

## Agenda Item 5 a)

### SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL

### Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st December 2022

	£ p	£ p
Balance in Hand at 01/04/2022		£534,426.84 Cr
As per reconciliation dated 30/11/2022	£3,044,956.27 Cr	
Income during December	£39,653.50 Cr	
Movement of Cash-Investment	£0.00 Cr	
Add - Outstanding receipts- November	£1,029.74 Cr	
Less - Outstanding receipts - December	<u>£0.00 Dr</u>	£3,085,639.51 Cr
Less payments made:		
As per Reconciliation dated 30/11/2022	£2,893,377.47 Dr	
Schedule 9 payments dated 31/12/2022	£213,172.04 Dr	
Movement of Cash-Investment	<u>£0.00 Dr</u>	£3,106,549.51 Dr
		<u><u>£513,516.84 Cr</u></u>
Balance at Bank		
Current Account		£33,812.44 Cr
Deposit Account		<u>£479,704.40 Cr</u>
		<u><u>£513,516.84 Cr</u></u>
Short Term Investments held by the Council		
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (MMF)		£250,000.00
Aberdeen Standard (MMF)		£500,000.00
Santander CD		£450,043.99
UK Government- Gilts		<u>£495,945.43</u>
		<u><u>£1,695,989.42</u></u>

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief this is a true and accurate Statement of the Town Council's Cash Balance as at 31st December 2022

Prepared by Alison Spencer

Dated: 9th January 2023

Certified by Martin Ayres

Dated: 9th January 2023

**Agenda Item 6- Monitoring of Payments**

**SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2023**

**Payment schedule reported to Council - 30th January 2023**

**Schedule 9:**

The following payments have been made in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Town Council's

**TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY  
TWO POUNDS AND FOUR PENCE**

.....(**£213,172.04**).....

**Swanage Town Council**  
**Schedule of Payments - Month 9**

**Direct Debits & Standing Orders**

Date	Name	Inv Ref	Inv Date	Details		Payment Total
12/12/2022	Barclaycard Merchant Service	001884331122	30/11/2022	Month Nov- charge		65.00
07/12/2022	British Telecom	Q135MQ	23/11/2022	Q3 BT BG	161.24	
07/12/2022		Q141AJ	23/11/2022	Q3 BT TH	148.75	
09/12/2022		Q115BV	24/11/2022	Q3- Emergency phone	244.01	554.00
01/12/2022	Dorset Council: Revenues &	840014144	01/04/2022	Rates - 2022/23		15,764.00
14/12/2022	First Data	520334510615636	30/11/2022	Nov charge		427.00
06/12/2022		Refund	06/12/2022	Beach Hut refunds x 4		900.10
15/12/2022	Green Energy (UK) Ltd	52376108	05/12/2022	Gas Nov-TH	310.11	
15/12/2022		52376107	05/12/2022	Gas Nov-TIC	219.78	
15/12/2022		52376109	05/12/2022	Gas Nov-TH office	680.58	
15/12/2022		52376103	05/12/2022	Gas Nov-Depot	189.06	1,399.53
20/12/2022	Kent County Council	E8413774	28/11/2022	Electricity	3,279.84	
29/12/2022		UMS8473966	05/12/2022	Electricity- Month 8 Unmetered	141.35	3,421.19
12/12/2022	Lloyds Bank PLC	385590043	11/11/2022	Bank charge	284.90	
28/12/2022		386130895	07/12/2022	Bank charge	82.90	367.80
12/12/2022	Paytek Admn Services Ltd (F	MI/3607404/03	01/12/2022	Monthly- charge	128.35	
12/12/2022		MI/3607405/03	01/12/2022	Monthly- charge	72.00	200.35
29/12/2022	Pltney Bowes Finance Ltd	BJ600743	14/12/2022	Meter Reset		208.00
16/12/2022	Sage (UK) Ltd	INV15864327	01/12/2022	Month 9- charge		513.30
01/12/2022	water2business	3061590185	02/11/2022	Water Shore Rd	739.27	
01/12/2022		3061620400	04/11/2022	Water 7- Heritage	551.00	
01/12/2022		3061619832	04/11/2022	Water 7- Allotments	113.86	
01/12/2022		3061618176	04/11/2022	Water 7- Chine	147.04	1,551.17
<b>Total of Direct Debit &amp; Standing Orders</b>						<b>25,371.44</b>

**Lloyds Chargecard**

Date	Name	Inv Ref	Inv Date	Details		Payment Total
15/12/2022	Charge Card Transactions	1-Chestnut Nurseries	16/11/2022	Tree	29.95	
15/12/2022		3010192236202	21/11/2022	SOS-Road Closure	150.00	179.95
<b>Total of Chargecard payments</b>						<b>179.95</b>

**BACS /CHAPS**

Date	Name	Inv Ref	Inv Date	Details		Payment Total
23/12/2022	Ace Office Environments Ltd	01064488	30/11/2022	TH - Stationery	49.97	
23/12/2022		01062811	30/11/2022	TIC - stationery	129.00	
23/12/2022		01064222	30/11/2022	TIC - stationery	94.67	
23/12/2022		01065575	12/12/2022	TH - Stationery	69.16	
23/12/2022		01065125	18/12/2022	TH - Stationery	70.07	
23/12/2022		01066116	18/12/2022	3 Drawer	160.64	573.51
23/12/2022	Apogee Corporation Ltd	1354275	28/11/2022	Rent -photocopier	444.45	
23/12/2022		1354275	28/11/2022	Copy plan TH	409.55	
23/12/2022		1354275	28/11/2022	Copy plan TIC	165.33	
23/12/2022		1353765	28/11/2022	Nov charge Photocopier	89.42	
23/12/2022		1355253	02/12/2022	Toner-Depot	9.00	
30/12/2022		1360372	22/12/2022	Rental- photocopier	444.45	
30/12/2022		1360372	22/12/2022	Copy plan TH	335.53	
30/12/2022		1360372	22/12/2022	Copy plan TIC	44.54	
30/12/2022		1359367	22/12/2022	Toner Depot	27.43	1,969.70
23/12/2022		AquAid (Southcoast)	424053	30/11/2022	Sanitisation & Water	121.11
23/12/2022	424054		30/11/2022	Water 19L	21.58	142.69
23/12/2022	Audit West	7638778	24/11/2022	Data Protection Service 2022-23		1,500.00
23/12/2022	BIPCOM	INV-7753	01/12/2022	Phone divert		3.00
30/12/2022	Blacknoll Construction Ltd	11410	17/11/2022	Infilling drainage ditch & repair to masonry walls		3,574.55
23/12/2022	Blue Level Media Ltd	51-30065	16/12/2022	Web development		570.00
23/12/2022	C. Brewer & Sons	PLE/361415	30/11/2022	Black metal paint		134.74
23/12/2022	Central Southern Security Ltd	189363	07/12/2022	New fire detection, Beach Gardens		1,194.00
06/12/2022	Countryside Tree Surgeons L	SI-214	06/12/2022	Emergency tree works - Forres Field		2,700.00
23/12/2022	Crab Apple Catering	INV-2317	30/11/2022	Refreshments		720.00
23/12/2022	DAPTC	INV-1087	01/12/2022	Training		40.00
23/12/2022	Darkin Miller Ltd	773	08/12/2022	Audit Oct 2022- Dec 2022		1,981.28
30/12/2022	Dorset County Pension Fund	Month 9	21/12/2022	Month 9- Pension	18,693.65	
30/12/2022		Month 9	21/12/2022	Month 9- CAYS	201.00	18,894.65
23/12/2022	Dorset Council	2800333245	09/12/2022	Contribution -Community Bus		1,200.00
06/12/2022	Ellis Jones	4310	29/11/2022	Legal advice		1,800.00
30/12/2022	Fireline Ltd	82699	02/12/2022	Fire risk assessment		354.00

