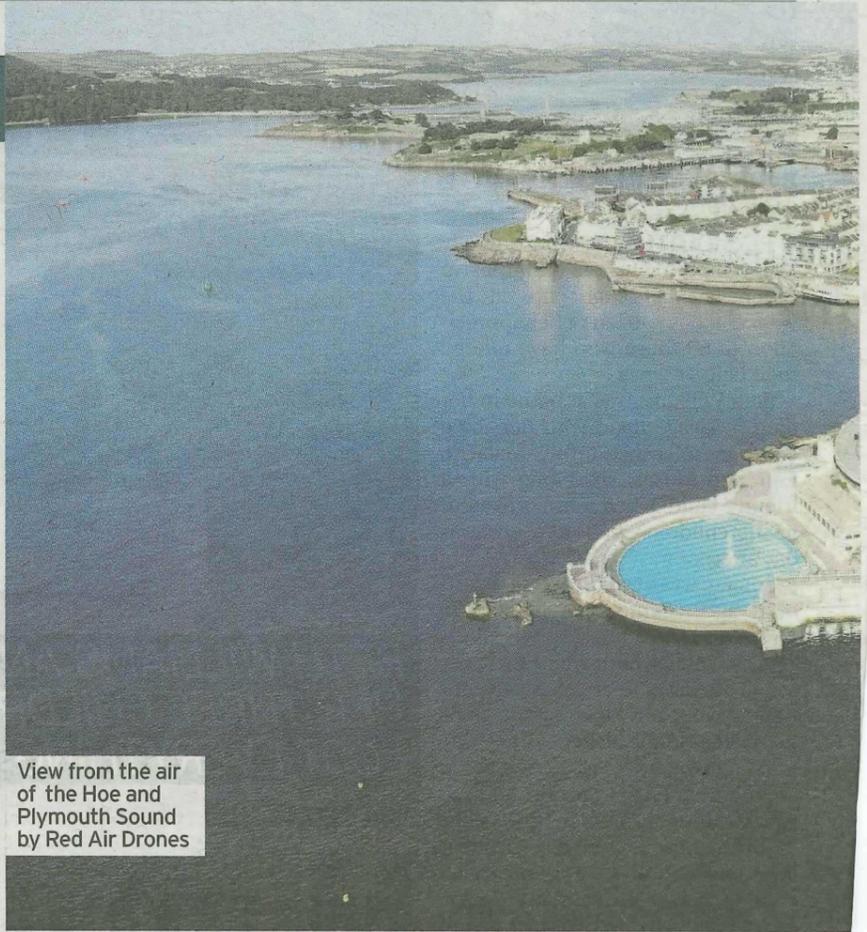


News

Marine Park plan all about turning back to the sea



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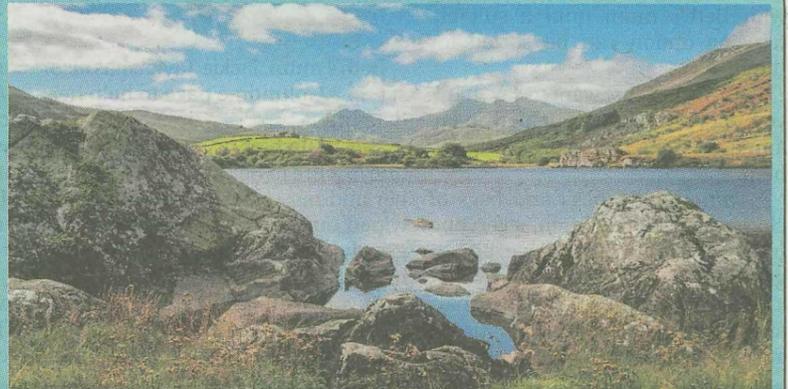
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Get together to celebrate delights of the Sound

PLYMOUTH will be getting together to celebrate the sea this weekend.

There is a National Marine Park party on the Hoe Saturday, September 14, from 10am to 2pm where you can discover what the Sound has to offer.

One of the highlights of the day will be the chance to take virtual reality "dive" in the Sound. The VR special uses professionally filmed 360-degree underwater footage.

The filming was done in the Sound this summer and will be most people's first exposure to the incredible world under the waves.

