

Minutes of a Meeting of the **BEACH MANAGEMENT  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage,  
on **WEDNESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2016** at **2.30 p.m.**

**In Attendance:** Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman  
Councillor G Marsh

Mr R Brockman – North Beach Representative  
Mr I Brown – Maritime Coastguard Agency  
Ms R Compton – Ocean Bay Watersports  
Mr J Deare – North Beach Representative  
Mr N Field – Maritime Coastguard Agency  
Mr S Hill – Swanage Boat Hire  
Mr G King – Swanage Angling Club  
Mr P Loudoun – Seaweed Removal  
Mr G Richardson – RNLI Community Sea Safety Team  
Mr J Taylor – Pierhead Watersports

Councillor C Finch  
Councillor M Whitwam  
Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk  
Mr G Brookes – Operations Manager  
Miss N Clark – Management Support Officer

**Other Attendees:** Mr K Sheppard – RNLI Lifeguard  
Mr L Beattie – Wessex Water  
Mr E Taylor – Wessex Water

**Public Participation Time**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

Prior to commencement of the Meeting, Mr S Hill was welcomed to the Committee as the new proprietor of Swanage Boat Hire.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor G Green (STC), Mr M Goater (PDC), Mr T Greasty (Designated Bathing Zone Representative), Mr P Jones (Durlston Country Park), Mr R Marsh (Quay Operators' Representative), Mr R Martin (Swanage Sailing Club), Mr D Turnbull (Swanage Lifeboat), and Mr C Wiggins (Beach Concession Operators' Representative).

2) **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 3rd February 2016**

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Mr G King and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

3) **Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016**

4) **Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

5) **Wessex Water – update on proposals to improve the Ulwell Stream Outfall**

Mr Ed Taylor, Wastewater Regulation Adviser, Wessex Water (WW), introduced himself to the meeting. Mr Taylor had replaced the previous WW committee representative Mr Andy Mears, and gave an update on the works completed at the Shore Road combined sewer overflow in March 2016. It was noted that the proposed improvements to the outfall had not yet been completed.

A discussion ensued, during which comments were made that WW had previously confirmed financial approval to the outfall improvement works, and a design briefing had been drawn up/presented to the Town Council. However, it was explained that, due to a health and safety issue WW had encountered regarding a missing grille upstream, these improvement works could not be completed until the issue had been resolved. Contact had been made with the Environment Agency for advice in this respect.

Health and safety concerns of beach users were again reiterated, and it was therefore agreed that representatives from WW and the Town Council would arrange to meet to consider possible options for WW and the Council to work together to find a solution to this outstanding matter in the interests of safety.

Mr Luke Beattie, Operations Manager for Sewage Treatment Works, WW, also introduced himself to the meeting, and gave an overview and update on the Swanage sewage treatment plant discharge issues that had been experienced during August 2016. It was reported that adverse weather conditions, along with a sizeable increase in headcount in the town during Carnival week, had exacerbated these issues. It was explained that experts had been employed to review/improve operations and equipment at the treatment plant.

Notification of the spillages had been made to STC, who were obliged under Bathing Regulations to display advisory signage. Subsequent water testing had shown no/little impact on bathing water quality. A comment was made that there had been some delay in this process, and it was confirmed that procedures would be reviewed for the future.

Thanks were given to Mr Taylor and Mr Beattie for attending the meeting, for their input to discussions, and for the updates provided, which had been appreciated.

4) **Lifeguards and sea safety**

a) **Review of 2016 season and plans for 2017**

Mr Kester Sheppard, RNLI Area Lifeguard Manager, gave an update on/ review of lifeguarding operations for the first season on Main Beach. The lifeguards had focussed on integrating with the local community/members of the public, beach concession operators, and Town Council staff, and feedback received had been positive. The service had experienced no major issues, although some minor areas for improvement had been identified.

It was explained that 95% of a lifeguard's work was through preventative action/education, and could be undertaken in a number of ways, (face to face, via the public address system, and via signs and flags). It was noted that beach

visitor population on the patrolled section of the beach had been monitored, on a two-hourly 'snapshot' basis, over the six-week summer period, and had totalled some 73,000 visitors.