23/12/2022	Four County Services Ltd.	62286	26/11/2022	Domain Renewal	175.20	
23/12/2022		62378	10/12/2022	Month 9- service IT	639.43	
23/12/2022		62378	10/12/2022	Month 9- service phone	42.00	
23/12/2022		62377	10/12/2022	Month 9- BG phone charge	42.00	
23/12/2022		62377	10/12/2022	Month 9- charge TIC	414.13	
23/12/2022		62376	10/12/2022	Month 9- charge IT	334.78	
23/12/2022		62409	15/12/2022	Annual Licence	2,491.20	
30/12/2022		62456	21/12/2022	Domain Services- Councillors	42.00	4,180.74
23/12/2022	Futurform	9299	01/12/2022	Sit- stand Desk	(27.30)	
23/12/2022		194052	30/11/2022	Sit- stand Desk	622.80	595.50
23/12/2022	G4S Cash Solutions (UK) Ltd	2022113465	30/11/2022	Cash Processing Nov 22	443.04	
23/12/2022		2022113465	30/11/2022	Cash collection Nov 22	357.14	800.18
23/12/2022	Greenham Trading Ltd.	04/406314	18/11/2022	Equipment	429.60	
23/12/2022		04/406127	18/11/2022	Wet weather gear	564.00	
23/12/2022		04/408110	01/12/2022	36 gloves for ops team	561.06	
30/12/2022		04/409662	13/12/2022	Padlocks all parks, de icer, scrapers	70.09	1,624.75
23/12/2022	A.R. Harris & Son	32145	04/12/2022	Monitor electric supply	434.40	
23/12/2022		32167	10/12/2022	Seafront lights	120.00	
30/12/2022		32239	21/12/2022	PAT testing artisan beach huts	171.12	725.52
23/12/2022	Hendy Group Ltd	42068674	13/10/2022	Service HJ69 LCV	415.91	
23/12/2022		42068674	13/10/2022	MOT HJ69 LCV	54.85	
23/12/2022		42069040	20/10/2022	LOT HJ69 KYE	54.85	
23/12/2022		42069397	25/10/2022	Service - HJ70 ZLE	209.00	
23/12/2022		42072153	12/12/2022	New clutch and 2 tyres - NWP	1,166.46	1,901.07
23/12/2022	Hunt Forest Group Ltd	539646	12/12/2022	Spares kit Trimax		363.20
30/12/2022	HMRC	M9	21/12/2022	Month 9- PAYE/NI		15,699.76
23/12/2022	J.D. Facilities Ltd	INV-1284	01/12/2022	Cleaning-TIC	294.34	
23/12/2022		INV-1282	01/12/2022	Cleaning-Depot	197.59	
23/12/2022		INV-1283	01/12/2022	Cleaning-Depot-Staff area	230.62	
23/12/2022		INV-1285	01/12/2022	Cleaning-Toilets	7,226.51	
23/12/2022		INV-1281	01/12/2022	Cleaning-Town Hall	499.20	
23/12/2022		INV-1280	01/12/2022	Cleaning- Cemetery Chapel	27.00	8,475.26
23/12/2022	King & Shaxson	LEI05122022STC	05/12/2022	Annual Renewal Fee		78.00
23/12/2022	LA Digital Print & Mailing Ltd	5403	07/12/2022	4 x Market Receipt Books		152.40
30/12/2022	Lily's Produce	TIC51	08/12/2022	TIC - cakes and jams for retail		302.80
23/12/2022	D. & P. Lovell Ltd.	L5946	08/12/2022	1.6T Digger Door Repair		360.00
23/12/2022	Luna Electrical Services Ltd	INV-4673	14/12/2022	Days Park works		21,806.35
30/12/2022	Maintain UK Drains Limited	INV-36052	22/12/2022	Inspection of waste pipe		270.00
23/12/2022	Metric Group Ltd.	C64757	30/11/2022	Month 9- Aslan	192.00	
23/12/2022		C64959	01/12/2022	Maintenance contract q4	1,936.51	2,128.51
30/12/2022	S. Moores	192444	01/12/2022	TIC - biscuits for retail		62.56
30/12/2022	National Express	AREXT/00234164	31/10/2022	October Agency	156.77	
30/12/2022		AREXT/00234164	31/10/2022	October Agency-credit	(40.85)	
23/12/2022		AREXT/00234665	30/11/2022	Nov Agency sales	277.10	393.02
23/12/2022	Newlands Training Ltd	7642	10/12/2022	Training		282.00
20/12/2022	Swanage Town Council	Month 9 Payroll	20/12/2022	Net Wages-Month 9		53,018.19
23/12/2022	Purbeck Print Company	1026	25/10/2022	Social media logo designs	50.00	
23/12/2022		1026	25/10/2022	Christmas promotional leaflet	150.00	200.00
23/12/2022	Purbeck Gazette	12430	11/11/2022	Artisans on the Beach - Full Page advert		240.00
23/12/2022	RM Liquid Disposal Ltd	13209	30/11/2022	Empty tank		246.00
23/10/2022	Refund	SR19	23/12/2022	Refund Shore 19		118.00
23/12/2022	RPS Energy Consultants	ESI093222	16/12/2022	Detailed UXO study - Seafront stabilisation		1,200.00
23/12/2022	Seton	9303556497	07/12/2022	Signs		45.68
23/12/2022	Sharman Fencing	101426	28/11/2022	Panel fencing + closeboard fence		4,368.00
23/12/2022	St. Michaels Garage	2944	30/11/2022	Diesel		779.65
23/12/2022	Suez Recycling & Recovery U	32809568	30/11/2022	Skip		1,741.20
23/12/2022	Swanage News	1284	26/11/2022	Newspapers		33.80
23/12/2022	Swanage Tyres and Tuning L	26388	01/12/2022	Landrover service		155.72
23/12/2022	Travis Perkins	AMU422	16/11/2022	Anchor bolt for tree	20.12	
23/12/2022		AMU554	17/11/2022	Redwood Planed Square Edge 25x50mm	32.14	
23/12/2022		AMU605	18/11/2022	Toilet pn connectors and flushes - Mermond	30.19	
23/12/2022		AMU634	21/11/2022	Fence panels Day's park	155.90	
23/12/2022		AMU823	23/11/2022	Flushplate toilet- Mermond	194.72	
23/12/2022		AMU783	23/11/2022	Deadlock	30.78	
23/12/2022		AMU769	23/11/2022	Plasterers bucket	11.28	
23/12/2022		AMU944	25/11/2022	Fire strips and higes doors beach gardens	29.14	
23/12/2022		AMV126	29/11/2022	30 Piece router set	120.85	
23/12/2022		AMV222	01/12/2022	3 rolls weed matting PAG	102.89	
23/12/2022		AMV356	05/12/2022	Door closer beach gardens	56.72	
23/12/2022		AMV472	06/12/2022	Tile adhesive	13.32	798.05
23/12/2022	Trinity St Christmas Trees	INV-1216	15/12/2022	Xmas tree purchase & delivery		1,696.80
23/12/2022	Trodax Stamps Online	033016	25/11/2022	Pads		6.66
30/12/2022	Third Party Payments	Payroll Month 9	21/12/2022	Deductions- Month 9		504.04
23/12/2022	Wayne's Carpets Ltd	464	08/12/2022	Carpeting		282.00
23/12/2022	Westmade Ltd	1010126	08/12/2022	Annual Boiler Service - Depot	460.21	
23/12/2022		1010125	08/12/2022	Annual Boiler Service - TH	1,630.31	
23/12/2022		1010124	08/12/2022	Annual Boiler Service - TIC	144.00	2,234.52



23/12/2022	WGS Power & Lighting Ltd	SI-10699	06/12/2022	Anchor bolt testing	9,648.00	
30/12/2022		SI-10738	20/12/2022	Seafront lighting	984.00	10,632.00
23/12/2022	WSP	64596633	25/11/2022	Seafront - fees		11,766.60
<b>Total of BACS/CHAPS Payments</b>						<b>187,620.65</b>

<i>Faser payments issued 6th December 2022</i>	4,500.00
<i>BACS payroll payment issued 20th December 2022</i>	53,018.19
<i>BACS supplier payments issued 23rd December 2022</i>	88,087.02
<i>BACS refund payments 23rd December 2022</i>	118.00
<i>BACS supplier payments issued 30th December 2022</i>	41,897.44
	<u>187,620.65</u>

<b>Total of Payments</b>	<b>213,172.04</b>
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**Burlington Chine Public Conveniences – Statement re. future operation**

**Background**

In the spring of 2022, the Town Council gave consideration to the future operation of the public toilets at Burlington Chine, given the drainage problems that had arisen over the previous two summer seasons. It was reported that:

All foul drainage from the public toilets terminates externally into a pump chamber and is then pumped uphill to the nearest main sewer line. The pipeline runs approximately 110 linear metres. The land through which the pipeline runs is very susceptible to ground movement and is not in the ownership of the Council.

