

Minutes of a Meeting of the **COASTAL CHANGE & BEACH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage, on **WEDNESDAY**
4th JUNE 2025 at **2.15 p.m.**

In Attendance: Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor T Foster – Swanage Town Council
Councillor C Sutton - Swanage Town Council
Councillor C Tones – Swanage Town Council
Mr B Compton – Ocean Bay
Mr R Eatwell – North Beach Representative
Mr G England – RNLI
Mr A Mears – Wessex Water
Mr S Norsworthy – Dorset Council
Ms S Parker - Dorset Coast Forum
Mr D Picksley – Environment Agency
Mr N Reed – Swanage NCI
Mr G Richardson - RNLI
Mr E Saloman-Carter – Dorset Council
Mr K Sheppard – RNLI
Mr S Thompson – Cumulus Outdoors
Mr M Turnbull – Founding Chairman of Swanage Coastal Change Forum

Ms J Woods – Mental Health Swims
Ms E Wright – National Trust

Also Present: Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk (Until 3.30pm)
Mrs S Layton-Kelly – Administration Officer
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services & Business Development Manager
(Until 3.30pm)

There was one member of the public and one member of the press present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised.

1) Election of Chairman

It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by M. Turnbull and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That Councillor M Bonfield be appointed as
Chairman of the Coastal Change and Beach
Management Advisory Committee for 2025/2026.

2) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Mr H Potter (Swanage Pier Trust), Mr I Brown (Maritime Coastguard Agency), Mr D Pratten (Beach Buddies), Mr R Marsh (Marsh Boats Stone Quay), Ms B Betts (Dorset Council), Mr S Hill (Swanage Boat Hire), Ms K Black (Durlston Country Park), Mr C Wiggins (Beach Concessions) and Ms E Steenkemp (Dorset Council)

3) **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 13th November 2024**

Proposed by Mr N Reed seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED
UNANIMOUSLY :-

That the Minutes of the Beach Management
Advisory Committee Meeting held on 5th February
2025 be approved as a correct record.

4) **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 5th February 2025, an update was provided by the FCERM team which included the following:

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

Outline Business Case with Wessex Water amendments is being drafted.
Funding has been acquired, awaiting costs of Wessex Water wall inclusion.

b) **Beach Renourishment scheme**

The Outline Business Case (OBC) remains within budget, subject to Dorset Council internal financial approval for increased spend within the approved limit.

Early construction cost estimates for the preferred option have been completed and whole life costs have been calculated.

Environmental Impact Assessment screening has been submitted to DC Planning, the Marine Management Organisation, and Natural England and comments are awaited.

Additional seabed sediment and benthic material studies are pending contractor availability, with completion expected by end of July 2025.

Subject to screening and consent approvals, final OBC submission is anticipated by November 2025.

c) **North Beach Cliff Management Strategy**

The annual cliff monitoring reports have been received and reviewed.

Additional Lidar works were completed in March 2025.

No cliff-top assets were recorded as being at imminent risk from the March update.

d) **Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP) project**

The Future Coast Dorset Project (formally known as Dorset CTAP Project) has moved into Phase 1, research and development stage.

The next round of public engagement events commenced in May and will continue throughout June.

For further information regarding Future Coast North Swanage events Sara Parker can be contacted via email: Sara.Parker@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

5) **Dorset Coast Forum**

The Committee received an informative presentation from a representative of Dorset Coast Forum. The presentation included updates on the current round of public engagement about the Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme and Shore Road enhancement options as well as the Future Coast North Swanage Project.

6) **Wessex Water online Improvement Work – update**

Further to Minute No) 5 of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 5th February 2025, the Committee received a presentation from the representative from Wessex Water, outlining ongoing and planned improvement works. During the discussion, members raised points regarding the potential for improved signage and the possible use of artificial intelligence to monitor water quality. Councillor Foster

thanked the representative for his attendance and continued engagement with Swanage Town Council.

7) Swanage Bay Byelaw Review - Update

The Committee was advised by the Visitor Services & Business Development Manager that, due to unforeseen circumstances, the review had temporarily been delayed and an update will be provided at a later date.

