

Local Ore and Alde yachtsmen have been resisting the move to shut down the Orfordness Light, partly on navigation grounds and partly on esthetic grounds, claiming the current lighthouse building should be preserved as a landmark. Trinity House has said it would not be able to afford to maintain it as monument.

At a meeting at the beginning of June, Trinity House told HASA, the RNLI and Harwich Harbour Authority that it would be willing for the National Trust to take over and maintain the building.

Nigel Mower, chairman of the Harwich Area Sailing Association (HASA) said after the meeting: "The Trinity House team went through all their research and reasoning behind turning off the light. It was all very sound and logical. Both Stuart Caruthers (RYA Cruising Manager) and I said that leisure boaters thought the light was "nice to have" as a navigation aid but not essential. HHA said the same, as did the RNLI.

"The conclusion is that the light will be decommissioned after the Southwold light has been upgraded. As these are both land based facilities this is not likely to start until the autumn, as Trinity House prefers to do as much of the water borne maintenance as possible during the summer. When the plans are confirmed they will let us know."

Trinity House has a number of national monuments, which it has to maintain to discharge its legal obligations to navigation. Once a national monument has been decommissioned, the property becomes available to any body that wants to take it on. Two local examples are South Foreland and Happisburgh. It is understood the National Trust has already expressed an interest in taking over the Orfordness Lighthouse and once the planned dates are known then discussions will commence.

If the Lighthouse was taken over by a group that wanted to maintain the light that is not a problem. The light would be shown on navigation charts as an occasional light as there would be no legal obligation to keep it operational.

Trinity House has published the results of its full UK survey on its website <http://www.trinityhouse.co.uk> .