In both 2020 and 2021 movement and/or disturbance of the ground surrounding this pipework caused the pipe to fracture. These incidents have resulted in lengthy closures to the WCs in peak summer season and significant adverse publicity.

At the Council Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 the following resolution was passed:

That Burlington Chine public conveniences be opened for the 2022 season and that all reasonable efforts be made to keep the facility open, pending further consideration at a future meeting, taking into account responses to stakeholder engagement and legal advice received.

As part of the planned stakeholder engagement, a public meeting was held on 7<sup>th</sup> September at All Saints Church. This was extremely well attended and those present made a strong case for the facility to remain open, including submitting evidence about the significant number of users of the facility and the potential public health hazard if they were to close.

Although some alternative means of raising funds were mentioned, including the potential availability of grant funding, installation of turnstiles and the disposal of the vacant space adjoining the main toilet block, many of those present agreed that the facility should continue to be funded from the public purse.

Over the summer of 2022 no further ground movement was detected and no damage was done to the pipework.

**Statement on Current Position**

In recent months the Town Council has reviewed the funds available for the maintenance of this facility over the next three years. Further to consideration of six different options relating to the drainage at earlier committee meetings, Council agreed at the Annual Estimates Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023:

That an annual survey be commissioned to monitor the condition of the pipework at Burlington Chine public conveniences, with a sum of £30,000 being retained in the Public Conveniences Reserve for re-lining the pipes if that is deemed necessary or a critical failure occurs.

It was also agreed that the following works to the external frontage of Burlington Chine public conveniences be undertaken at a budgeted cost of up to £7,000:

- Localised repointing and concrete repairs to external frontage of building
- Provision of guttering and downpipe system (subject to further investigation)
- Renew/repair louvred windows, frames and grilles
- Repair/replace damaged stone windowsills
- Repair concrete ramp
- Consider provision of external sensor lighting to front
- Undertake boxing repairs male WC
- Repaint internal metal drainage covers.

In addition to the above, Council has agreed a budget projection that maintains revenue spending on public conveniences for the next three years.

It is, therefore, clear that the Town Council is committed to continuing to operate a public toilet facility at Burlington Chine for the foreseeable future. Opening times will remain unchanged, the facility being fully operational between April and September, and open during school holidays between October and March.

It is understood that the problem of ground instability is likely to continue, largely dependent on groundwater levels in the vicinity of Burlington Chine. It is, therefore, not impossible that a catastrophic failure could occur. Were there to be significant ground movement and the estimated cost of repairs to the pipes exceed the sum of £30,000 held in the public conveniences reserve, then Council would have to take a view at that time as to whether the facility remained viable in the longer term.

Due to the increasing demands on Council expenditure, Council will continue to explore potential sources of additional funding where those arise. Further to discussion at the meeting of the Public Conveniences Working Party on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2022, this will include the potential disposal of the vacant area adjoining the public conveniences.

Finally, it must be noted that the continued successful operation of this facility also requires the co-operation of the public and local business owners. Following a recent service of the pumps it was reported that the sumps contained a 'large amount of fat and wet wipes'. Signage is to be placed within the public conveniences regarding the flushing of wet wipes. With regard to the fat, an external tap and drain was removed in 2021 due to the disposal of fat via this route, however subsequent reports have been received regarding disposal into the toilets themselves.

**Action required:**

To consider approval of the above statement, including the Town Council's commitment to continuing to operate a public toilet facility at Burlington Chine for the foreseeable future.

Martin Ayres  
Town Clerk

January 2023

**Swanage Accessibility Audit**

At the Full Council meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, approval was provided for officers to procure an Accessibility Audit of the Town and Seafront. This information was to be used to inform the Swanage Seafront Masterplan and to support the Council's ambition to enhance the accessibility of the town.

The report was produced by a community interest company known as DOTS who undertook a mystery shopping exercise in November 2022. The report makes very interesting reading and suggests a total of 78 recommendations. These recommendations cover a very wide range of areas and activities. It should be understood that only a relatively small number are perhaps in the direct control of Swanage Town Council, and that a good number lie with Dorset Council and in some cases other parties such as shops and attractions.

The report is provided as Appendix 1.

**Taking the report forward**

The report will inform development of the Seafront Masterplan and has already been fed into the work that is currently being developed by the Dorset Coast Forum. In addition, the report will be shared widely across the town and its many stakeholders with a view to engage key organisations and groups of people to help develop the recommendations. It should be noted that not all recommendations are perhaps feasible or practical and over the next few months the action plan will be developed to identify which ones can be implemented either by STC, Dorset Council or in partnership with other organisations. It is proposed that the Action Plan is developed by officers and monitored and reviewed by the Tourism and Local Economy Committee on a regular basis.

**Additional work**

A number of important recommendations were made around the Swanage Information Centre, with perhaps the most important being the information currently provided in the form of the 'Accessibility Guide' being very out of date. This guide was originally produced by Purbeck District Council in 2010 and covered the whole of Purbeck. The guide is no longer publicly available as it is so out of date.

Councillors agreed to put some budget aside in 2023-24 to fund the development of a new guide and we hope that it can be ready for the summer season, although this might be optimistic. A quote has been received for this work and is currently being reviewed by officers.

In addition, a further key recommendation was around the establishment of an 'informed and empowered Disability Reference Group, made up of disabled people that experience a wide range of disabling barriers'. A local group would be a very useful way of developing and implementing the attached Action Plan and would also act as a very useful group to enable the Town Council to consult on plans for the seafront. A quote has been received from the company that undertook the audit and for £1,000 (2 days work) they would 'develop a proposed Terms of Reference for a Swanage Disability Reference Group, agenda for a first



meeting and recommendations on how to recruit'. Councillors are asked to consider if they would support the establishment of such a group and in turn to provide a budget.

**Decision required:**

1. That the Tourism and Local Economy Committee develop, monitor and review the Action Plan.
2. To approve the establishment of a 'Disability Reference Group' and provide a budget of £1,000 to support the setting up of such a body

Appendix 1 - Swanage Town Centre and Beach Front Mystery Shopping Exercise

Culvin Milmer  
Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

January 2023

# DOTS Disability



Community Interest Company

## Disability Consultation and Advisory Service

**Swanage Town Centre and Beach Front  
Mystery Shopping Exercise**

**“It’s about making [access] a central feature and about making the access features attractive and celebratory...”**



**“... then you are making Swanage welcoming for everyone.”**

November 2022

DOTS Disability CIC Telephone 01202 771336  
Littledown Centre, Chaseside, Bournemouth BH7 7DX

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## Introduction

### Background

DOTS Disability is a community interest company that is the social enterprise arm of Access Dorset.

Access Dorset is an organisation run by and for disabled people, older people and carers. We're building a community where everyone gets treated with dignity and respect, where we support one another, grow together and make a difference.

