

Swanage and Studland water safety briefing October 2020

There have, for many years, been complaints about watercraft (especially personal watercraft/jet skis) at Studland and Swanage Bay. Many parts of the Dorset coast have seen a growing interest in open water swimming with an increased number of people taking part and swimming out to the marker buoys rather than along the bay. There is an ongoing issue that personal watercraft vehicles/jet skis are coming into the area and during Summer 2020 with so many staycations the problem was exacerbated as there were a new audience to Swanage and Studland. The issue around jet skis and motorboats is an ongoing issue and resolving it sits across a range of different organisations/partners including:

- Dorset Council
- National Trust
- Coastguard
- Marine Police
- Swanage Town Council
- Dorset Coast Forum
- Studland Parish Council
- RNLI (tbc)
- Representatives from Jet Ski community (tbc)

There has been an initial site meeting in August to talk collectively about the different issues at both Studland and Swanage. From this there were key actions to explore a range of options that will provide a proactive approach to reducing the issues at both sites. It is important to note that the issue is not just around Personal watercraft/jet skis but can be other maritime users and that it is often jet skis and other motorised watercraft from elsewhere that cause the issue at Swanage and Studland.

Key issues for Swanage include:

- The conflict between swimmers and jet skis
- Personal watercraft/jet skis come around the stone pier and go to the pub and then back out to sea or land on the beach
- The Parish slipway (a free access point) is often very congested in summer with lots of people walking, sitting, crabbing in this area. It can be dangerous with trailers that have jet skis/ small boats on them being reversed into this area.
- There is poor signage to provide water safety/bylaw advice to people at launch points.
- Noise from power boats and jet skis is an issue

Key issues at Studland include:

- South beach is the main issue for jet skis with speeding vehicles going along the cliff towards Old Harry rocks



- There is a disregard for the bylaw and marker buoys by some
- Noise from power boats and jet skis is an issue mainly towards South beach.
- Signage is poor with some old Purbeck District signs up

The actions from this meeting to date include:

- **Incident recording** - Having a good evidence base is essential and complaints were originally collected by all partners and dealt with in a variety of ways. A central database has now been created by the Dorset Marine Police who will be the organisation who holds it. Also, a new incident recording form (attached) sits alongside this and/is being sent out to all partners and others. The new incident forms are sent to: MarinePolicingTeam@Dorset.PNN.Police.uk for the attention of Dave Brown

The key areas that we are investigating include:

- Investigating options around improvements at Parish Slipway to help with water safety at this launch point
- Looking at enforcement options – looking at the bylaw, the use of Section 35 dispersal notices on the water by the Marine Police, how and who to provide enforcement – having a coordinated approach
- Noise pollution from Jet Skis – Although an environmental Health issue it is hoped to get a better understanding of the law/legislation behind noise from jet skis and whether there is a solution to reducing this impact
- Having a coordinated Communication/Education programme – including Jet Ski Code of conduct, leaflets, messaging etc
- Having correct and informative signage is important therefore we are carrying out a signage audit at both areas and will provide costed new signage as an option
- The Marine Police are looking at a number of pathways around jet skis, to include education and restorative ‘punitive’ measures – similar to Driver Awareness schemes, however that is a long-term project and will require a lot of thought and investigation, and buy in from authorities and other partners

A partnership options paper will set this out in more detail and will be available in November for all partners to comment on.

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November 2020



Report on responses to public consultation on the potential pedestrianisation of southern section of Shore Road

The Shore Road Closure survey was instigated as a result of various committee and working party meetings, where it was decided that the need to seek public opinion was essential prior to consideration to propose a change to the current traffic regulation order, which would be referred to Dorset Council, as Highways Authority.

The Shore Road Closure Survey was held between 20th January 2020 and closed on 20th March 2020. The survey was available to complete online, using Google forms, and was promoted via Facebook. Paper format was also available, and the survey was printed on the Swanage Town Council newsletter which was delivered to all Swanage homes with postcodes BH19 1 and BH19 2.

The responses received via Google forms was 726 and paper forms returned totalled 121, making the overall total responses 847.

Under the heading *'Would permanent closure be beneficial, if yes why?'* the highest number of comments made related to safety, as a reason for permanent closure. Many of the respondents mentioned the confusion over the opening and closing of the road, near miss accidents and parked cars impacting the visibility of pedestrians crossing the road.

Suggestions for using the area, should this section of road be closed permanently, included an attractive seating area, splash area for children, an area for events, exhibitions, games, and a market.

The image of the town was also mentioned, and the benefit of a designated pedestrian area by the seafront. Other suggestions included installing additional benches and attractive planting, improved leisure space, increased tourism and greater beach hut hire.

Reducing the pollution levels and increasing the 'green' status of the town was also noted as beneficial, should the road be closed to vehicles.

Comments made under the heading *'Would permanent closure be detrimental, if yes why?'* could largely be grouped in four categories; congestion, access to other areas of the town, parking and that the current arrangement was suitable as it was.