8) Updates from representatives/organisations

- **RNLI** – Safety concerns were raised regarding paddleboarders who may be unaware of the dangers posed by offshore winds. It was suggested that the VSBDM work in partnership with the RNLI to explore the feasibility of installing banners and wind socks at the Mowlem and Banjo Pier, to alert water users to offshore winds and other potential hazards.
The Chairman asked if the representative would provide an update at the next CCBMAC meeting about paddleboarding related incidents.
- **Mental Health Swims** – The Chairman welcomed the representative to the Committee. A brief overview of the group's purpose and activities was provided and the group's gratitude for the use of the beach hut near to the Ice Cream kiosk was reported.
The representative also raised a concern, asking that consideration be given to how individuals with disabilities, specifically mobility scooter users, can safely access the water. Councillor Tomes confirmed he would be happy to engage with Accessible Swanage, alongside the VSBDM, regarding the matter.
- **NCI** – It was reported that working relations were being established with Border Force due to the increase in activity in the area. Members were also informed that Project Kraken, the national maritime security initiative, was being reinvigorated to strengthen vigilance and reporting of suspicious maritime activity.
- **Swanage Pier Trust** – It was reported that a five year surveillance programme of the piles had commenced. The findings of this would feed into a 5-10 year maintenance programme.
- **The National Trust** - Members received an update from the representative which included the ongoing progress of the Middle Beach Project, an initiative that has been agreed to address the coastal erosion at Middle Beach. It was confirmed that progress is being made and the Beach Huts have been successfully relocated further inland.
- **Ocean Bay** - The representative raised ongoing concerns around manging dogs on leads. Dog owners tend to challenge this approach as it is a privately owned beach. A discussion ensued where a suggestion about signage was put forward. The Chairman advised that the Council needs to be mindful of any potential signage displayed and affirmed that it would need to be presented in a positive and constructive tone. In addition, the Chairman requested that officers give consideration to the possibility of potential signage.
- **Stone Quay** – The Chairman read out an update received from the Stone Quay representative. He expressed appreciation to the Council for the installation of signage warning bathers of boats coming alongside the Stone Quay.
Further to this, a concern was raised regarding the wild swim event that took place the previous summer. It was noted that the swimmers used the quay slipway to enter and exit the water, which posed a safety risk given the high volume of boating activity in the area. The representative highlighted the difficulty in spotting swimmers among anchored boats and mooring buoys and requested that the event organisers consider an alternative location along the shoreline for future events.
- **Environment Agency** – The representative provided an update to the Committee which included the welcome news that the restoration of the South West Coast Path from Kimmeridge Bay to South Haven Point at Studland has been completed and will form part of the King Charles III England Coast Path. In addition, the representative read out an

announcement from the Floods Minister of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Environment Agency (link to announcement below)

[Reforms to bolster flood protection for communities across the country - GOV.UK](#)

9) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

a) Swanage Green Seafront and Stabilisation & Shore Road Enhancement Scheme

The Chairman advised that the survey was ongoing and reiterated the importance of public input.

10) Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee had been scheduled for Wednesday 1st October 2025 at 2.15 p.m. at the Town Hall. The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 3.55pm.



The National Beach Access Project Survey

Launched in June and open until September 30th 2025, the Beach Access Survey is designed to gather evidence from people with medical/mental health conditions and disabilities regards their experiences of accessing the beach environment and blue space. [click here to complete the beach access survey](#). Or for more info go to www.beachaccessproject.co.uk or email Will@beachaccessproject.co.uk

Beach Access Project

Vision “enhance and improve beach access to enable people with medical/mental health conditions and disabilities to play a meaningful and active role in beach life and blue space.”

Mission

The beach access project and survey are designed to gather evidence from people with medical/mental health conditions and disabilities regards their experiences of accessing the beach environment and blue space. This information will be used to

- Visualise and raise awareness of the current situation regards beach access
- Inform, on how people with medical/mental health conditions and disabilities think and feel about the beach and how it can be improved
- showcase projects already promoting beach/blue space access,
- develop innovative solutions for beaches/blue space access projects and
- bring together a consortium of passionate individuals, groups and organisations to drive the beach/blue space access agenda.



Anything you can do to promote and support people with medical/mental health conditions and disabilities to complete the survey is greatly appreciated.

<https://form.jotform.com/wbehenna/beach-access-project-survey-2025>



Will Behenna - Beach Access Project

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Beach Access Audit

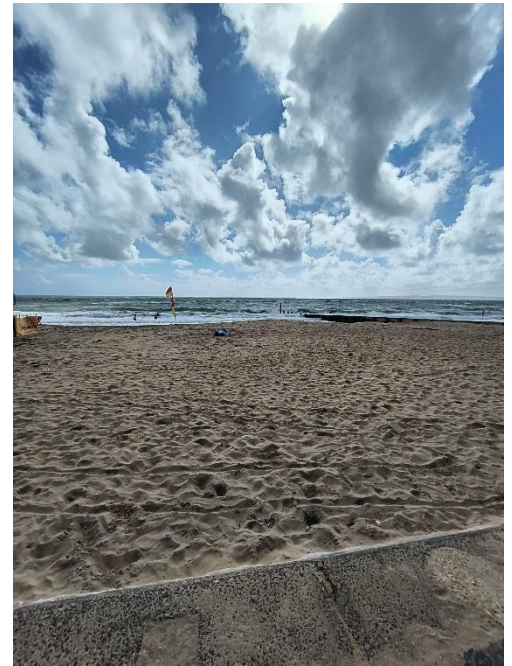
The Beach Access Audit is now live and available to complete.

This enables you to go to your local beach and complete a Beach Access Audit using your mobile phone. This Audit is designed to empower people with a passion for making Beaches and Blue Space inclusive and accessible for everyone.



It will take about 30minutes to complete and will be added to a map so everyone can see your Audit.

This is the first time a National Beach Access Audit has been done, so we are making history. I am deeply indebted to you for your commitment to this project.



The Process

Step 1 Get to the beach and open your phone

Step 2 Either click on this link <https://form.jotform.com/wbehenna/beach-access-audit-UK> OR go to <https://beachaccessproject.co.uk/beach-access-audit/> and Click on the blue box. The audit will open on your phone.

Step 3 Complete the audit by answering questions, ticking boxes and uploading photos

Step 4 Submit your beach access audit.

Here is a link to a short video about using your phone to complete the audit.
<https://youtu.be/pAMcaGAIJZ8>

If you have any questions or queries give me a ring on 07813641958



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Why is the beach access survey needed?

The Family Resources Survey indicates that "16.1 million people in the UK had a disability in the 2022/23 financial year. This represents 24% of the total population." **Department for Work and Pensions.**

Almost half of the UK population (45.7% of men and 50.1% of women) reported having a long-standing health problem; more women (22.3%) reported being limited (but not severely) in activities because of a health problem in the last six months than men (18.5%). **Census 2021 UK health indicators: 2019 to 2020.**

In January 2024 the Environment Agency produced a report from the Blue Space Forum: Health and Inequalities project. This project identified that **"There is also little provision for people with physical or sensory disabilities to access safe outdoor blue space."**



(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-wellbeing-benefits-of-blue-space-lived-experience>)

"There is growing evidence that living close to and spending time in and around green or blue spaces (GBS; e.g., parks, gardens, rivers, beaches) is associated with fewer mental health problems. People in deprived areas, those from minority ethnic communities, older adults, and **those with longstanding health conditions or functional limitations often have less physical access to good-quality GBS.**" Ambient greenness, access to local green spaces, and subsequent mental health: *Lancet Planet Health* 2023; 7: e809–18

These four pieces of evidence and the research papers associated with them, highlight the benefits of accessing blue space but clearly demonstrate that people with medical/mental health conditions and disabilities (PMHCD) who make up between 24-50% of the population, have little or no access to blue space. Everyone has a right to access blue space and currently we have no guidelines or strategies in place, to better understand and improve the situation.

There is also a significant lack of provision of activities on and in blue spaces. This is primarily because PMHCD cannot get to the blue space. Over

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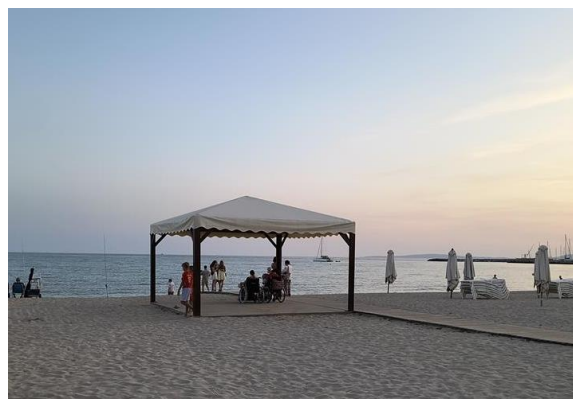
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the last 25 years significant resources have been put into creating guidance for accessing green space. The sensory trust launched its **Outdoor Accessibility Guidance**; Supporting inclusive outdoor access in the UK in April 2023. **"The guide is designed as a practical reference"** however the 203pg document allocate 2 pages to access to the water, under the heading **"boats and water based activities pg. 151-153."**

The new **Accessible and inclusive sports facilities** document launched in 2024 by Sport England dedicates 1 page to **Access to the countryside** and signposts to the Sensory Trust document above.

Organisations such as such Sustrans, the Forestry Commission, the National Trust, and National Parks organisations are able to use these green space guidelines to make their environments accessible. Without any guidance for blue space we will not change the current situation.