A question was raised as to whether contact details could be made available for the lifeguards (e.g. phone/radio channel). However, a reminder was given that, in the event of an emergency, it was vital that '999' was dialled to call for urgent assistance.

Thanks were given by the Committee to the Lifeguards, Coastguards, and Coastguard Helicopter Services for their invaluable help and assistance during the year.

Mr E Taylor and Mr L Beattie left the meeting at 3.10 p.m.

An analysis of the 2016 lifeguard operations had been undertaken, and a briefing note had been prepared by Mr Sheppard for consideration detailing three potential options for the lifeguard service in 2017, two of which included the possible relocation of the lifeguards' hut/flagged area. A summary of the advantages/disadvantages for each option had been included, and a discussion/question and answer session ensued.

Option 2 gained the broadest support among Committee Members which would see the hut/flagged area relocated to north side of Banjo Pier. There would be two lifeguards on duty from May to July, and three for the peak season from July to September. The patrolled area would include an additional 200 metres of beach either side of the flagged area, and would therefore incorporate the pedestrianised area south of the Banjo Pier. However, Members felt that consideration should also be given to extending the designated bathing zone so that it would be in line with the flagged area. It was reported that there would be a cost associated with this, and approval would be required from the Marine Management Organisation.

It was further felt that the service/arrangements should be reviewed annually, although it was noted that RNLI service contracts were usually put in place for a five-year period.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Mr J Taylor and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

**TO RECOMMEND:**

**That Option 2 of the Swanage RNLI Lifeguard Service Options be implemented in 2017, subject to confirmation of costs, and that it will be possible to amend the designated bathing zone.**

**b) Five knot speed limit enforcement in the bay**

As previously reported, the Pleasure Boat Byelaws Enforcement Officer had retired, and there had been no patrol in the bay during the 2016 season. The boat park had also been closed, which meant that no one had been available to provide advice to boat/watercraft users. Concerns had been raised regarding speeding incidents and enforcement issues experienced in the bay, particularly during Carnival week. Committee Members agreed that Enforcement Officer presence in the water was a deterrent and did slow boat users down.

The enforcement of byelaws was the responsibility of the District Council (PDC), however, the Lifeguard Service Options for 2017 included the possibility of a lifeguard watercraft, to assist the Town Council with a waterborne presence that would be able to inform water users of local byelaws

and speed restrictions, acting as a deterrent to any rule breaking. This would also enhance the lifeguard services patrol and rescue capabilities. If this option was approved a minimum of three lifeguards would be required, and the only additional cost for this extra service would be for the additional lifeguard. A discussion ensued, and Committee Members were in agreement that this option should be explored further.

During the discussion it was reported that watercraft were permitted to land at Shep's Hollow, and a question was raised as to whether advisory signage could be displayed accordingly. Queries were also raised regarding PDC's existing byelaw signage, and the location/visibility/size of the five knot marker buoys, as it was felt that this could be improved, and it was agreed that these queries would be raised with PDC accordingly.

It was therefore proposed by Mr G Richardson, seconded by Mr J Taylor and RESOLVED:

That proposals for a RNLI lifeguard watercraft be brought forward for further consideration at the next Meeting of the Tourism Committee.

#### **c) RNLI lifejacket lockers**

Further to Minute No. 4 a) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015, it had been confirmed that the RNLI lifejacket locker scheme was still available, and an overview of the scheme was given by Mr Gary Richardson, RNLI Community Sea Safety Officer. It was explained that the lockers had been designed to encourage the use of lifejackets when sailors rowed ashore, by placing a free, secure, short term storage facility on the shore at popular landing sites, and reference was made to drowning incidents that had been seen in the past. The lockers, keys, signage, and leaflets, would be provided free of charge, however, the Town Council would have to cover the cost of the steel frame to house the lockers, installation, cleaning/maintenance, and keyholder/out of hours cover.

