

Minutes of a Meeting of the **BEACH MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage,
on **WEDNESDAY 3rd FEBRUARY 2016** at **2.30 p.m.**

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

 - Mr B Adeney – Swanage Pier (from 3.55 p.m.)
 - Ms R Compton – Ocean Bay Watersports
 - Mr J Deare – North Beach Representative
 - Mr N Field – Maritime Coastguard Agency
 - Mr T Greasty – Designated Bathing Zone Representative
 - Mr R Johnson – Swanage Pier
 - Mr G King – Swanage Angling Club
 - Mr P Loudoun – Seaweed Removal
 - Mr R Marsh – Quay Representative
 - Mr R Martin – Swanage Sailing Club
 - Mr G Richardson – RNLI Community Sea Safety Officer
 - Mr J Taylor – Pierhead Watersports
 - Mr I Weston – Coastwatch

 - Councillor S Poultney
 - Councillor M Whitwam
 - Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk
 - Mr G Brookes – Operations Manager
 - Miss N Clark – Management Support Officer
- Other Attendees:**
- Mr B Heathfield - Lifeguard Manager, RNLI
 - Mr B Shepherd - RNLI
 - Seven representatives from St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Public Participation Time

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

The following matters were raised by the St Mary's Catholic Primary School representatives during Public Participation Time:-

- Pupils from Year 6 of St Mary's Catholic Primary School had been invited to attend the meeting and they took the opportunity to ask the Committee various questions during Public Participation Time. Questions and comments raised included:
 - How close could boats anchor to the safe bathing zone and what effect light vessels in the bay had on swimming
 - Clarification requested regarding dog walking on the beach regulations, and whether it would be possible for the pupils to design new signage for the Town Council, including a waterproof poster
 - A discussion held regarding the Beach Wardens' portable first aid kit, and the defibrillator located inside the Tourist Information Centre, and whether this could be housed in a waterproof box outside the building instead

- Reduction in number of litter bins on the beach
- Enforcement procedures for instances of speeding in the five knot area
- Details of the discussions/debate held by the pupils in classes regarding the beach environment, and thanks given to the Committee for giving the pupils the opportunity to attend meetings, which would assist them in their studies
- A request made for a written response to the queries raised by the pupils

The Chairman thanked the pupils for their valued input to the meeting, and it was hoped that they would continue to attend meetings of the Committee in the future. The Chairman also confirmed that he would welcome the opportunity to visit the school to discuss the questions raised in more detail.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Mr A Allison (Swanage Angling Club), Mr R Brockman (North Beach Representative), Mr I Brown (MCA), PCSO T Ferrari (Dorset Police), Mr A Power (S&PHA), Mr M Slater (Swanage Boat Hire), Mr D Turnbull (Swanage Lifeboat), and Mr C Wiggins (Beach Concession Operators' Representative).

Further to Standing Order No. 12) a) viii it was proposed by the Chairman and AGREED:

That Item 4) on the agenda be brought forward to Item 2).

2) Beach management summer season 2016 – Beach Wardens or Lifeguards?

A presentation was given by Mr Barry Heathfield, RNLI Area Lifeguard Manager, and Mr Brett Shepherd, RNLI Lifeguard Manager, which explained the role of a RNLI Lifeguard. It was noted that there were almost 1,500 RNLI Lifeguards, and 225 beach lifeguard units, in the UK, and the benefits of a lifeguard were discussed. It was reported that the RNLI saved more lives, provided a joined-up rescue service from the beach to the sea, and provided a consistent national standard of lifeguards, facilities, signage and equipment. RNLI lifeguards were fitness-tested monthly.

It was noted that each year in the UK there were over 200 beach-related deaths, 27,000 serious accidents on the beach, and that drowning was the third most common reason for deaths in the under 16's. In 2015 100 lives had been saved, 21,938 people had been aided, and there had been a total of 19,594 incidents. The RNLI Lifeguards worked proactively with the public providing education, beach supervision and advice, and provided a fast 'first response' service.

A discussion and question and answer session ensued.

The representatives from St Mary's Catholic Primary School left the meeting at 3.05 p.m.