Other suggestions made included providing a one-way system in De Moulham Road, opening Shore Road permanently, reducing the speed limit, the effect of permanent closure on businesses and some suggested an extension to the closure period to include the Easter holidays.

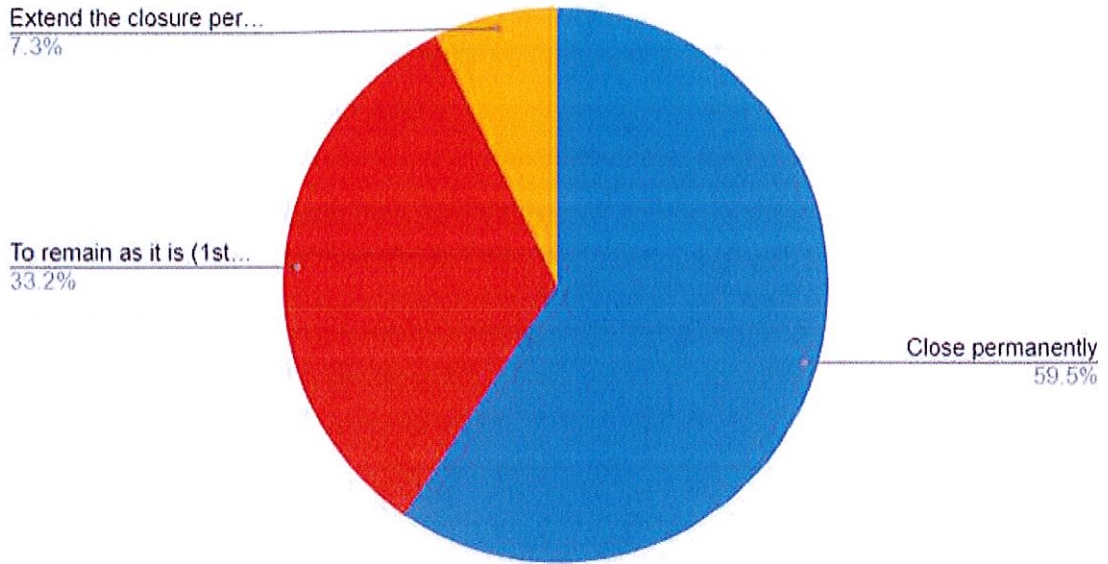
Given the opportunity to make any other comments or suggestions regarding Shore Road, respondents noted the confusion due to the road opening in September and closing in May, as an area of concern, as well as the issue of parked cars obstructing the view for pedestrians crossing the road.

Further comments included the suggestion of closure of the entire length of Shore Road to vehicles, traffic calming measures such as road humps, a 20-m.p.h. speed limit, crossing points or traffic lights.

Emma Evans
Management Support Officer
Swanage Town Council
November 2020

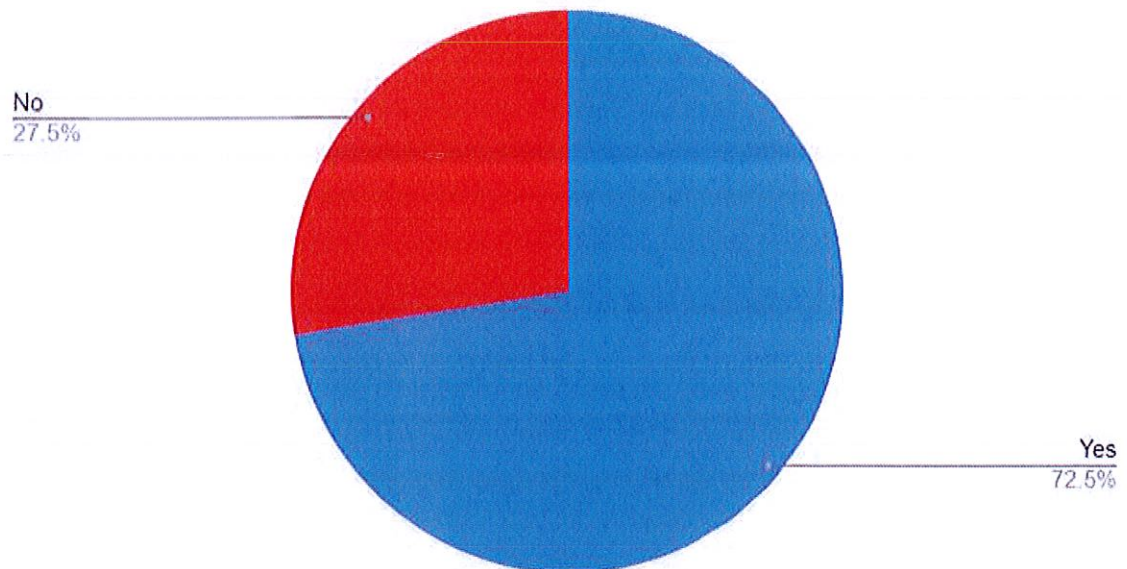
Shore Road Closure survey response charts