A discussion ensued and various possible locations for the lockers, and the landing of dinghies, were suggested, and these included the Stone Quay and Mowlem areas. However, Committee Members were in agreement that further research needed to be undertaken before a decision could be made.

It was therefore AGREED:

That delegation be given to Councillor Bonfield and Mr G Richardson, RNLI Community Sea Safety Officer, to research suitable locations for the lifejacket lockers, and report their findings to the next Committee Meeting to be held in February 2017 for further consideration.

A comment was made that, if the scheme went ahead, signage needed to be clear that no motorised craft would be permitted to land at these locations.

#### **d) Consideration of future production of Swanage Bay Water Safety Leaflet**

Further to Minute No. 5) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016, further consideration was given to the future production of the water safety leaflet.

Committee Members were in agreement that the leaflet was worthwhile, and that production should continue. However, it was felt that the content and design of the leaflet needed updating, and should include details of the new

lifeguard service, and emergency services information, although it should not contain too many 'messages'. The RNLI Community Sea Safety Officer would therefore provide officers with a copy of Poole's sea safety leaflet for kayakers for information purposes in this respect.

It was therefore AGREED:

**TO RECOMMEND:**

**That agreement be given to the continued production of the Swanage Bay Water Safety Leaflet, subject to satisfactory costings being obtained.**

**5) Review of enforcement activities along Shore Road/the seafront**

A copy of the Town Council's existing Beach Regulations had been provided to Committee Members for information purposes. This had been the first season without Town Council Beach Wardens on patrol on the beach/along the seafront, and an update/review of operations during 2016 was given. Support had been provided by the Town Council's Enforcement Officers, and the Lifeguards had also assisted by working proactively with the public providing education, beach supervision and advice. However, concerns had been raised regarding pedestrian safety due to the number of cyclists who cycled along the closed section of Shore Road. It was felt that signage could be improved, and more effective enforcement action taken. It was reported that advice had been sought from the County Council regarding the recommended wording for such signage, which would be explored further. Other concerns raised included an increase in incidents of dogs and barbecues on the beach.

A discussion ensued and a query was raised as to whether the Enforcement Officer job role could be reviewed/updated so that enforcement activities could be better focussed in 2017. A suggestion was made that the new Visitor Services Manager could be tasked to review/explore options in this respect, and report his findings back to the next Committee Meeting being held in February 2017. It was therefore AGREED:

That options for enforcement of seafront regulations in 2017 be considered further by the Tourism Committee at its next meeting.

**6) Beach recharge – update**

A brief update was given on the Swanage Coastal Change Forum (SCCF) Meeting that had been held earlier in the day. It was reported that discussions had been ongoing with the authorities involved in the Poole and Christchurch Bays Shoreline Management Plan (SMP), and consideration was being given to the forming of a coastal partnership to implement a joint scheme to replenish all beaches in the SMP area. SCCF would be making a presentation at a future Council meeting when further details of the partnership/scheme were known.

A note entitled 'Erosion and Protection of the Purbeck Coastline', which had been recently updated by the District Engineer, was also provided to Committee Members for information purposes.

**7) #2 minute beach clean – consideration of beach clean station boards**

Details of the #2 minute beach clean stations were provided to Committee Members. It was explained that the stations had been devised as a way of making it easier for/to encourage everyone to pick up marine litter every time they visited the beach. The stations were 'A-boards' with a holder for litter pickers, and a

windproof slot for plastic bags. Each station cost £330 + VAT to sponsor, litter pickers cost £8 each, and delivery costs were extra.

A discussion ensued during which concerns were raised regarding the quantity of waste/litter seen in the town during the season, and the number of plastic/fast food containers that ended up in the sea. However, Members were in agreement that the Town Council's beach cleaners, who patrolled the beach between 6.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. each day, did an excellent job of keeping the beach clean and clear of litter. It was also reported that discussions were still ongoing with Dorset Waste Partnership regarding service improvements, and the proposed trial of five solar powered 'Big Belly Bins' in the town next season. Members therefore felt that the stations would be surplus to requirements on the Town Council-owned beaches, and a question was raised as to whether the private beach owners would be interested in sponsoring stations for the private beach.