The Chairman reported that the Town Council wished to explore the Committee's views regarding a possible move to RNLI Lifeguard services. The Council's Beach Warden service had been in place for approximately ten years, it was a seasonal role and the previous difficulties experienced with recruitment were discussed. However, concerns were raised that the varied duties undertaken by the Beach Wardens, which included first aid cover, lost children, compliance with Byelaws, litter-picking, jellyfish removal, and assistance given to the

seaweed removal contractor, would not continue under a lifeguard service. The RNLI representative confirmed that a lifeguard's priority would be safety in the water.

Committee Members were invited to submit any comments to the Town Council regarding the possibility of future RNLI Lifeguard services, and any responses would be considered further at a future Council Meeting.

The Committee thanked Mr Heathfield and Mr Shepherd for the informative presentation, for taking part in discussions and answering questions raised. The Committee supported the Town Council furthering discussions with the RNLI regarding lifeguards on Swanage Main Beach.

Mr B Heathfield and Mr B Shepherd left the meeting at 3.30 p.m.

3) **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 7th October 2015**

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Marsh and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 7th October 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

4) **Beach recharge** – a brief overview was given of an email received from Purbeck District Council (PDC). The beach recharge had been placed on hold at present pending future discussions regarding the possible change in local government structures.

5) **Wessex Water – update on proposals to improve the Ulwell stream outfall** – it was reported that a meeting had been held on site with the Wessex Water Networks Design Engineer, the Town Council's Operations Manager, and Ocean Bay Watersports representative, to discuss the scope of works being undertaken. Financial approval had been given to the project and the replacement of the grille on the beach, and improvement works to the tanks and filter, would be going ahead at the beginning of March 2016.

6) **Five knot speed limit enforcement in the bay – to consider possible improvements** – it was reported that a meeting had been arranged with interested parties on 17th February 2016 to discuss this matter. The outcome of this meeting would be given at a future Committee meeting.

5) **Consideration of future production of Swanage Bay Water Safety Leaflet**

A copy of the Town Council's current water safety leaflet had been provided to Committee Members. It was explained that a copy of the leaflet was submitted with the Council's Blue Flag Application each year, to demonstrate to award judges that beach user/water safety was of utmost importance to the town.

A discussion ensued. It was felt that the leaflet was worthwhile, and that production should continue. However, it was felt that other information could be included, e.g. warnings regarding the strong tides around local headlands, and that stocks of the leaflet/A3-sized posters should be held at strategic points around the town, including the Stone Quay and the slipway when it reopened. Reference was also made to dogs on beach regulations as discussed under Agenda Item 7) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 7th

October 2015.

It was noted that a safety document, specifically for kayakers using Poole and Studland Bays, was to be produced. The RNLI Community Sea Safety Officer would enquire whether Swanage Bay could be added to this document.

Committee Members were invited to submit any further comments or suggestions to the Town Council for further consideration at a future meeting.

6) Clarification of Town Council's Policy in respect of dog walking on beaches and foreshore from the Mowlem to Swanage Pier

A map of the Council-owned beach areas, and a copy of the PDC dog byelaws, were provided to Committee Members. It was reported that the area south of the Mowlem slipway up to Swanage Pier was a hotspot for instances of dog fouling, and the difficulties of managing the area were discussed. No dogs were permitted from the Mowlem to the small jetty/steps on Monkey Beach from May to September each year, signage was in place, however the area was not covered by the PDC Dogs on the Beach Byelaw. Dogs on leads were permitted on Monkey Beach from the steps to the Pier. A question was raised as to whether the whole area should be dog free from May to September, which would make it easier for the Town Council's Enforcement Officer to manage.

During the ensuing discussion all were in agreement that Main Beach should remain free from dogs during the main season, particularly for health and safety reasons, although a comment was made that if a dog ban was imposed on all Council-owned beach areas from May to September this could have an adverse effect on the town's tourism trade and give the incorrect impression that Swanage was not a dog-friendly town.

Concerns were raised about the reduction in the number of dog waste bins, instances of dogs off leads, part-time cover only of the PDC Dog Warden and enforcement difficulties. It was confirmed that dog waste could now be placed in Dorset Waste Partnership's litter bins. It was also confirmed that the Town Council's Enforcement Officer removed any dog waste found on his patrols on a daily basis, and thanks were given to the Officer by Committee Members. A question was raised as to whether CCTV footage could be used to prosecute dog owners who were found to be in breach of dog byelaws.

Mr B Adeney joined the meeting at 3.55 p.m.

Further to Minute No. 7) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 7th October 2015, comments were again made that consideration should be given to a leaflet confirming dogs on beach regulations, in particular highlighting what dog owners could 'not' do. It was confirmed that this would be an agenda item at a future Tourism Committee meeting. It was also confirmed that an article would again be included in the next Swanage Matters newsletter.

**7) Updates from Representatives/Organisations
Swanage RNLI**

It was reported that the new lifeboat would arrive in April 2016, a public event was being planned and details would be publicised in due course. Crew training would commence at the end of February 2016.

The Community Safety Action Plan would be presented at an RNLI Management Meeting on 4th February 2016, clarification of some statistics was still required, and there would be increased focus on the RNLI 'Respect the Water' campaign.

Councillor S Poultney, Dr M Ayres and Mr B Adeney left the meeting at 4.00 p.m.

It had been a fairly quiet winter so far, with no calls this year as of 29th January. In 2015 there had been 27 callouts with the inshore lifeboat, and 32 with the all-weather boat. Yachts and motorboats made up the majority of casualties, and there were a number of searches for missing persons.

The new lifeboat station was starting to take shape, although there had been a few setbacks. It was hoped that the timber frame that formed the main part of the building would start going up during the week commencing 8th February, which would allow the builders to progress quickly in getting the building watertight.

It was reported that Mr Dave Turnbull had been given the honour of taking over as Coxswain from Mr Martin Steeden and looked forward to updating the Committee on how things were going with the new boat at the next Committee meeting. Congratulations were extended to Mr Turnbull.

The AGM would be held on 8th March 2016 at the Pines Hotel at 7.30 p.m., and a reminder was given that Lifeboat Week would be held from 12th – 21st August 2016.

Designated Bathing Zone

The designated bathing zone area would be installed slightly earlier this season, Easter Sunday being on 27th March in 2016, and would be in place until the end of September.

Swanage Pier

It was reported that Swanage Pier Trust had been awarded a development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and a presentation would take place on the Pier over the Easter period. The MV Balmoral and the Waverley Paddle Steamer would return in 2016 for boat excursions from the Pier, and Frigate Shtandart, a replica of an 18th century Russian Naval Flag Ship, would be making an appearance during the Purbeck Pirate Festival between 29th - 31st July 2016.

Coastwatch

Comments were made about the increase in sea kayakers seen locally, and concerns raised regarding the inexperience of some users. The importance of taking a radio was highlighted. Interest was noted in the lifeguard proposal.

It was reported that there had been an increase in new Coastwatch recruits recently and, once fully trained, they would be looking to increase station opening hours.

Quay Representative

A query was raised as to when the Stone Quay would be repointed. It was confirmed that costings were in hand and it was hoped that the contract would be out to tender in 2017.

Concerns were raised regarding possible difficulties which may be experienced when boats were removed from the water and placed on the slipway during strong east winds, due to the siting of picnic tables by a local business on the pavement area above the slipway. It was confirmed that DCC had responsibility for the area concerned.

An update was requested regarding the possibility of a new 'floating' pontoon between the Stone Quay and the Pier. It was confirmed that there were no funds available within STC budgets for a pontoon, and that alternative funding options would have to be explored. However, work was due to commence on the existing fishermen's jetties, the eastern jetty would be part-demolished, and the western jetty would be increased by approximately fifteen metres.

North Beach Representative

Concerns were raised regarding proposals for a new water park in Swanage Bay, and a query raised as to whether a response had been received from the Marine Management Organisation. It was reported that the water park would not be going ahead in Swanage, and that it may now be sited at Arfleet Mill Lakes, Corfe Castle.

Maritime Coastguard Agency

It was reported that Mr Nick Field would be taking over as Deputy Station Officer with effect from 3rd February 2016. Committee Members congratulated Mr Field on his appointment. There would be a recruitment 'push' this year for new team members, and any interested party should contact the local MCA Team for further details. The team would be undertaking cliff work training and defibrillator training during March 2016.

Seaweed Removal

The contractor reported that he was ready for the next influx of seaweed when it arrived.

8) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

There were no matters to report.

9) Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting would be confirmed in due course. However, Committee Members agreed that a date early in June, at least three to four weeks before the Tourism Committee Meeting, and prior to the beginning of the main season, would be a better date for the Committee's second meeting of the year. It was also felt that meetings should be held at 2.30 p.m. in future, which would enable local schools to attend meetings if they so wished.

The meeting closed at 4.20 p.m.