The evidence that blue space has benefits for individuals, groups and organisations and public health at a national level is well established. The evidence above demonstrates that blue space providers want and need guidance and support to enhance their offer.

Beach Access Project and Survey media

- an article from BBC South News
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp3q0kzk8d0o>
- a documentary I've made with students from Bournemouth University media productions department
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3D85a4ewFJQ>
- BBC radio Cornwall interview
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0lq76rg>
- BBC AccessAll podcast
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02r6yqw>
- an article in the Bournemouth Echo
<https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/25221138.wimborne-man-launches-survey-improve-blue-space-access/>
- an article by Nicola Baird
<https://nicolabairdtalkssup.substack.com/p/why-cant-i-access-the-beach>
- a documentary about inclusivepaddleboarding <https://youtu.be/-F9QZYPG0II>
- <https://www.mixcloud.com/chaosradiouk/will-behenna-beach-access-project-240625/> Chaos Radio interview with Ross Lannon

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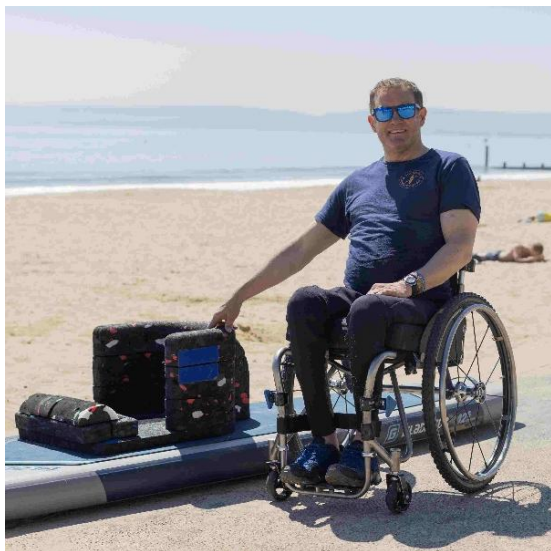
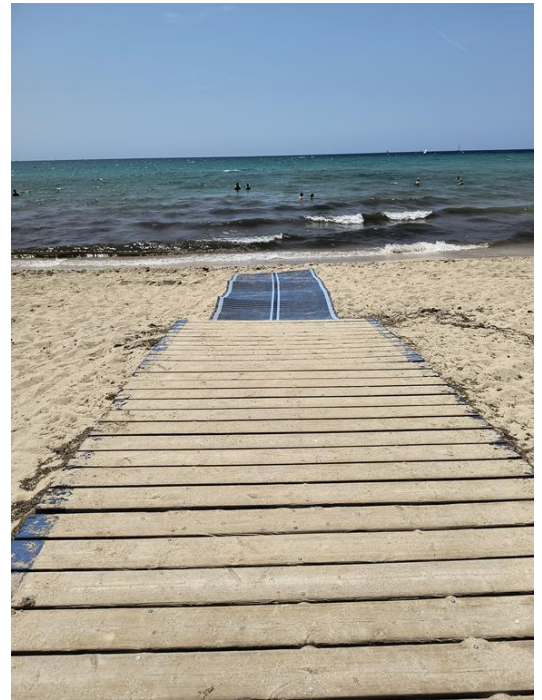
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Background to Will Behenna and the beach access project and survey.

Will Behenna, Founder of the Beach Access Project, grew up in Cornwall spending school holidays on the beach until a cycling accident at 16 left him with a spinal injury and a full-time wheelchair user. Having spent a career in sports development and training and education his passion has always been out on the water; whether sailing, scuba-diving or kayaking and helping others to do the same. However, the introduction of paddleboards opened up the possibility of being able to go out paddling independently. In 2023 he achieved this, having made a foam seat which attaches on to the paddleboard. Using a range of adapted and modified equipment he was able to get out on his local river without any support.



He set up inclusivepaddleboarding in the same year and acquired funding to build a range of equipment to support people with a range of medical/mental health conditions and disabilities (who have difficulty standing) to go paddleboarding. He has found it increasingly frustrating that so many blue spaces including beaches, rivers, lakes and canals are inaccessible for so many people with medical/mental health conditions and disabilities.

Finding places with accessible parking, pathways, toilet and changing facilities and safe and easy access onto the water is consistently limited. The beach access project and the survey are the start of a journey to **“enhance and improve beach access to enable people with medical/mental health conditions and disabilities to play a meaningful and active role in beach life and blue space.”**

Become a **Beach Access Champion** and [complete the beach access survey](#)

For more info at www.beachaccessproject.co.uk or email Will@beachaccessproject.co.uk



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