

Minutes of a Meeting of the **COASTAL CHANGE & BEACH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage, on **WEDNESDAY**
1st NOVEMBER 2023 at **2.15 p.m.**

In Attendance: Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman

Ms B Betts – Environment Advice Team, Dorset Council
Mr B Compton – Ocean Bay watersports
Mr R Eatwell – North Beach representative
Mr E Fox – RNLI
Mr S Hill – Swanage Boat Hire
Mr M Jones – Swanage NCI
Ms J Lane – Cumulus Outdoors
Mr P Loudoun – Seaweed concession representative
Mr A Mears – Wessex Water
Mr M Penny – FCERM Team, Dorset Council
Mr H Potter – Swanage Pier Trust/Swanage Sailing Club
Mr D Roper – Swanage Angling Club
Mr K Sheppard – RNLI
Ms R Tanner – Land & Wave
Mr C Wiggins – Beach concessions representative

Also Present: Councillor T Foster – Town Mayor
Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk
Mrs K Court – Administration Officer
Mrs E Evans – Democratic Services Officer
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services & Business Development Manager
Ms G Percival – Assets and Compliance Manager
Mr C Spark – Boat Park Attendant

There were two members of the public and one member of the local press present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matter was raised during public participation time:-

- A comment was made regarding the condition of the steps to Sheps Hollow, which had collapsed. In response, the officer from Dorset Council's FCERM team reported that a grant had been requested from the Environment Agency, and an update would be provided to a future meeting.

1) To review the Terms of Reference and to incorporate Swanage Coastal Change Matters

Further to Minute No. 1 (b) of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting, held on 21st June 2023, consideration was given to a suggested minor amendment to the wording within the Terms of Reference to include a key item from the Swanage Coastal Change Forum, which had recently been incorporated within

the advisory committee. It was suggested that the *impacts of climate induced* coastal change be included in the wording.

It was therefore proposed by Mr D Roper, seconded by Mr R Eatwell and AGREED:-

TO RECOMMEND: That the Town Council approves the minor amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee's Main Objective/Remit, as follows:

Main Objective/Remit: To advise the Council on measures required to provide a safe, clean and well-maintained beach facility, compliant with the European Blue Flag criteria. Also to provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss matters relating more widely to the management of the *impacts of climate induced* coastal change in Swanage and Durlston Bays and make recommendations to Council accordingly.

2) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Cllr C Finch, Cllr C Tomes, Mr R Marsh (Marsh boats), Mr T Greasty (Designated Bathing Zone representative), Mr D Picksley (Environment Agency), Mr R Waitt (Planet Purbeck), Mr I Brown & Ms K Jury (Swanage Coastguard), Mr G Richardson (RNLI) and Mr M Turnbull (Former Chairman, Swanage Coastal Change Forum).

3) **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Coastal Change & Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 21st June 2023**

Proposed by Mr D Roper, seconded by Mr R Eatwell and AGREED:-

That the Minutes of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 21st June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

4) **Dorset Council's Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Team update including the following projects:**

a) **Swanage Town Centre Coastal Protection Scheme**

It was reported that the Environment Agency had confirmed the approval of an additional £151k of funding to widen the modelling scope of the Swanage Town Centre Coastal Protection Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to identify options that are feasible and sensible within the townscape.

b) **Beach Renourishment scheme**

It was stated that an initial meeting had been held with Natural England on 1st November and it was anticipated that the selection of a preferred option would be provided within a few weeks. It was suggested that previous predictions may have been overly pessimistic. It was noted that the groynes may be acting more effectively than anticipated. The beach levels have lowered from their summer profile in some locations, however, the levels were still above action level and underpinning of the sea wall was not visible. It was noted that continuous monitoring would proceed throughout the winter.

c) **North Beach Cliff Management Strategy**

It was reported that the North Beach Cliff Management project commenced on 2nd October 2023, and the strategy would cover a 3-year period. The initial site

inspection was scheduled for w/c 30th October 2023 and the Swanage Landslide group would meet again on 7th November 2023.

d) Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP) project

An overview of the aims of the programme was provided and included:

- Promoting adaptation actions to help communities transition away from the eroding coastline, finance and funding solutions, adaptation planning mechanisms.
- The programme aims to include the testing of innovative practical coastal transition actions in areas at significant risk of coastal change e.g. north Swanage.
- A reduction in risk to communities and to support communities to respond and adapt.
- To inform both national policy and local interventions in other locations.
- The project delivery was anticipated April 2024 – March 2027.

5) Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation and Enhancement Scheme (Sandpit Field, Weather Station Field and Spa Beach Hut Area) – Public engagement

It was noted that the public engagement for the Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation and Enhancement Scheme had closed on 31st October 2023 and an update would be provided to a future meeting.

6) Commercial Opportunities on Seafront – Update

It was reported that a pack detailing the concession opportunities on Town Council owned land had been released and the expressions of interest deadline was noted as 31st October 2023. The expressions of interest received would be reviewed by the Property Panel, and it was anticipated that a report would be presented to the Full Council in December.

7) Seaweed and beach raking – Update on year and future considerations

An update was provided regarding the seaweed collection and beach raking provision during the 2023 season. It was reported that an invasive species of Japanese weed had been discovered in the bay, which had caused issues for small watercraft and entangled some bathers.

It was noted that should the removed seaweed not be used on agricultural land, as it was currently, it would be deemed a waste product and accrue a high charge for disposal. Alternative options were discussed, such as pushing the seaweed back into the sea or leaving it on the beach, as was the policy adopted in other areas.