Count of Would you like to see the existing road closure arrangement:



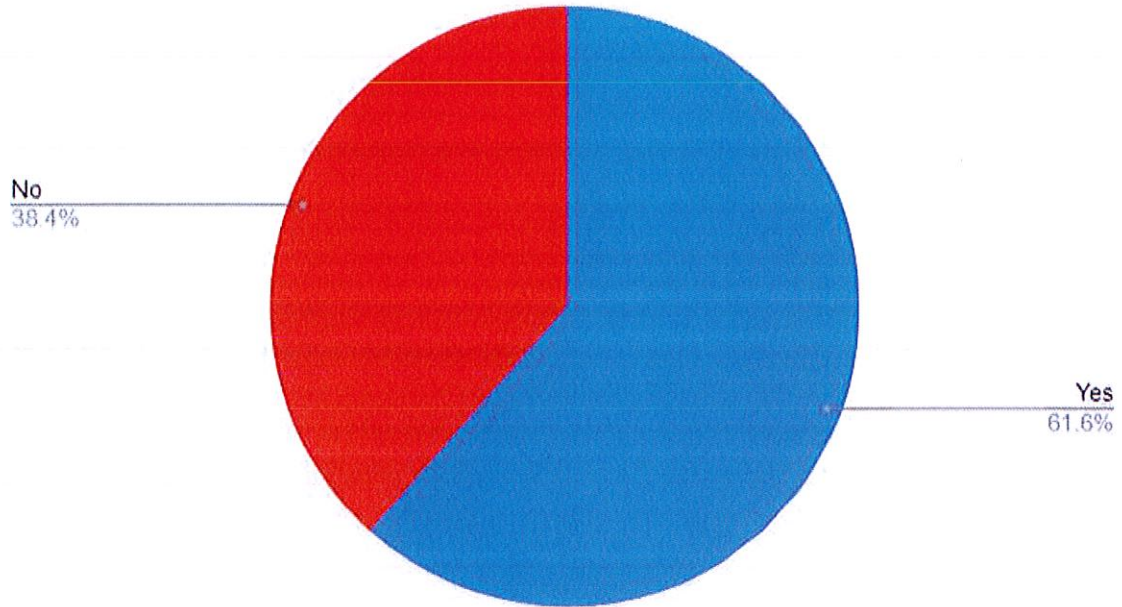
Close permanently 59.5% To remain as is 33.2% Extend the closure 7.3%

Count of Are you concerned about safety along the south end of Shore Road?



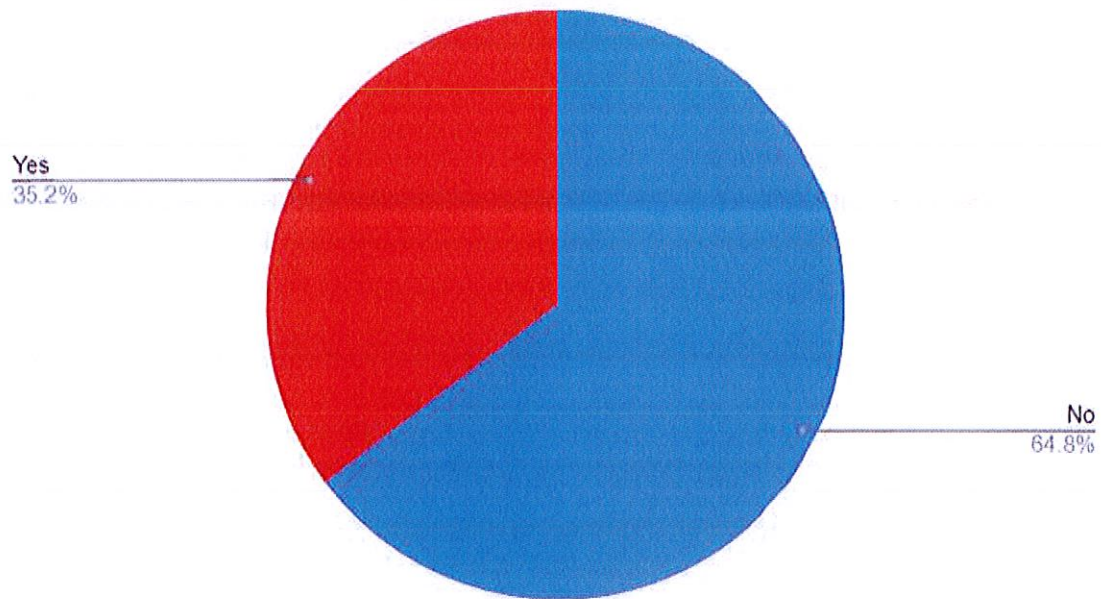
Yes 72.5% No 27.5%

Count of Would permanent closure be beneficial?



Yes 61.6% No 38.4%

Count of Would permanent closure be detrimental?



Yes 35.2% No 64.8%