All of our work is informed by an in-depth understanding of the Social Model of Disability. This means that our approach acknowledges that:

1. Impairments exist, and that people from across different impairment groups have access needs. Failure to meet those access needs results in exclusion and isolation.
2. Society imposes physical, information/communication barriers and attitudinal barriers on people with impairments, which create disability discrimination.
3. Within the cultural model of deafness, advocates of Deaf culture use a capital "D" to distinguish cultural Deafness from deafness.

The aim of our work is to support organisations and communities to identify the barriers and solutions to inclusion for disabled people from across the different impairment groups, in a wide range of settings.

We believe that **Inclusive Design** creates environments that everyone can use to access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available – confidently, independently, with choice and dignity – which avoids separation or segregation and is made up of places and spaces that acknowledge diversity and difference, meeting the needs of everyone in society.

## Commission

DOTS Disability have been commissioned by Swanage Town Centre to undertake a user-led/co-produced mystery shopping exercise and feedback report on the lived experience of disabled people accessing and visiting Swanage town centre.

## Participants

The route was undertaken by 9 disabled people from the following impairment groups:

- Mobility
- Sensory
- Mental health
- Learning difficulty
- Long term health condition.

Some of the disabled people taking part had more than one impairment.

## Methology

Before the mystery shopping visits, we:

- Reviewed the websites from a user perspective, both for ease of use and quality of information for disabled people
- Contacted Swanage Tourist Centre to ask specific questions about access.

Scoping trip: Undertaken by two members of staff to:

- Identify key themes for the disabled mystery shoppers to consider
- Identify accessible and inaccessible venues for the mystery shoppers to visit
- Ensure that there were accessible venues for refreshments and access to toilets

Visit 1: Undertaken by disabled mystery shoppers and facilitated by 1 members of staff to gather experiences of the following:

- Arriving in Swanage

- Parking, including bays, traversing car parks, paying for parking and exiting car parks towards town centres
- Exiting buses and traversing the bus station towards the town centre
- Finding a café for a coffee
- Locating and getting access information from the Information Centre
- Traversing the main streets in Swanage
- Locating somewhere to eat lunch
- Accessing the seafront from Swanage Pier to Ulwell Road
- Using the public toilets

Visit 2: Follow up visit focused on the roadway between Victoria Avenue and Ulwell Road.

Following the mystery shopping exercises, we produced a draft report and consulted on the recommendations with the people who took part before producing this final report.

### Exclusions

This feedback report does not include:

- Specific technical information
- Costings or cost bandings
- Review of strategy, policy, or procedural documents

### Weather Conditions

On the days of our visits, the weather ranged from fresh and sunny to lots of rain showers.

## Overarching Comments

We very much welcome the opportunity to review the accessibility of this wonderful town. Taking part in activities such as a day at the beach with family and friends is central to living a fulfilled life. The aim should be that the public realm and activities available are inclusive of disabled people from across different impairment groups.

Accessibility needs to be present in every aspect of town centre planning and management because, without that broad and informed commitment, the outcome is often inconsistent; you might have accessible toilet, for example, but no accessible or inclusive events. This will discourage visitors from choosing Swanage as a destination of choice.

The group undertaking this mystery shopping exercise did face some significant challenges, but really enjoyed visiting Swanage and genuinely felt it was a lovely place to visit. The participants commented that part of the charm of Swanage and one of the reasons to visit was that it is a quaint and old-fashioned town.

A number of participants commented that their decision to visit somewhere was based on knowing what is accessible:

**“[Swanage] is lovely and attractive with great shops and a beautiful beach ... but we need to know what the access is.”**

People noted that there may be parts of the town that are difficult to negotiate, but that information about these specific barriers would help people to plan their visits and manage expectations.

**“We need to know. [I] was able to get though the cute back streets...surprising.”**

One person felt very strongly that it was about integrating accessibility and inclusivity into the overarching presentation and marketing of Swanage. This was specifically in relation to the recommendation for a barrier along the seafront, which they considered could be: **“an exciting art installation and a safety barrier at the same time”**.



The main challenges for our group were:

- Lack of relevant and accurate access information in the Access Guidance
- Traversing the Swanage train/bus station car park
- Lack of Blue Badge parking bays parking near to the sea front
- Uneven paving and poorly maintained dropped kerbs throughout the town centre
- Lack of dropped kerbs along the sea front
- Poor directional signage, including an absence of information about access amenities
- Lack of inclusive sheltered seating, especially along the sea front
- Lack of guard rail and kerb trip hazard at the sea front (pedestrian zone)
- Inadequate accessible toilets for people with mobility issues
- No Changing Places toilet
- Limited retailers and restaurants with level access/accessible toilet facilities
- The narrowness of the walkway between Banjo Pier and Ulwell.

The seafront was found to be particularly tricky. The road between Victoria Avenue towards Ulwell Road is too narrow to accommodate a two-way road, rear access parking, a cycle lane, and a wide walkway. Therefore, compromises will need to be made and it is vitally important that older and disabled people are involved in developing these solutions and those for the town.

Our visits took place when the seafront between the Mowlem Theatre and Victoria Avenue was a **“closed to traffic”** road as part of a wider trial to explore the viability of a pedestrianized zone. People liked this idea very much.

The lack of wheelchair access and Changing Places toilet near to the beach and the town centre **“and all the action”** was considered to be disappointing given the large number of level access beach huts.

**“If it’s hard to get to the toilet, we don’t go.”**

Whilst participants acknowledged that the historic nature of the town would present some inevitable barriers, they commented that broken pavers and poorly constructed dropped kerbs made circulation more difficult.

Parking was very challenging. The long stay car parks were located furthest from the amenities and the gradient adjacent to the Broad Road car park made it inaccessible to reach on foot.

Responding to the recommendations in this report should support Swanage to work towards and maintain an accessible and inclusive environment, which will:

- Contribute to the prioritisation of equality and inclusion for older and disabled residents and visitors from across different impairment groups, and their families, friends and allies
- Provide tools with which to embed inclusive practice into all areas of Swanage Town Centre management
- Demonstrate Swanage Town Council's commitment to benchmarking equity of experience and inclusion in general
- Support Swanage to become a destination of choice for diverse communities.

## Recommendations

### Strategic

- For any activity to be fully effective and successful, it will need to engage with and reflect the needs of the local community. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that an informed and empowered Disability Reference Group is developed, made up of disabled people that experience a wide range of disabling barriers. Where there are gaps in representation, consider outreach work/positive action to address this
- The Disability Reference Group should feed into an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for both the town centre and seafront plans. Where you find a negative impact, you can either make a change

(reasonable adjustment/mitigating action) or justify and record a position for not doing so. This is key for achieving transparency and effective communication. This is especially important given that some aspects of the work going forward will have to balance the needs of different groups.

- Briefings and learning events should be delivered to ensure that decision-makers and influencers are aware of the implications of the Equality Act 2010 and the Social Model of disability, and how to remove barriers to services. Disability Equality Training will also be key to people carrying out EqIAs, so they adopt a Social Model 'removal of barriers' approach to inclusion.

### Tourist information

- The current tourist information is out of date and inaccurate; it should be updated and in a "living" format so that it can be maintained.
- Access information should be visible and easily available.
- Where appropriate, consider adopting of a number of well recognised symbols that indicate accessible amenities.

### Parking

- Serious consideration should be given to developing level access seafront parking for disabled people.
- Develop a seafront parking strategy that offers parking for disabled people who use a variety of vehicles. Given the complexity of the space management and potentially conflicting needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers (including disabled drivers), we recommend an inclusive consultation is undertaken on any proposed changes to make sure it meets the widest needs.

### Beachfront Access

- Increase the number of beach access points close to the town centre for people with mobility issues who cannot use stairs.