At the same time, the Plymouth Seafood Festival on the Barbican

on Saturday and Sunday will tempt visitors with a taste of the ocean.

Sue Dann, Plymouth's Cabinet member for Environment said:

"We want everyone to enjoy Plymouth Sound, this incredible free resource that we have in Britain's Ocean City. This year is the 70th anniversary of national parks in this country, and we think Plymouth should be the first of a series of national marine parks.

"Saturday's event is all about raising the profile of the national

marine park. Once partners have signed the document and the celebration event is finished, the hard work really begins on developing Plymouth as the UK's first national marine park."

Leisure operator Everyone Active has also worked with Plymouth City Council to extend the opening season of Tinside Lido by a week, keeping it available for the event. It will be offering free swimming sessions from 10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm on Saturday.



Cllr Sue Dann

the National Marine Aquarium in Plymouth, with backing from the city council and Labour MP Luke Pollard.

Council leader Tudor Evans said: "We have a unique combination of assets in Plymouth Sound - 1,000 species of wildlife, nuclear submarines, fishing boats, pleasure craft. And we are in a unique position to exploit these assets.

"One of the jobs the park will do is to improve access to the water for local people and tourists. A shocking 17% of the public in Plymouth have never been to the seaside. We've got a long way to go to ensure that Plymouthians enjoy their birthright.

"I know people will worry that we'll be slapping protection orders on everything, but the protection orders we have already are good enough." He stressed that the park would not try to stop people from doing what they do already.

Lewis Pugh, the Plymouth-born UN Patron of the Oceans, will be in the city for Friday's signing.

"In the past Plymouth launched many great voyages that changed the history of the world.

"It is my hope that, in the future, people will look back at Plymouth as

the ocean innovator that set the standard for national marine parks in Britain and across the globe.

"The future of our planet will be determined by what happens in our oceans.

"I have always been proud to be born in the greatest of maritime cities. Today I am particularly proud to see Plymouth leading the charge on ocean protection with this important national marine park initiative."

Charles Clover, executive director of the Blue Marine Foundation, said: "Ours is a great maritime nation which tends to forget its links to the sea.

"There is nowhere better to rediscover them than in Plymouth Sound, the departure point for so many historic voyages and a natural harbour of great beauty, above and below water. Congratulations to Plymouth for creating the first national marine park."

Stuart Elford, chief executive of Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, said: "This is a really exciting opportunity to raise the profile of Britain's Ocean City and it will be fantastic for the local economy, bringing more visitors, opening up funding opportunities for research and other important projects, and attracting investment and more jobs."

Dr Keith Hiscock, a member of Plymouth Sound Divers and recognised as one of Britain's leading marine ecologists and conservationists, said: "We have some of the most diverse and attractive marine habitats in Britain as well as a plethora of wrecks for diving.

"Facilities to get out there and enjoy those diverse habitats are already well established but creating a marine park invites ideas on how to make that hidden world more accessible, more visible and better understood."

The future of our planet will be determined by what happens in our oceans.

Lewis Pugh

By KEITH ROSSITER

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A SHOCKING statistic lies behind plans to turn Plymouth Sound into Britain's first National Marine Park - 17% of the Plymouth public has never been to the seaside.

In 2003 the Barcelona architect David Mackay, in his Vision for Plymouth, noted that the city appeared to have turned its back on the sea.

Now the partners behind an ambitious project for a National Marine Park centred on the Sound hope to show locals and visitors alike what's there - and how to access it.

Plans for the country's first National Marine Park take a giant stride forward tomorrow when city leaders, experts in the marine and maritime sector and other partners from the public, private, and voluntary sector sign a pledge to make it happen.

And on Saturday the public will

have a chance to share in the excitement.

Plymouth City Council has been given a year by the government to come up with a blueprint for the park. If ministers like what they see, the Plymouth Sound National Marine Park will get the go-ahead, and the model created in the West-country will be offered to other parts of Britain.

The park aims to showcase to the world the unique and fantastic assets that Britain's Ocean City has to offer, including an estimated 1,000 different species of marine life, and help boost the economy, attract more visitors, enable funding for research and range of other benefits.

The idea of a National Marine Park was first mooted by Professor Martin Attrill in a Guardian article in 2012.

It wasn't until last year that it was brought to life when the Blue Marine Foundation staged a conference at

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