

Minutes of a Meeting of the **COASTAL CHANGE & BEACH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage, on **WEDNESDAY**
1ST OCTOBER 2025 at **2.15 p.m.**

In Attendance: Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman
Councillor C Tomes – Swanage Town Council
Councillor T Foster – Swanage Town Council
Councillor C Sutton - Swanage Town Council
Councillor C Moreton – Swanage
Ms B Betts – Dorset Council
Mr A Charters – Swanage Sea Rowing Club
Mr R Eatwell – North Beach Representative
Ms J Hutchinson – Swim Group
Mr S Norsworthy – Dorset Council
Ms S Parker - Dorset Coast Forum
Mr D Picksley – Environment Agency
Mr H Potter – Swanage Pier Trust
Mr G Richardson - RNLI
Mr K Sheppard – RNLI
Mr A Steele – Dorset Council
Mr M Turnbull – Founding Chairman of Swanage Coastal Change Forum
Forum
Mr C Wiggins – Beach Concessions
Mr M Winter - RNLI
Ms J Woods – Mental Health Swims

Also Present: Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk
Mrs S Layton-Kelly – Administration Officer
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services & Business Development Manager (VSBDM)

There were four pupils of St Mary’s Catholic Primary School and one teacher in attendance at the meeting along with one member of the press.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised

St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, questions from pupils

- **Additional Bins** – A query was raised as to whether the introduction of additional bins would encourage people to clean up after themselves. In response it was stated that there are thirty bins along the seafront which are collected five times a day in the summer. The Chairman further remarked that it is also society’s duty to create less waste.
- **Rock Face North of Ocean Bay** – A question was raised asking if there were plans to secure and preserve the rock face north of Ocean Bay. A representative of Dorset Council advised that various options are being explored including improved drainage measures and the planting of trees. The Dorset Coast Forum representative offered to visit the school to provide further explanation and engagement with the pupils on this matter.

- **Disabled Access to Water's Edge** - A question was raised regarding plans to help disabled people, specifically wheelchair users, to reach the water's edge and paddle. It was noted that this matter would be addressed in greater detail under agenda item 6).
- **Signage Advising Against Bathing** – A question was asked concerning the placement of signage warning against bathing and why sewage may enter the sea. The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) explained that the signage is used to indicate a risk of pollution which may arise from several sources, including surface water run-off from roads and agricultural land, as well as occasional sewage related incidents.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Mr P Palmer (Pier Head Water Sports), Mr T Greasty (Swanage Sea Fishing), Mr S Thompson (Cumulus), Ms E Wright (National Trust), Ms T Carvisiglia (Natural England), Mr D Pratten (Swanage Beach Buddies), Ms A Williams (Wessex Water) and Mr S Hill (Swanage Boat Hire).

2) **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 4th June 2025**

Proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Mr M Turnbull and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 4th June 2025 be approved as a correct record.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 12) a) viii, at the Chairman's discretion agenda item 6) was moved up the agenda, to allow the VSBDM to address the question posed by one of the school children.

3) **6) Blue Spaces – Access for all: Beach Access Project including Possible grant funding for new solutions**

The VSBDM reported that he would be attending a meeting the following day along with representatives of the Dorset Coast Forum. This meeting had been initiated by Mr W Behenna, a Wimborne resident who is a keen paddleboarder and wheelchair user. Mr Behenna has a vision to make Dorset a key destination for beach access. The aim of the meeting was to explore ways to make Dorset Blue Spaces more accessible.

The VSBDM invited Members to provide comments or suggestions regarding potential improvements to facilitate access to the water in Swanage. During discussions, concerns were raised in relation to the availability of safe changing spaces and storage of personal belongings. Councillor Tomes suggested that Accessible Swanage should be consulted on this matter. The representative from Dorset Coast Forum further asked whether accessible accommodation provision would be included within the scope of the Blue Spaces project.

A member queried whether there was provision for a soft cell wheelchair for beach access. It was noted that, at present, such provision is not feasible due to the lack of suitable storage facilities.

4) **Dorset Council: Purbeck Watercraft Byelaw Review**

Members received an update from the representative regarding the Proposal to amend

the Purbeck District Council Seaside Pleasure Boat Byelaws 2013 to the Dorset Council Purbeck Watercraft Byelaw 2025.

During discussions, Members expressed concern regarding the matter of jet-skies and potential dangers arising when they enter or cross bathing areas. It was noted that as byelaws only relate to speed, the matter of location of jet-ski activity could not be incorporated.

A suggestion was made to consider whether a similar practice to one currently used in Studland where yellow buoys are positioned to guide jet-skies out to sea, could be implemented. The Chairman suggested that the VSBDM explore this option further, noting that this would require appropriate licensing.

The representative from Dorset Coast Forum advised that a link is available on their website enabling members of the public to report dangerous activity on the water directly to Dorset Marine Police.

<https://www.dorset.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/wsi/watch-schemes-initiatives/harbour-watch/harbour-watch/harbour-watch-contact-form/>

5) To Receive Comments about Seaweed Management

The VSBDM updated Members on the progress of the trial which has been running for the past two years whereby seaweed is pushed back into the sea advising that the Council are considering moving to this arrangement on a permanent basis. The VSBDM invited Members to put forward their thoughts and it was broadly felt that this was the best solution.