- Increase the accessibility of the stepped entry points with colour, textural and tonal contrast
- Consider developing an accessible beach area adjacent to the Mowlem Theatre. Its proximity to public transport hubs could make it a valuable resource for people who cannot walk long distances.

### Pavements, crossings and kerbs

- In general, pavements and kerbs were not well maintained, showing many cracks and gaps. This can cause a trip hazard for people with visual impairment and reduce access for people using mobility aids in particular. Therefore pavements and kerbs should be mended and maintained.
- Consider the use of coloured and textured paving to indicate the edge of the walkway and the beach, and the parameters of The Square.

### Toilets

- Specifically, and as a matter of urgency, review the status of the beachfront toilet alarm system and ensure that, if triggered, it gets a timely response from staff who have a clear protocol for assisting people.
- Specifically, and as a matter of urgency, install an alarm system in the accessible toilet between the museum and the pier.

- The current proposed location of the Changing Places toilet cannot be easily accessed from the seafront, which the group felt would make it unpopular and significantly less likely to be used. Therefore, strong consideration should be given to the development of a Changes Places toilet that can be easily accessed from the seafront and is near to the town centre. This would open up the commercial and cultural experience of the seafront to people with more complex needs, and their friends and family.
- Improve the signage to both accessible toilets in Swanage.



- Upgrade the internal space of both accessible toilets so that they reflect as much as possible the most recent Part M Building regulations.

### Seating

- Increase the availability of accessible and sheltered seating throughout the town centre and along the beach front.

### Signage

- Consider the development of accessible orientation signage to be placed throughout the town centre. This will need to indicate the presence and location of access features such as parking, toilets, access to beach, etc.
- Consider specific directional signage indicating where there is ramped access to the beach.

### Bandstand

- Consider the reconfiguration of the bandstand – or mitigation activities – to make it accessible to disabled people, specifically those with mobility issues.

### Bus Station / Car Park

- Consider reconfiguration of bus station/car park to reduce the congestion adjacent to the entrance to the train station.

## Main Report

### The Swanage Information Centre Webpage

Disabled people visiting a location will often research the accessibility of the area before they visit. People need to be assured that they can park, access the various attractions and places to eat, in addition to being able to access toilet facilities.

Information provided by Swanage on the website should relate to disabled people from across impairment groups, including but not limited to:

- People with physical impairment
- People with visual impairment and blind people
- People who are Deaf
- People who have hearing impairment
- People with mental health issues
- People with learning difficulties
- People with long term health conditions.

The tourist information page is embedded within the [www.Swanage.gov.uk](http://www.Swanage.gov.uk) website. It was located by several of the participants who use the following terms:

- Tourist info
- Tourist centre

This was considered to be positive because the page was easy to find.

In terms of readability, we tested the text on the page via the [readabilityformulas.com](http://readabilityformulas.com) website, which scans text against 6 different readability formulas. It generally scored poorly – between fairly difficult to read to hard to read across a number of objective measures.

Some participants felt that people might come to Swanage for dinner and theatre, or cinema. We could not find any information on access for the Mowlem Theatre so we sent an email asking if there were any shows that were audio described and if the theatre was wheelchair accessible. We did this on the **9 November 2022**. We did not receive a reply.

Others people looked for access information about the museum, which states that it is wheelchair accessible on its website (<https://swanagemuseum.org.uk/>).

The website also says: **“Toilets: Public toilets (charges may apply) are situated nearby.”**

This was found to be concerning, and several people said this would put them off visiting this attraction.

## Recommendations

- Consideration should be given to the development of a new stand-alone tourism website, with access information gold-threaded throughout. This website should meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- Employ the Plain English guidance to support the development of clear and readable easily readable written material, including the website (for more information, see [www.plainenglish.co.uk/how-to-write-in-plain-english.html](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/how-to-write-in-plain-english.html))
- Consider using a free readability checker with all written materials (such as [readabilityformulas.com](http://readabilityformulas.com)). Stick to the same one for consistency of measure and approach. Include this as a step in the production of all written material. If you aim for a reading age of 9 you will reach a broad range of people. The Sun newspaper, for example, has a reading age of 8 and the Guardian of 14. (For more information, see: [www.ascento.co.uk/blog/are-you-aware-of-how-literate-your-employees-are](http://www.ascento.co.uk/blog/are-you-aware-of-how-literate-your-employees-are))
- The website homepage should include a brief introductory statement about the accessibility of the key features of the sea front and town centre, and provide direct links to key information that disabled people might need to be able to make an informed decision whether to visit or not.

**“The beach is important but so is the town – the shops and theatre... it’s all part of a day.”**

## Arriving by Bus

One of the participants taking part in this mystery shopping exercise arrived by bus, travelling from Poole on the Purbeck Breezer. The individual is ambulant with restricted mobility and is visually impaired.

She commented very positively on the bus journey:

**“The buses I used were accessible and had accessible seating inside. One of the drivers was very helpful... which I thought was very thoughtful and kind.”**

She did have some concerns, which were:

- The timings of the buses were irregular, meaning that gaps varied between 15 and 45 minutes, which she felt could be off-putting particularly in bad weather with limited seating and shelter available at Swanage.
- The bus timetable information at Swanage Bus Station was in small print and she found it very difficult to read.
- They could not access the seating outside Swanage station because it was narrow and crowded. The participant got wet waiting for the bus, which can be a more significant issue for people with less mobility and some long term health conditions less as they cannot warm up again.



**Image 1: Not enough circulation space at the bus stop seating at Swanage station: “Imagine it in the summer!”**



## Recommendations

- If redeveloping station approach as a whole, then the bus stops and seating could be positioned away from the entrance to the train station.
- Re-configure the seating to include sheltered accessible seating with handrails.
- Extend the sheltered areas to include a recess for wheelchair users.

## Parking

The Co-Op car park was chosen because it is close to the station and town centre. Those choosing this location had not realised that there was a 2 hour limit on the parking. It meant that one person – who has significant fatigue issues – did not want to park there as it would require him to walk back to his car mid-way through our exercise.

He headed off to find “**the next nearest**” car park. He followed signage to the Mermond Place car park only to find that this was also limited to 2 hours. He did not want to go to the main car park as this took him too far away from the town centre and too far from the accessible cafe we had located near to the pier. He finally parked in Broad Road car park above the pier but was concerned that he would not be able to ascend the hill back to the car park later in the day. In the end, he waited beside the entrance to the pier to be collected by another driver who drove him back to his car later that day to avoid ascending the hill.

One driver uses a rear access hoist, and only realised the restriction at the Co-Op car park after she has disembarked and returned the hoist into the car. She was frustrated, and did not want to do street parking along the sea front because this risked her being blocked in and unable to access her hoist.

The group did discuss street parking in relation to the sea front. There were the following concerns:

- Distance to the shops and other attractions
- Lack of hatched accessible bays on the seafront

- Lack of space for larger and rear hoist access and wheel-on-wheel-off vehicles

## Recommendations

- In local information guides, include parking info and the location of both long stay and short stay car parks.
- Consider extended parking times for blue badge holders in the short stay car parks.
- Improve signage in car parks so that any time restrictions.
- Consider the development of long stay parking opportunities along the sea front adjacent to the pedestrianised zone and with hatched bays suitable for rear access vehicles.

## Station Approach from the Co-Op car park

Those exiting from the Co-Op car park across Station Approach found the route difficult. They could not locate a defined walkway through the Co-Op car park. Although there was a walkway from the car park Kings Road West, **“it feels like walking away from the sea.”**



**Image 2: Showing inadequate and obscured walkway**

There was no signage suggesting routes from this car park, although we spotted the pedestrian pavement marking shown in Image 2; however

this was obscured by two parked cars that infringed on the walkway at the time of our visit.

**“It’s just disconnected, and I am confused.”**

The walkway continued to be challenging for everyone because it was busy. There were people getting on and off buses, people going into the station and people waiting; participants felt **“hemmed in”**.