8) RNLI Lifeguards - Update on year and future considerations

Further to Minute No. 8) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 8th February 2023, a discussion ensued around the current RNLI Lifeguard provision and the future service. The current costs were noted as circa £29K for the year 2023/24 and would increase to circa £32K for 2024/25 to cover the period from the May half term until the Folk Festival around 8th September. It was noted that the service provided was valuable to the community, as reflected in the emergency on the beach in the summer. Various options were discussed which included, a reduced time period of RNLI lifeguard provision and a suggestion was made as to whether businesses or the community could part-fund the service. An offer from the outdoor activity companies to consider the provision of training and lifeguard service in the future was noted.

It was acknowledged that there needed to be a balance between the safety of beach users and the cost of service provision. An update would be provided to a future meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee, following

discussion at the next Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting being held on 22nd November 2023.

9) **One off budget proposals for 2024-25**

The VSBDM reported that there were currently two proposals for one-off budget expenditure in the next financial year: repairs to the staging for the private site beach huts and the replacement of the posts for the beach regulation signage along the seafront.

10) **Update from the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager**

The VSBDM provided an update which included:

- **Beach Huts** – It was reported that there had been an increase in longer lets and the Shore Road beach hut bookings were currently at 65% capacity.
- **Boat Park** – The boat park had seen a relatively quiet year, due to poor weather conditions. This had impacted the daily launch income which was down by 10% on the previous year. The storage income remained strong and the boat park was currently full (34 on the waiting list). Advertising at the boat park for marine related commercial activities had commenced and attendees were encouraged to contact the VSBDM should they be interested. The improvements to the boat park included: a dedicated boat park telephone number, better access to the water, better administration processes, better customer service and staff presence and jet wash facilities. It was noted that improvements to signage were being considered.
- **Planet Purbeck Beach Tour** – During the middle of September the Assets and Compliance Manager and the VSBDM led a group on a beach management tour which had proved useful and a future tour was planned for April 2024. The invitation would be extended to the CCBMAC members.
- **Water Quality** – During the bathing season two days had been affected by poor water quality. Out of season there had been 11 alerts over seven days, to date. A business plan was being developed by Wessex Water cover the period 2025-30. An unprecedented amount of investment was being put into improvements to the sewage network, following new legislation around the quantity of overspills permitted in a year.
- **Events** – It was reported that 2023 had been the biggest year for events to date. 2024 will see even more events, which will include two more events on the beach, Coastal Barbarians Rowing Regatta on 27th April 2024 and the Studland Sim Run on 15th June 2024.
- **Wave Barriers** – The “Flooding Swanage with Art” project will launch on Friday 3rd November 2023 at 4 p.m. in The Square, Swanage. Thanks were given to Sara Parker and the Dorset Coast Forum team for the work on this project.

11) **Updates from representatives/organisations**

- **Environment Advice Team Manager, Dorset Council** – It was reported that the Studland and Swanage water safety group now included 15 different organisations, and by working together the reported number of jet ski/watercraft incidents had been significantly reduced. The boat patrols in Studland and Swanage bays had assisted in combating speed on the water and provided advice. It was noted that the group would revisit the pleasure craft by-law and an update provided to a future meeting.
- **Beach concessions representative** – Thanks were given to the response of the emergency services and Tourist Information staff in dealing with an incident on the beach in the summer. Thanks were also offered to the Beach Buddies for their work in keeping the beach clean.

- **Seaweed concession** – Thanks were offered to the seaweed concessionaire for maintaining the condition of the beach to a high standard.
- **Wessex Water** – It was reported that a business plan (2025-30) to implement improvements to the sewage system was in progress. It was anticipated that 2024 would see a year of discussion with Ofwat, DEFRA and the Environment Agency in order to implement changes which would reduce the overflow spillages. An update would be provided to a future meeting. It was noted that a storm overflow newsletter was available to interested parties.
- **Swanage Pier** – It was noted that there had been a change of operator at the café situated on the Pier.
- **Ocean Bay watersports** – The weather had not been ideal for the launching of watercraft and some advice had been given to sea swimmers who were unaware of their lack of visibility to other water users.
- **Land and Wave** – Business had been steady in term time, however there had been a number of cancellations due to the poor weather. There had been some vandalism to the changing rooms at Ocean Bay with bottles left on site. The winter training programme had commenced.
- **Swanage Coastwatch** – It was reported that the incidents were reducing following the summer season. National Coastwatch were undertaking a coastal water safety programme.
- **Cumulus Outdoors** – Bookings had been down slightly on the previous year. The company was happy to build relationships and work together.
- **Swanage Angling Club** – It had been a quiet year with many competitions cancelled due to the poor weather.
- **North beach representative** – Thanks were given to the Town Council for the continued maintenance of the Burlington Chine toilets.
- **Swanage Boat Hire** – Some water safety issues had been reported, however, it was acknowledged that the increase in quantity of the 5 knot marker buoys and the fact that they had not moved position, as had been the case in previous years, had proved beneficial in reducing speed in the bay. It was requested that consideration be given to the installation of bins for people accessing the sea by water, as boats accumulated rubbish whilst at sea and needed a hygienic way to dispose of waste. In response, it was noted that this would be included on the next agenda for the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting.
- A further comment was made regarding the waste left following an event at PAG. In response, it was stated that the bins may not have been positioned in a prominent position and the Dorset Waste services collection days may not have coincided with the event.

12) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

- a) Ocean Origin – Seaweed Farming in Kimmeridge (short presentation)
- b) Motion for the Ocean
- c) Coastal Resilience Study – Update

It was reported that a grant had been applied for, approximately two years ago, to fund a resilience study to investigate options for coastal protection for a rise in sea levels. It was suggested that a group work together, consisting of STC and other interested parties, to discuss potential solutions and next steps. It was agreed that this item would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting being held in February 2024.

13) Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was noted as Wednesday 7th February 2024 @ 2.15 p.m.

The meeting closed at 4.10 p.m.

