

Swanage Town & Community Partnership Quarterly Meeting – Wednesday 20th March 2019



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Our ref: KG/NLC

7th January 2019

Dear Dr Ayres

Swanage Town & Community Partnership's (STCP) support for the Coastal Communities Fund bid for the coastal defence project

As Chair of the STCP, I am writing to support the coastal defence project bid. The STCP was created as part of the Market and Coastal Town's Initiative in the early 2000s to produce a town strategy and a process to deliver community priorities. This has developed into a meaningful structure whereby community groups, the Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust, and the Town Council, continue to work together at a strategic level, and as a delivery vehicle to deliver priorities following extensive consultation with the community.

The last round of major consultation was part of the Swanage Local Plan process, working with Purbeck District Council to produce a plan that goes far beyond basic planning requirements, and includes tackling flooding, coastal management and sea defence. This in turn has been included in the STCP priority actions as being critical for the town's economic future.

<https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/purbeck/swanage-local-plan/pdfs/slp/adopted-swanage-local-plan.pdf>

The seafront/promenade area between the Mowlem and Swanage Pier is of vital importance to the town, both creating the first line of sea defence, but also being the flashpoint where rising sea levels, high tides and heavy land rainfall (from Swan Brook) meet resulting in potential regular flooding of the whole town centre and the destruction of the fragile retail, service and leisure economy, that relies primarily on tourism. We are also a remote community, being at the end of a very long cul de sac and surrounded on three sides by the sea. This means we have higher than average local shopping which again, if destroyed, would mean that people may no longer choose Swanage as a place to live, losing serious injections of finance from retirees and other wealthier incomers. It would become a town in decline with no imperative for new businesses/job creation.

As Swanage is difficult to access by land, it is envisaged that a meaningful way to increase footfall is by access from the sea. This opens up many opportunities to create businesses/jobs of possibly higher value and skills than currently available. This could then also encourage more young people to remain in Swanage, rather than leave or commute. So not only would improved sea defence measures protect the existing economy, it could be enhanced to create a whole new economy and customers, making Swanage a 'go to' destination to live, work and play.

That is why the STCP strongly supports the holistic and strategic proposals for this bid to; improve flood defence measures; enhance public realm improvements; improve pedestrian safety and the public realm along Institute Road leading to Lower High Street; improve access to and from boats; renovate the Stone Quay; provide new interpretation to showcase the historic 'bankers' area, linked to Swanage Museum and Marine Villas on Swanage Pier; and promote the marine access opportunities by drawing together existing information from different providers and improve promotion.

I am, on behalf of the STCP, therefore very keen to be part of future discussions and consultation to develop these proposals further.

Yours sincerely

Kim Gallagher

Kim Gallagher
Chair of the Swanage Town and Community Partnership

Dr M Ayres
Town Clerk
Swanage Town Council
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