**“We were constantly saying ‘Excuse me!’”**

The electric wheelchair user traversed Station Approach across the hatched area (see Image 2) to the junction with Station Road and accessed the walkway via an unmarked dropped kerb, turning left onto Station Road as a potential line of desire.

## **Recommendations**

To be accessible and inclusive, Station Approach should be reconfigured. Specific actions should include, but not be limited to:

- Clear and safe pedestrian routes with adequate width for wheelchair users that reflect the most straight forward and accessible routes
- Accessible signage, both for orientation and information
- Bus stops with shelters, accessible seating and space for wheelchair users
- Shared surfaces and spaces should be avoided:  
[\(https://www.rnib.org.uk/get-involved/support-a-campaign/inclusive-journeys/shared-space/\)](https://www.rnib.org.uk/get-involved/support-a-campaign/inclusive-journeys/shared-space/)

## **Crossing Kings Road West and Station Road and relationship to Station Approach**

Participants located the controlled crossing to the left of the entrance to Station Approach. People were unsure of the purpose of the bollards adjacent to tactile paving, but felt it was generally good:

- The location of this crossing made sense

- The kinetic control (the spinner beneath the control box that indicates when it is safe to cross) was in working order
- The tactile paving was correctly laid
- People felt that they had adequate time to cross the road.

People were more confused by the location of the crossing and line of desire when they travelled along the western side of Station Road towards Swanage train station.

People located the crossing but were unsure of how to proceed once they had crossed towards the station. An individual who wanted to go to the bus stop noted that there is no crossing over the entrance to Station Approach.

Drivers who wanted to get to the Co-Op car park wanted to avoid traversing the pavement in front of the railway station, so they elected to follow the path adjacent to the Medical Practice, cross the centre car park and then cross via the uncontrolled crossing on the section on Station Approach adjacent to King Road West. Whilst it was by no means perfect, it was easier than traversing Station Approach and the the bus station area in front of the train station.

It is important to note that for some people with mobility issues this is the closest car park to the train station. A trip on the railway could exceed the current 2 hour limit.

## **Recommendations**

- Consider the development of a defined and well signposted walkway adjacent to the Medical Practice from Kings Road West to the Co-Op car park.
- Consider a controlled crossing over Station Approach.

## **General Town Centre Circulation, Demises and Street Furniture**

The streets are narrow in places, but there were some issues that were more challenging. We also had many examples of cracked and uneven paving.



Here are some examples of the barriers encountered.

	<p><b>Image 3: Street furniture blocking the pavement, posing a potential injury hazard.</b></p>
	<p><b>Image 4: Lack of sign-posting along and to the accessible lines of desire</b></p>
	<p><b>Image 5: Unmarked step as a potential trip hazard. Railing also does not tonally contrast with the surroundings.</b></p>
	<p><b>Image 6: Ramp with no guide rail, posing potential hazard for a wheelchair user or visually impaired person.</b></p>
	<p><b>Image 7: Street furniture causing potential collision hazard for a visually impaired person outside of shop demise.</b></p>



## Signage

Participants really struggled with the signage. Whilst there was a good colour contrast, people did not like the font and found it difficult to read.



**Image 8: Showing multiple signs that some participants found overwhelming**

In places, there is a lot of signage, which some people found overwhelming. However, there were also gaps in the signage, such as indicating where accessible toilets and routes were.

## Shops, Cafés, Restaurants and Attractions

We were aware that there is stepped entry to many of the shops and cafes in Swanage. We called a number of cafes in advance of our visit. Everybody we spoke with tried to be helpful; however, levels of knowledge, confidence and competence varied considerably.

We identified two cafes that we could visit: one with level access and a large (but not necessarily fully accessible) toilet and another that had ramped access but no accessible toilet. We used the latter because the former was very crowded and the music meant it was difficult for those people with hearing impairments in our group.

**“Often we had to leave wheelchair outside of cafes.  
Staff aren't often friendly or accommodating.”**

We discussed the lack of access to a number of shops. People felt some could have ramps because the risers were not necessarily that high, but others were concerned that this would result in trip hazards, especially where the pavements were narrow.



**Image 9: Shop entrance with ramp for low riser**

One participant, who lives in Swanage and loves going out, commented: **“They are making an effort in Swanage but it’s getting individual shops on board which is tricky.”**

### **Recommendations**

- Develop and maintain directory of accessible shops and restaurants, potentially linked to the Purbeck Guide.
- Celebrate and promote venues that express good access through good customer services in addition to physical access.
- If a premises cannot achieve permanent level access, consider ways of providing temporary access solutions on requirement. For example, could their customers have access to an adjacent venue with an accessible toilet, purchase a shared temporary ramp, and can providers work together to maximise the facilities that are available?
- Require increased access for commercial planning applications for enhancement or change of use applications.

## Commercial Road

We went to Commercial Road because two of the more accessible cafes were located off this back road. In addition, it is an attractive road with some independent shops and galleries, which represents a unique aspect of the Swanage offer.



**Image 10: “[These stones] force me onto the road – it’s worse for older people...”**

It was difficult to negotiate and – whilst we did recognise that this is **“part of the charm”** – people felt that some things could be done to improve the access for people with visual impairments and mobility issues specifically.

We visited in the daytime and we are not sure if these cafes and shops are open in the evenings but we did note a lack of street lighting.

### Recommendations

- Increase the colour and tonal contrast between planters, objects/large rocks that are being used to discourage parking and surround.
- Encourage careful and consistent placement of A-Boards within demise, not impinging on desire lines.
- Highlight edging on the slope connecting the small plaza to Commercial Lane.
- Undertake a night time street lighting audit and consider the impact on night time economy.

## Places where it is difficult to cross

People struggled crossing back and forth across at the junction of Shore Road and Station Road, and where the High Street continues past the Square. The line of desire was clearer if one was heading left back towards the Molem Theatre.

### Recommendations

- Consider lines of desire for pedestrians in this area and create safe crossing points – for example, turning right at the high street to access the square or visit the Museum.
- Ensure the demarcation of pedestrian zones are clear.

## Seating at the library

People with mobility issues need seating that they can easily descend into and rise from, which is assisted by armrests. We saw a variety of seating throughout the exercise, including the example below of an accessible bench at the library. This bench has good tonal contrast with the surroundings, arm rest at either end, and space either side for a wheelchair user to park and sit alongside their companions.



**Image 11: Accessible seating at the library with space for a wheelchair user to park alongside**



## The Square

People liked the Square as on a “**good weather day**” it potentially provided seating, places to eat, the Museum and a “**nice vista**”. One person with mobility issues noted that “**you could drop me off here and then go and park**”.

However, there was a general lack of colour and tonal contrast between street furniture and surround making the space challenging to negotiate for the visually impaired participant.

**“There is grey flag stones, grey bollards, grey seating...  
on a grey day ”**



**Image 12: Stone bollard on The Square with no tonal contrast with surround**

She noted that on a busy day, it would be even more challenging because of the “**double challenge of crowds and difficult to see obstacles**”.

The seating was a combination of benches and seating without arm rests. The configuration of seating did mean that there was space for a wheelchair user to sit alongside their companions, which was considered to be positive.

In terms of the “**edges of the square**”, there were areas where there were raised tables linking The Square to adjacent walkways and some areas where there were kerbs. These did not have sufficient colour contrast for our visually impaired member.

We did note that there was a taxi rank here, which would be great for some people who wanted to access the Square and go to the Museum.

## Recommendations

- Insert seating with arm rests with colour contrast with surround
- Highlight the risers and the raised tables at the perimeters of The Square

## The Museum to Stone Quay

On a grey day, this part of the route was not attractive to our participants. The sea defences were “**off putting**” to the visually impaired person and the wheelchair user. The surface looked slippery, which was off-putting for the ambulant people with walking impairments.