6) Dorset Council's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Team

Further to Minute No. 4) of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 4th June 2025, an update was provided by the FCERM team which included the following:

a) Swanage Town Centre Flood Protection Scheme

The representative reported that the project remains paused at present. An outline of the next steps and programme to be undertaken once the project resumes was provided.

b) Swanage Beach Renourishment Scheme

Members were informed that the draft Outline Business Case (OBC) had been submitted by JBA and was currently paused pending receipt of comments.

It was noted that the Environmental Impact Assessment screening had been submitted to the Marine Management Organisation and comments were awaited.

The Committee was also advised that BCP Council has been brought in to incorporate the Swanage Beach Marine Management Organisation (MMO) licence with that to be sought in connection with the Poole Bay scheme.

c) North Swanage and Durlston Cliff Management Strategy

It was reported that recent LIDAR survey had indicated that no alert levels have been reached. Data collection is continuing and is scheduled to run until Spring 2026, with final outputs due in Autumn 2026. The outcomes will feed into the Future Coasts Dorset project.

d) Future Coast Swanage (CTAP) project

Members received an update on the progress of Phase 1. It was noted that Jacobs, the Consultation Project Managers, are making good progress. The findings will help inform potential delivery options including drainage trials and planting measures. It was further reported that a steering group has been established and engaged to provide feedback on the research and proposed delivery plans.

e) Dorset Coast Forum

Members received an informative presentation from a representative of Dorset Coast Forum. The presentation included a brief update on upcoming events such as the

Swanage Neighbourhood Plan drop-ins and the Swanage Beach Recharge webpage. It was noted that the Dorset Coast Forum Newsletter had reached its 10th edition. The representative further noted that Dorset Coast Forum was proud to have been invited to participate in the Beach of Dreams Parade held in Weymouth in September.

7) **Budget Proposals for 2026-2027**

a) **RNLI Lifeguards – increased fee for 2026-27 and consideration of a proposal to change contract from a rolling basis to a 3 or 5 year term**

It was reported that currently there is an annual recurring contract between the RNLI and Swanage Town Council to support lifeguards on Swanage Main Beach. The RNLI wish for consideration to be given to a 3 or 5 year fixed term contract that is to include annual increases to the fee paid by Swanage Town Council. This matter will be given further consideration in due course.

Beach Signage

It was reported that the Blue Flag Assessor had raised concerns regarding three information boards located along the beach, specifically in relation to the information provided for life guard opening hours and first aid provision. The Council was given 48 hours to rectify the issues identified. The requirement was met on the understanding that improved signage would be installed the following year. It was noted that a proposed figure of £10,000 had been put forward for inclusion in the budget for the replacement of the signs.

A discussion took place regarding the potential inclusion of QR codes on the signage. However, it was reported that there is a risk of QR codes being tampered with or overwritten, which could expose members of the public to fraudulent or unsafe websites.

8) **Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) Update**

- Members were provided with a brief update for the year in which it was reported that the summer months had been very busy, particularly during Carnival Week. It was further noted that there was strong support from Dorset Waste Services when managing the bins along the seafront during this period. However, it was also reported that there had been a number of complaints regarding dogs on the beach.
- It was further reported that, following a mid-summer change in the beach risk assessment relating to inflatables, windsocks had been temporarily attached to the deckchair storage points along the beach. This measure proved effective and permanent locations are being explored for next year.
- It was noted that Beach Hire Concession was currently out for tender with a closing date for applications of 27th October 2025.
- The Beach Huts had been busy over the year and were fully booked during the peak summer season.

9) **Updates from representatives/organisations**

- **Pier Trust** – It was reported that visitor numbers over the season had been satisfactory. However, ongoing concern was expressed regarding the long term funding for pier maintenance.
- **North Beach** – The representative raised that a dog waste disposal bin along the promenade would be appreciated as dog owners are leaving their dog's waste outside beach huts.
- **Environmental Agency** – Members were informed that the temporary wave barriers had been installed by contractors in the previous week. The alignment followed the same format as in the previous year.
- **Beach Concessions** – The representative expressed thanks to the Council employees and volunteers for their work in cleaning the beach and clearing rubbish through the town.

- **RNLI** – It was reported that the RNLI had experienced a busier than usual season, largely due to the increase in paddleboarders. Members were reminded of the ‘Launch a Memory’ Campaign which allows commemorating a loved one by having their name placed on the 13:13 Lifeboat.
Members further received an update on lifeguard activity throughout the season, including data relating to in-water interventions and first aid administered.
- **Rowing Club** – It was reported that membership had increased to the highest level ever recorded. The U14’s achieved second place in the National Championships in Hayle.
- **Pier Head Watersports** – The Chairman read out an email received from the representative of Pier Head Watersports reporting that speed patrols have continued to be carried out. However, there remain individuals who choose to ignore the speed limits and any advice given.
Appreciation was expressed to all those involved in the organisation of the popular events on the water held throughout the season.

10) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

There were no items of information or matter for forthcoming agendas raised.

11) Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee had been scheduled for Wednesday 11th February 2026 at 2.15 p.m. at the Town Hall. The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm.