The Committee therefore wished it to be noted that this matter had been appropriately reviewed and discussed, but that it recommended that no further action be taken.

8) **Feedback on 2016 season and updates from representatives/organisations**  
**Ocean Bay Watersports**

A quiet start was reported, followed by a very busy main season. It was noted that stand up paddle boarding was becoming a very popular activity in the bay.

**Pierhead Watersports**

A quiet start was reported due to the windy weather conditions, however, business had picked up from mid-July, and had carried on until late in the season. Comments were made that there had been a noticeable reduction in boat traffic, possibly due to the fact that the boat park had been closed, and that divers had been favouring the Portland area. It was hoped that they would return to Swanage when the boat park reopened.

**RNLI Community Sea Safety Officer**

A brief update was given on the RNLI Community Safety Action Plan. Sea safety figures were being monitored, and an increase in incidents involving kayakers had been seen. Diver incidents also continued to be a high risk area. These would therefore be the areas of focus for 2017.

**Seaweed Removal**

Little removal activity was reported this season. There had been less seaweed on the beach than had been seen in previous years, due to the lack of easterly winds (and spring tides). Thanks were given to Mr Loudoun by the Chairman for the excellent condition of the beach.

**Swanage Boat Hire**

A poor start to the season was reported, however, business had quickly picked up, and a good end to the season followed. It was noted that over one weekend in the summer the water taxi had ferried circa 1,000 passengers to/from the shore, and comments were made that these visitors would have had a positive effect on the local economy.

**North Beach Representative**

Concerns were raised regarding the increase in the number of groups using the beach for water sports and other outdoor activities (e.g. raft building, and the building of a large catapult on the beach).

Comments were made that the weather and condition of the sand had been good this season, however, fishing had been poor.

**Maritime Coastguard Agency**

It was reported that the start of the season had been quiet, however, during July

and August the team had attended 60 callouts, which had included minor first aid, cliff rescues, and serious medical support to the Ambulance Service. During September the team had also responded to callouts for Poole MCA.

A reminder was given that the Portland helicopter service/coastguard search and rescue base would be closing in April 2017. The service would be covered by the Lee on Solent base in the future.

### **Swanage Angling Club**

It was reported that it had not been a good season for fishing, both onshore and offshore. There had been no mackerel in the bay for most of the year, although there had been good numbers of Tope, and other species of fish not usually seen in local waters.

The club's annual Swanage Beach Open fishing competition would be held on Saturday 29th October 2016, in aid of Julia's House this year. Thanks were given to Swanage TIC for the use of a beach hut for the event.

### **Swanage Tourist Information Centre (TIC)**

It was reported that, for the third year running, Swanage TIC had won a Bronze Award in the Tourist Information Service category of the Fourth Annual Dorset Tourism Awards 2016. The award was presented to the TIC team at an awards ceremony held at the Tank Museum, Bovington, on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Congratulations and thanks were given to the TIC team.

## **9) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas**

### **a) RSPB urban gulls – results of the RSPB 2015 Survey of SW England Councils**

– copies of the results of the RSPB 2015 Survey of SW England Councils, and a briefing statement on urban gulls for local authorities and the public, were provided to Committee Members for information purposes.

### **b) Swanage Tourist Information Centre (TIC)**

– it was reported that the TIC would be temporarily relocated to the Town Hall with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> October 2016 whilst refurbishment works were carried out to the TIC building in Shore Road. The temporary TIC offices were located at the rear of the Town Hall, accessed across the courtyard off of Town Hall Lane, and all the usual services would be available. It was anticipated that the TIC Team would return to a much improved building in spring 2017, which would benefit all users of this important facility.

## **10) Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting, planned for early February 2017, would be confirmed in due course.

It was reported that Swanage RNLI had offered its new boathouse as the venue for the next meeting. Committee Members all agreed that they would like to take the RNLI up on this offer, which would also give attendees the opportunity to view/take a look around the new facilities. Officers would therefore confirm the meeting date and venue in due course.

The meeting closed at 4.50 p.m.

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