

Minutes of a Meeting of the **BEACH MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage,
on **WEDNESDAY 19th OCTOBER 2022** at **2.15 p.m.**

In Attendance: Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman
Councillor C Finch

Mr B Compton – Ocean Bay Watersports
Mr J Deare – North Beach Representative
Mr E Fox – RNLI Lifeguard Supervisor
Mr S Hill - Swanage Boat Hire
Mr P Loudoun – Seaweed Removal Contractor
Mr S MacMillan Pratt - Swanage NCI
Mr P Palmer - Pierhead Watersports
Mr H Potter – Swanage Pier Trust
Mr G Richardson – RNLI Community Safety Officer
Mr J Roberts - Land and Wave
Mr A Smith – Swanage Sea Rowing Club

Councillor C Moreton
Councillor M Whitwam
Mrs E Evans – Democratic Services Officer
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services Manager

There were two members of the local press present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Mr R Acornley (Environment Agency), Mr D Bennett (Swanage Sea Rowing Club), Mr I Brown (Coastguard Station Officer), Ms N Canning (St Mark's Primary School), Mr T Greasty (Designated Bathing Zone Representative), Mr R Marsh (Stone Quay Representative), Mr J Mitchell (Dorset Coast Forum), Mr D Roper (Swanage Angling Club), Mr K Sheppard (RNLI Lead Lifeguard Supervisor, East Dorset), Mr E Taylor (Wessex Water), Mr D Turnbull (Swanage Lifeboat), Mr C Wiggins (Beach Concessions Representative) and Ms E Wright (National Trust).

2) **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 27th April 2022**

There were no matters raised.

3) **Swanage Seafront Masterplan a presentation from James Mitchell, Dorset Coast Forum Project Officer**

Further to apologies received from James Mitchell, the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) provided an update regarding the progress of the Swanage Seafront Masterplan and included information about upcoming community engagement events:

- Swanage Seafront – Past, Present and Future on 17th November 2022 @ The Mowlem, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. – an opportunity to find out more about the plans and to provide input into the ideas board.

- Creative event on 29th November 2022 5.30 p.m. – 7 p.m. @ Herston Village Hall - an opportunity for people with creative skills to take part in a workshop.
- Business Workshop on 1st December 2022 @ The Loft, Commercial Lane, 5.30 p.m. – 7 p.m. – an opportunity for business owners to comment and provide input into the seafront plans.
- The VSBDM encouraged attendees to take part in the survey.

Further to the update, a question was asked regarding the geographical area covered by the seafront survey. In response it was stated that the area referred to in the Seafront Masterplan was from the Pier to the Ulwell Steam at Ocean Bay, and the land adjoining the seafront owned by the Town Council such as Prince Albert Gardens and Sandpit Field.

Clarification was provided around three projects/proposals currently being considered: Swanage Town Centre Flood Defence Scheme, Dorset Council's Shore Road experimental traffic order and Dorset Coast Forum's Seafront Masterplan. It was acknowledged that the three projects may overlap depending on results of the consultations, and an update would be provided to a future meeting.

4) Terms of Reference and Representation of Outside Bodies

Consideration was given to the draft Terms of Reference document circulated prior to the meeting. A discussion ensued around the inclusion of cliff stability within the remit of the Advisory Committee, however, it was noted that the ownership of North Beach and most of Durlston Bay did not rest with the Town Council, and the objectives of the advisory committee would be best met with focus on Swanage Bay and the Town Council owned beach.

Further to a brief discussion it was suggested that the Swanage Moorings Association and Planet Purbeck be included in the list of outside representatives, prior to presentation at the Tourism and Local Economy Committee for consideration.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Mr P Loudoun and AGREED:-

That the draft Terms of Reference be amended to include Swanage Moorings Association and Planet Purbeck and be presented to the Tourism and Local Economy Committee for consideration.

5) Update from the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

An update was provided by the VSBDM and included:

- **Beach Huts** – it was reported that it had been a busy year for beach hut bookings with occupancy year-round. Beach hut income had seen a 20% increase from 2019 with people remaining in the UK for vacations.
- **Artisans on the Beach** – it was noted that the Artisans would return to Shore Road beach huts from 26th November and would continue every weekend until 1st January.
- **Events** – it was reported that Lewis Manning would hold an event on 10th December: 'Candles on the Beach' to provide residents with an opportunity to place a candle on the beach in memory of a loved one and the 'Boxing Day Dip' would be organised by #Willdoes.
- **Boat Park** – it was noted that the new staff member allocated to the boat park had made a positive improvement to customer service and operation of the boat park.
- **Tourist Information Centre** – a seven day a week opening schedule throughout winter would be trialled. It was envisaged that this would help to support local businesses in attracting visitors out of season.

