worked at various stages of the operation with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), the Police, Environment Agency, National Trust and many other agencies to deal with the many and varied challenges that the ship has presented.

For information, please contact:

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[www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk)