

Minutes of a Meeting of the **BEACH MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage,
on **WEDNESDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2019** at **2.15 p.m.**

In Attendance: Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman
Councillor C Tomes

Ms R Compton – Ocean Bay Watersports
Mr J Deare - North Beach Representative
Mr S Hill – Swanage Boat Hire
Mr I Jamieson – RNLI Lifeguard Supervisor
Mr G King – Swanage Angling Club
Mr R Marsh – Quay Operators’ Representative
Mr J Taylor – Pierhead Watersports
Mr D Turnbull - Swanage RNLI Lifeboat Station
Mr C Wiggins - Beach Concession Operators

Councillor T Foster
Councillor C Moreton
Councillor M Whitwam
Miss N Clark – Administration & Communications Manager
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services Manager

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

Public Participation Time

The following matter was raised:-

- Details provided of a 96-mile Jurassic Coast Sea Kayak Challenge taking place on the weekend of 30th November 2019. For further information please visit:
www.h2oadventures.co.uk/ and <https://en-gb.facebook.com/H2oadventuresLTD/>.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Finch, Mr K Bragg (Private Beach Hut Owners’ Representative), Mr T Greasty (Safe Bathing Zone Representative), Mr P Loudoun (Seaweed), Mr S Pinkard (RNLI Lifeguards), Mr G Richardson (RNLI Community Safety Officer), and Mr E Taylor (Wessex Water).

2) **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 11th June 2019**

It was proposed by Mr D Turnbull, seconded by Councillor Tomes, and AGREED:
That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 11th June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

3) **Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 11th June 2019**

There were no matters raised.

4) Consideration of budget options for 2020-21

The Visitor Services Manager (VSM) provided details of budget proposals for 2020/21 which he would be working up. These would be considered at the next Tourism Committee Meeting being held on 19th November 2019 (prior to being taken forward to the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee for further consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2020/21).

Each item was discussed in turn and the VSM welcomed the views of Committee Members and invited any further comments or suggestions.

The draft proposals included:-

- **Additional RNLI Lifejacket Lockers** to be installed near the Shore Road toilets – comments were made that these would be particularly useful for swimmers, beach users and motorcyclists.
- **Seafront Advisers** – it was reported that these had been very effective during the 2019 season and it was proposed to amend/enhance this role to become ‘Swanage Town Adviser’ as a trial for the 2020 season.
- **Beach Hut Competition Questionnaire** - an overview was given of the responses received to the questionnaire, and in particular to the question ‘What additional facilities or improvements might you like to see made to Swanage beach front?’. It was reported that out of 484 responses, the headline figures were:-
 - 11% more litter bins, or bin improvements/recycling
 - 7% permanent closure of Shore Road (5% southern section, 1% whole road, 1% general improvements around signage/speed limit)
 - 6% additional chairs and benches
- **Plastic bottle recycling facility** on the beach.
- **Prominent drinking water tap outside the Swanage Information Centre** – comments were made that the existing taps nearby were very low level.

A discussion ensued during which details of the RNLI’s water refill stations were given, and the VSM would make contact with the RNLI to find out more information accordingly. Further comments were made that consideration should also be given to the installation of water fountains in Prince Albert Gardens and at the north end of Main Beach.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

TO RECOMMEND:

That the Tourism Committee gives consideration to improved drinking water facilities in the seafront area, and to better signage to indicate the location of drinking water points, at its next meeting being held on 19th November 2019.

Further discussion ensued regarding discussions held at recent Sustainable Swanage Group meetings about plastic bottle recycling and previous issues seen in the seafront area with general litter/waste being placed into recycling bins. A suggestion was made that consideration should be given to the construction of a large wire fish which could be used for plastic bottle recycling, and installed at either the hardstanding or in Sandpit Field, or moved around the town as required.

Comments were made that litter had reduced on the beach, environmental impact education activities continued, and local school children were regularly involved in beach cleans. However, the non-collection of litter bins at times experienced in the high season did sometimes create issues with litter being blown onto the beach and into the sea, and a question raised as to whether additional bins could be installed just for the main season.

