

Minutes of the Meeting of the **SEAFRONT STABILISATION WORKING GROUP** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on

FRIDAY, 7th November 2003 at 11.45 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor A.H. Miller (Town Mayor)

Councillor Mrs C. Gainsborough J.P.

Councillor M.W. Pratt

Also present

Councillor Mrs J Farrow

1. **APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received.

2. **SEAFRONT STABILISATION**

Further to the Council's previous decision (Min 461/9/04) to commission a geotechnical report to assess the site conditions in the area behind the White House, Fishermen's Catch, Public Conveniences and Shore Road bungalows, the Town Mayor welcomed Mr G. Thorne, the Council's surveyor who reported on the outcome of the lands survey.

The site of the Recreation Ground was therefore discussed in detail. The report identified the need, as anticipated, to undertake stabilisation work to varying degrees throughout the site. The main area of concern was identified as the area behind the Tourist Information Centre, Fishermen's Catch and the Public Conveniences.

The area of the War Memorial was shown to be stable in that it had been constructed upon a rock ledge. The land immediately below the War Memorial was shown to require stabilisation, along with the large area extending towards the north-east of the site at the Shore Road and Victoria Avenue junction.

The survey identified the levels of the base rock strata that extended through the site. It was established that, as this was approximately 1 m above the level of Shore Road to the north side of the public conveniences, this would provide a natural area in which to provide access to the stabilisation works and new terraces that would be required.

The land naturally falls throughout the northern part of the site and the base rock strata at the Shore Road and Victoria Avenue junction is at 5 m below the existing surface levels.

3. **OPTION APPRAISAL**

Discussion ensued regarding the issues relating to the scope of works and the phasing that would be required. It was noted that one option was to remove soil from the rear of the site and to re-grade the slopes and earth banks. This option was disregarded on the basis that it would remove the natural contours, the height and other features of the site. As a consequence, the resulting sloped land would permanently remove the spectacular vantage points and character of the seafront.

For the above reasons it was AGREED:-

To recommend that the back of the site, adjacent to Horsecliffe Lane be maintained in character to that which exists at present.

Subsequent discussions centred on the options that could be considered, whilst maintaining the overall character and heritage of the site, as a mix of recreational and commercial use. Further consideration was then given to the potential afforded by the essential works required to the rear of the Tourist Information Centre, with the possibility to extend, making use of any retaining walls. The proposed extension of the Fishermen's Catch, with 'in principle' agreement already granted, was also considered, along with building a new public toilet block.

In the central part of the site it was proposed to maintain the steeped grassed slopes and pathways, whilst incorporating the retaining walls required below and immediately in front of the War Memorial. In the north-east corner of the site and the front, where the beach bungalows are sited, was considered in detail as offering the potential for incorporating some innovative ideas, in keeping with the natural contours and crescent shapes. The inclusion of some small retail kiosks were also considered appropriate, provided that they were small in both scale and number. As a guide figure it was concluded that an overall limit be placed on the number of beach huts sites and that this should be restricted to a maximum of fifty, i.e. sixteen more sites than currently existing.

After a lengthy debate, it was AGREED UNANIMOUSLY to recommend that:-

i) The Council further instruct Graham Thorne & Partners, to instigate two architectural designs, incorporating all necessary structural and drainage works in the area of the Recreation Ground and seafront site.

ii) To report to a meeting of the Council, scheduled for 15th December 2003, prior to proceeding with full public consultation in January/February 2004.