Everyone was concerned because there was no safety rail between the path and the sea. It was felt this would be more concerning on a busy summer’s day because there would be people to negotiate. Participants thought that it could potentially get crowded along this path because it is a nice walk with public toilets, and it’s the route to the pier.



**Image 13: Sea defences and no indicator of the accessible toilets**

At the point when Image xx was taken, no one was aware that there was an ‘accessible toilet’ midpoint along this section of the seafront. The signage had some very small visual indicators, which no one noticed.

There were benches adjacent to the sea defences that were low level, had no arm rests and limited tonal contrast to the surroundings, making them not very accessible.



**Image 14: Low level seating with low contrast to the surroundings and no arms rests**

There were numerous barriers along this route, some of which we later learned were flood defences, while others more temporary obstructions.



**Image 15: Trolley obstructing the pathway**

### **Recommendations**

- Enhance the colour contrast between the flood defences and the surround
- Introduce accessible seating at regular points along the route.
- Introduce a safety rail between the walkway and the seafront.
- Introduce directional and location signage adjacent to the entrance of the toilets.

## Stone Quay to the Peir

People noted that there was some short 1 hour parking bays and an area with double yellow lines (we did not notice any yellow kerb dashes indicating restrictions), so there is potential parking at this end of the road for Blue Badge holders up to three hours. This was considered to be: **“enough time for a visit to the seafront”**.

Blue Badge holders may park on single or double yellow lines for up to 3 hours, but in general not where there are restrictions on loading or unloading – indicated by yellow kerb dashes and / or signs on plates. You may wish to [check whether a particular local council](#) has chosen to exempt Blue Badge holders from this restriction. However, visitors are unlikely to know to do this.

Participants also noticed that there was a partial safety rail and some seating, but without handrails.

The group wondered if there was potential to develop beach access for wheelchair users adjacent to Stone Quay.



**Image 16: Somewhere to potentially park and adjacent seating**

### Recommendations

- Include accessible seating in future design and/or retrofitting arm rests to current seating
- Assess and provide information on the **“helpful”** locations of single and double yellow lines so that they can advise people with limited mobility with **“top tips”** on where to park. This could be shared with



the Information Centre and local businesses, as well as a marked Parking map provided on the website.

## Area surrounding Mowlem Theatre

We noticed designated parking for Blue Badge holders adjacent to the Mowlem Theatre, which was positive. However, the dropped kerb was difficult to find and not of the correct paving and no tonal contrast with the surround.

We noted the slipway and wondered if it had the potential to be an access point to the beach for wheelchair users. It is close to the train and bus station, the theatre and the shops, so might be an attractive proposal for some people.

### Recommendations

- Ensure any accessible parking information / map includes the Blue Badge parking facilities at this location.
- Improve the quality of the dropped kerb
- Explore the opportunity to develop an accessible beach area in this area, adjacent to the town centre.

## Pedestrianized Zone

We understand that the section of Shore Road between the Mowlem Theatre and Victoria is closed to cars for a period of 2 years to test the idea of a permanent pedestrian zone.

The idea of a pedestrian zone was generally warmly welcomed, although people did raise some concerns for consideration:

- Where people could park with level access and rear access close by
- What mobility scooters would be allowed in the zone (these are used by many older and disabled people)
- Trip hazards (currently the kerbs within the zone have little tonal contrast and so provide a trip hazard, especially for people with visual impairment)

- Presence of potential collision hazards (for example, bike racks with poor tonal contrast)
- The lack of a safety rail (this concern is currently compounded by the tenancy for people to be drawn to walk on the seaward walkway)
- The lack of rails and highlighted risers on the steps down to the beach
- The lack of alarm in the adjacent accessible toilet
- The lack of a Changing Places toilet in this area
- The lack of signage showing where there was stepped and level access to the beach
- The lack of accessible seating
- Lack of accessible directional signage
- Lack of signage to and at access features

## Recommendations

In the short term:

- Introduce colour and tonal contrast to the kerbs and risers adjacent to the sheltered seating within the trial pedestrianised zone: **“I have some vision... I want to know where the edges are”**
- Insert a temporary handrail to the beach access staircase opposite the end of the Amusement Arcade and opposite the Information Centre.

In the longer term:

- Review and replace the signage within the guidance of the Sign Design Guide. This should include both directional and placement information for access features ([www.signdesignsociety.co.uk/](http://www.signdesignsociety.co.uk/))
- Consider the development of an **“accessible beach area”** adjacent to the Mowlem Theatre with a colour contrast and rails on the slipway. This would give people ramp access to the beach near to the town centre and closer access to accessible toilets. This would also benefit those with prams as well as those using wheelchairs.

- Two of the cafes close to the Mowlem Theatre state that they have accessible toilets – consideration could be given to highlighting these in any access guide going forward.
- Redevelop the sheltered seating throughout to include accessible seating offering space and shelter for wheelchair users, with good colour and tonal contrast to the surround.
- Install a guard rail between the pedestrianized zone and the beach. This could be developed with local creatives and in effect be a functional art installation, beautifying the seafront.
- Integrate tactile paving adjacent to the edge of the pedestrianized zone with the beach.
- Integrate hand rails and colour contrast to all beach access points
- Develop and consult on plans for the provision of accessible parking with a variety of options for different types of vehicles and level access to the pedestrianised zone.
- Ensure clarity about the use of mobility vehicles within the pedestrian zone. This includes what kind of mobility scooters would be acceptable within the zone and, if excluded, what provision would be in place for older and disabled people using Class 4 mobility scooters.

## Seating and beach access at the junction with Victoria Avenue and Banjo Pier

People were grateful to reach the sheltered seating adjacent to the two sloped entrances to the beach. Several of the participants commented that they really like to go onto the beach. One of the participants goes to the beach and swims in the sea daily, and is very clear that activities such as yoga on the beach and swimming in the sea have health and social benefits.

The sheltered seating was on a raised platform and not accessible to the wheelchair user. However, people noted that the Banjo Pier had some

seating with armrests and space for people using mobility scooters or wheelchair users to **“sit alongside to enjoy the view”**.

Participants commented that they had not noticed any signage indicating that this was the **“ramped access”** and slipway to this part of the beach. They also commented on the lack of proper handrails on both slipway of the pedestrian ramps and lack of colour/tonal contrast.

However, they did like that there was demarcation between the slipways and the walkways.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure the location of the ramped access to the beach is signposted and integrated into the relevant information guides.
- Introduce handrails with colour contrast to the surround on the pedestrian ramps.
- Introduce accessible sheltered seating at Banjo Pier.

### **Banjo Pier to Ulwell Road**

We did not traverse this section of the road on our initial visit because the group was fatigued by this point and saw nothing that attracted them to that end of the beach. They were concerned about the long walk back to the car park and the hill.

We however returned on 24 November 2022 with three disabled people from the group to review this section of the road.

It was a cold winter day when we did this and there was no one about so we had space on the pavement. Two of the participants had visual impairments and one a mobility issue. All three said that they would not even try to walk this section of the road on a summer day.

The issues raised were:

- The safety rail was welcomed due to the narrow pavement, but concern raised that there is not space to pass
- Street furniture (both temporary and permanent) cause pinch points along the route

- There is not much in the way of dropped kerbs, so even if you can find parking, it can be difficult to ascend to the pavement
- There was very little parking for people who use rear entry vehicles (requires rear hatching to maintain space for access)
- Little tonal contrast on rails at entrance to Battle Gate
- There were toilets but they were not accessible

Clearly, this is a narrow stretch of road that cannot be widened trying to meet the different needs of different groups of people. There is no clear solution that will meet everyone's needs without some radical changes, and compromises will need to be made in order to improve access here.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that Disabled people are involved and empowered throughout the process of identifying and developing solutions for this important stretch of road and walkway.
- Parking for Blue Badge holders (including rear access parking) should be considered as a priority on this section of road as there is no other level access parking adjacent to the level access accessible beach huts.
- Consideration could be given to a one-way system to increase options for widening the walkway and creating accessible Blue Badge Bays.
- Consideration could be given to rerouting the bus routes to ease pressure on this stretch of road.
- More regularly placed dropped kerbs should be installed.