5) Update from the Visitor Services Manager (VSM)

The VSM reported that it had been a very busy summer, and provided updates on a number of matters, which included:-

Swanage Information Centre

- The Centre had won a Gold Award at the Dorset Tourism Awards 2019.
- An increase in footfall to the Information Centre had been seen during the April to September 2019 period of 4.2% compared to the previous year.
- Beach huts bookings had performed particularly well this year.
- **Litter Free Purbeck** – the storage/information hut was now in place on the grassed area adjacent to the TIC, and an ‘opening ceremony’ would take place in due course.
- **Beach Safety Boards** – three new boards had been installed, which included an improved map.
- **Swanage Boat Park** – a good year was reported, with high occupancy rates. Relining of the park would be undertaken over the winter months. It was noted that one business had taken up the trial to use the boat park as a launch site for commercial kayaks. Consideration would be given to the continuation of this trial at a future Council Meeting.
- **Seafront Advisers** – four advisers had been recruited for the 2019 season, and the new combined role covering the beach and the boat park had been successful. The advisers had also assisted with litter picking in the beach area, which helped contribute to a cleaner seafront
- **Giant deckchair** – the deckchair had arrived in time for Carnival Week and had proved very popular. It was noted that it had now been removed for the winter.

Following the update a question was raised as to the use of barbecues on the beach and whether this could be considered at a future Tourism Committee Meeting.

6) Updates from representatives/organisations

Swanage Angling Centre – it was reported that the poor weather had had an adverse effect on the angling competitions this season.

Pierhead Watersports – it was reported that there had been an increase in bookings from the local language school, however, there had been a reduction seen in ‘occasional’ water-skiers.

Ocean Bay Watersports – it had been a quiet season, but it had ended well with good weather on the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Beach Concessions – a slow start was reported, and comments made about the impact the suspension of the Sandbanks Ferry had had. Further comments were made that the condition of the beach had improved. A question was raised about the poor condition of some of the steps down to the beach, and it was confirmed by the Chairman that new steps would be constructed in due course.

Swanage RNLI – the team had had a busy season, and fundraising activities had continued. It was noted that the team would be appearing in the BBC TV series ‘Saving lives at sea’. Swanage Lifeboat Week 2020 would be held from 7th to 16th August, and new events were being planned. Details were given about the live webcam at the lifeboat house.

North Beach Representative – a question was raised regarding any future plans for the Battlegate public conveniences and whether they would be upgraded when the works to The Spa area were progressed.

Swanage Boat Hire Representative – it was reported that the RNLI Lifejacket Lockers situated adjacent to the Stone Quay would be removed by the end of October 2019. Thanks were given by the Chairman to Mr Hill for undertaking keyholding services on behalf of the Town Council during the season.

Quay Representative – further to Minute No. 6) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 11th June 2019 a question was raised as to whether the review of signage had been undertaken, and a request was made for consideration to be given to a new sign to make visitors aware that boats did operate from the Stone Quay area. The Chairman confirmed that proposals were currently being worked up for possible repairs to the Stone Quay and to permanent flood defences in the area, and that if any issues regarding use of the Stone Quay did arise then the representative should contact the TIC or the Seafront Advisers who would be pleased to provide support and guidance regarding this matter.

RNLI Lifeguards – a brief overview of the season was provided. The Chairman passed on thanks and appreciation to the lifeguard team, and for the advice and guidance given to beach users/members of the public during the season.

7) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

a) Swanage Town Centre Flood Defences – a leaflet had been provided by Dorset Coast Forum detailing the plans to investigate new/improved flood defences for the town centre, including lower High Street. In addition to the flood defences, the plans (which were jointly funded by the Town Council and Dorset Council) aimed to include enhancements to the public spaces around the flood defences. It was noted that the Environment Agency had been modelling the flood risk for Swanage and the results would be used to inform what works needed to be undertaken.

A request was made for an invitation to be extended to the Environment Agency to undertake a presentation to the Committee at a future meeting. It was further requested that an update on the progress of the plans be included on the agenda of the next Committee Meeting being held in February 2020.

b) Beach Management Advisory Committee - Boat Park Representative – a request made for consideration to be given to the nomination of an outside representative to serve on the Beach Management Advisory Committee at the next Committee Meeting being held in February 2020.

8) Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 26th February 2020.

Before closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Committee Members in attendance for attending Committee Meetings, and for their support and input at meetings during the past year.

The meeting closed at 3.40 p.m.