Further to the update a question was raised around the accessibility matting

situated on the beach during the high season. It was noted that seaweed removal was more time consuming due to the need to ensure the matting was not in-situ prior to the use of the tractor. Further to a brief discussion it was noted that a thicker version of the matting may be available and that the Seaweed Removal contractor would be involved in future discussions.

6) Updates from representatives/organisations

The following updates were provided:

- **RNLI Lifeguards** – it was reported that the Lifeguard hut had been removed and the lifeguard season had finished. The hot weather had contributed to a busy summer. The lifeguards had dealt with weever fish stings but had not had any major incidents.
- **Seaweed Removal** – the season had been good with no large shingle banks and good quality sand.
- **Swanage Pier Trust** – a busy summer was reported, that had seen the return of the Waverley paddle steamer. The second stage of works were underway but the Pier would be fully re-open in December for ‘Lighting up Lives’ and Christmas events.
- **RNLI Lifeboat** – Lifeboat Week had been successful, raising approximately £25,000. The dates for next year were noted as 11th-20th August 2023. It had been a busy year with 27 lifeboat call outs and 37 all weather boat call outs. The Swanage team had starred in several episodes of the BBC Saving Lives at Sea programme. A request for improved signage to encourage visitors to the boathouse was made and improved signage to keep the far end of Broad Road carpark clear for emergency services. It was also queried whether the lifejacket lockers situated on the Banjo Pier could remain all year round to provide storage for all weather swimmers. In response it was stated that a sign audit would be commenced when the new Business Development Officer was in post, and the request regarding the lockers would be raised with the Assets and Compliance Manager.
- **Ocean Bay Watersports** – a good season was reported with high footfall of visitors, although jet ski hire was down on the previous year. Lifeguards had assisted and approached jet ski users displaying inappropriate behaviour, although overall it was considered that behaviour had improved.
- **Land and Wave** – 4,000 school pupils have been taken on excursions this year. More staff had undertaken lifeguard qualifications which would enable more availability for watersport sessions including paddleboarding.
- **North Beach representative** – it had been a busy season on the beach due to the good weather. Many dogs had been seen. A request was made to review the opening times of the public conveniences to accommodate school trips which primarily visit during the autumn and winter. In response, the comments were noted and would be raised at a future working party/committee meeting. It was also suggested that comments could be made through the Swanage Seafront Masterplan survey.
- **Swanage NCI** – it was reported that the recently installed cameras had proved beneficial in the search and rescue of vessels or people at sea. It was noted that the camera situated on top of the Coastwatch building was a public camera and could be accessed via the Coastwatch website. It was stated that the Swanage NCI can be contacted anytime should there be concerns of safety at sea. The ‘Respect the Water’ campaign would be relaunched in 2023.
- **Swanage Boat Hire** – it had been a good season, although takings were down on the previous year, possibly due to visitors’ financial constraints. A query was raised regarding the provision of waste and fresh water at the Stone Quay and it was stated this would be referred to a future committee meeting for discussion.

- **Bay Safety Patrol** – it was reported that there had been fewer incidents this season, although over one weekend in the summer several incidents had occurred involving violent and threatening behaviour from people who, it was understood, were members of the travelling community. In response, it was noted that the police would be made aware of the impact on businesses of such behaviour.
- **Pierhead Watersports** – the season had been busy but it was noted that during carnival week there had been a ‘no fly zone’ imposed at short notice which had impacted business.
- **Sailing Club** – it was reported that the footpath had eroded and pipes had become visible. It was noted that this would be referred to the Dorset Council footpath officer for their information.

In addition to the updates, comments were again made regarding the positioning of the 5 knot buoys, and in response it was stated this would be referred to the Swanage and Studland Water Safety team for their information.

7) **Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

The following items were noted for a future agenda.

- a) Swanage Town Centre Flood Defences

8) **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 8th February 2023.

The meeting closed at 3.55 p.m.