### **The Level Access and Accessible Beach Huts**

We were really happy to read that so many of the beach huts were level access. For many older and disabled people, this is sufficient to make the space welcoming and desirable

Participants were concerned, however, that with just 5 huts with adjustable counters and no lowered counters in any of the Premium



Huts there is currently only 3% of the offer that with the high level of accessibility accessible.

People thought the following wording below was confusing:

**“Please note that all huts are fully accessible, except numbers 1 to 14, which are only accessible by steps.”**

The term ‘fully accessible’ appeared to be being equated with level access: however, level access alone is not enough to make something ‘fully accessible’ and inclusive.

We did find further key information for those who require more than level access:

**“We have five huts which have slightly larger doors to easily accommodate a wheelchair, and a lower countertop.”**

Internal circulation can be a key factor for those with larger wheelchairs and we were disappointed that none of the larger Premium Huts had lower level counters.

We did find information about the accessibility of these huts on the website, but it was not easy to find ([www.swanage.gov.uk/Shore-Huts.aspx](http://www.swanage.gov.uk/Shore-Huts.aspx)). We were also confused somewhat between the difference between the Premium Huts and the Accessible Huts. For some wheelchair users, it is only the Premium Huts on the lower level that would be accessible because they have the most circulation space.

## **Recommendations**

- Consider introducing height adjustable counters into all of the Premium Beach Huts and a larger number of those with level access to increase the percentage of more accessible Huts.
- Review the accessibility of the internal features of the beach huts and, where necessary, adjust heights and increase colour and tonal contrast to ensure that they reflect current good practice.
- Consolidate the Beach Hut access information into a single clearly marked location on the website, reached by “1 click” to ensure that it is clear and accurate.

- Replace the term ‘fully accessible’ by detailing all access features/potential barriers of the different Beach Huts. With comprehensive access information, individuals with different impairment needs will be able to decide whether it is accessible for them.

## Seating along Shore Road/adjacent to Beach Huts and planters

The seating adjacent to the beach huts and the information centre was welcome. People did like the idea of being surrounded by flowers, although the lack of arm rests and colour contrast to the surround was considered disappointing.

**“It could be a real sensory experience.”**

We noted that there was a small recess towards the end of some of the seating, which might be sufficient for a small pram but not for a wheelchair user.

### Recommendations

- Introduce seating with arm rests adjacent to the Tourist Information Office.
- Reconfigure or increase the seating adjacent to the level access Beach Huts to create space for wheelchair users and perhaps those with double buggies, etc.
- Introduce colour and tonal contrast.

## Swanage Bandstand

Several people located the bandstand, and we also found various pages on the web talking about community and musical events that take place at the bandstand.

It was noted, however, that the Bandstand was really difficult to reach and sit with friends and family and enjoy a show or some music on a sunny summer afternoon.

## Recommendations

- Any future development of the Bandstand should have a comprehensive Access Statement and be inclusive of disabled and non-disabled performers and audience members.
- In the interim, an Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out to identify anticipatory actions that can be undertaken prior to an event to mitigate access issues (for example, provision of temporary ramps).
- Reasonable Adjustments and access information should be included in event publicity, with contact details for older and disabled people who require more information.

## Swanage Pier

Unfortunately, the Pier was closed on the day that we visited, but we tried to look up access information on the website. We could not find any online but we were told by a volunteer on the gate that there was a wheelchair that can take you to different levels of the Pier if you can transfer from your own wheelchair.

We stopped to eat at the 1859 Pier Cafe & Bistro, with an accessible toilet and really good service: **“We felt welcome.”**

However, we found out about their good level of access via word of mouth, rather than via any access information on their website. The page does, however, mention that the venue is dog friendly (see <https://www.swanagepiertrust.com/cafe>).

## Recommendations

- Consideration should be given to recognising venues with good disability access and good practice via “access awards” or other events.
- Disability History month could be used as a leverage to garner support for an ‘Accessible Swanage’ with events and support for local shops and venues.

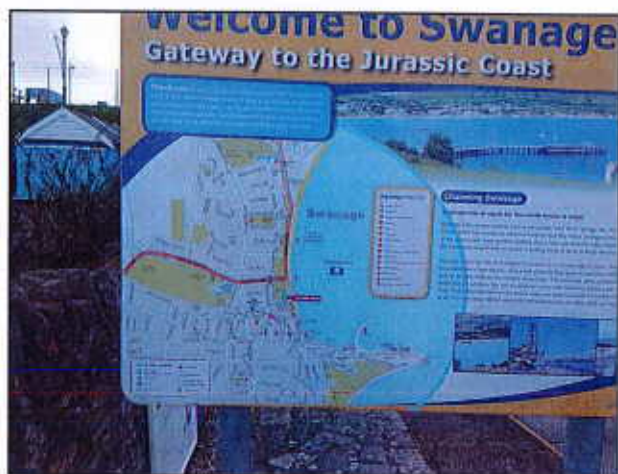
## Tourist Information Centre

The Tourist Information Centre was not considered to be particularly accessible by the members of the group with mobility issues or visual impairments. We spotted a big “I” for Information from outside of the Mowlem Theatre and proceeded to investigate.

### “It took us ages to find this”

On arrival, the wheelchair user would not enter for fear of “**knocking something over**”. There are a lot of items on display and there appeared to be limited space to manoeuvre.

There external information sign was found to be hard to read and did not highlight access features.



**Image 17: External information sign that was found difficult to read**

However, the staff working in the shop were friendly and very approachable. One of our group spent some time chatting with them and thought they were “**informative and engaging.**”

There is opportunity here to offset the limited physical access with good customer services for older and disabled people.

### Recommendations

- Accurate disability and access information should be developed and maintained so that Information Centre staff are equipped with the information that they need.



- Training and guidance should be developed so that staff are supported to be competent and confident in their ability to deliver information to disabled people from a range of impairment groups.
- More detailed information about what is available in the shop should be available on the website.
- Marketing and posters should reflect the Sign Design Guide and the Plain English guidelines.

## Accessible Toilets: Tourist Information Centre and Heritage Walk

Tourist Information Centre Toilet was initially visited by a member of the team who uses walking sticks. We noted a number of issues with the toilet, including the sanitary bin obstructing the wheelchair recess and an inaccessible alarm cord, and high hooks on the door, meaning you would need to stand to hand up any items.



**Image 18: Accessible toilet showing a sanitary bin in the wheelchair recess and inaccessible alarm cord**

We set off the emergency alarm to see what would happen. After waiting a number of minutes, no one came, so one member of the group returned to the Tourist Information Centre to report the alarm. A member of staff made a call and said someone called “Kos” would come and reset the alarm.

In the meantime, another member of our team wanted to use the toilet, so we reset the alarm ourselves. The reset button was not located close enough to the toilet for an individual to reset it themselves in the event of accidentally setting off the alarm.



**Image 19: Door to accessible toilet with high hooks meaning you have to stand to be able to hang any clothing or items**

The Heritage Walk Toilets were not well sign-posted and were not attractive.

**“it’s all a bit run down...dark and dingey...a bit cramped at the entrance”**

There were numerous access issues found with this toilet, including:

- Sanitary bin in the recess
- No colour contrast between furniture and surround
- Difficult to locate and reach flush
- No alarm cord (which is a Health and Safety issue)

### **Recommendations**

- Installation of an alarm cord in the Heritage Walk toilet.
- Review of management and response protocols for toilet alarm cords.
- Better directional signage to accessible toilets.
- Refurbishment of both toilets to meet the standards of Part M of the Building Regulations.