

Minutes of a Meeting of the **BEACH MANAGEMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held via Zoom video
conferencing platform on **WEDNESDAY 11th
NOVEMBER 2020** at **2.00 p.m.**

In Attendance:

Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman
Councillor C Finch
Councillor C Tomes

Mr B Compton – Ocean Bay Watersports
Mr N Field – Swanage Coastguard
Mr R Johnson – Swanage Pier
Mr G King – Swanage Angling Club
Mr R Marsh – Quay Operators’ Representative
Mr P Palmer – Pierhead Watersports
Mr S Pinkard - RNL
Mr G Richardson - RNL Community Safety Officer
Mr D Roper – Swanage Angling Club
Mr J Taylor – Pierhead Watersports
Mr D Turnbull - Swanage RNL Lifeboat Station
Mr C Wiggins – Beach Concessions Representative
Ms E Wright – National Trust
Mr M Wycherley – Land and Wave

Councillor A Harris
Councillor C Moreton
Councillor M Whitwam
Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk
Ms B Betts – Environmental Advice Manager, Dorset Council
Mrs E Evans – Management Support Officer
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services Manager
Mrs G Percival – Operations Manager

Public Participation Time

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

The following matter was raised:-

- **Jet skis in Swanage Bay**– Concerns were raised over the speed of motorboats and jet-skis using the bay, in particular the speed near to the shoreline and the proximity to bathers. The introduction of larger 5-knot marker buoys was noted as a suggestion to reduce the risk and to potentially alter the position and the time of year when the buoys are deployed. It was further proposed, by the member of the public, that national legislation be reviewed regarding water safety. In response it was stated that these concerns would be discussed under Agenda item No.5) where Bridget Betts, Environmental Advice Manager, Dorset Council, would provide a presentation.

1) **Election of Chairman 2020/21**

It was proposed by Mr R Johnson, and AGREED:-

That Councillor Bonfield be elected Chairman of the Beach Management Advisory Committee for 2020/21.

2) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Mr K Bragg (Private Beach Hut Owners' Representative), Mr J Deare (North Beach Representative), Mrs T Ferrari (PSCO), Mr T Greasty (Safe Bathing Zone Representative), Ms S Huntington (Environment Agency), Mr R Marsh (Marsh Boats), Mr E Taylor (Wessex Water) and Mr I Weston (Swanage NCI).

3) **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 26th February 2020**

It was proposed by Councillor C Tomes, seconded by Mr D Turnbull, and AGREED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 26th February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4) **Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 26th February 2020**

There were no matters raised.

5) **Swanage and Studland water safety, a presentation from Bridget Betts, Environmental Advice Manager, Dorset Council**

A presentation was provided by Bridget Betts, Environmental Advice Manager, Dorset Council, regarding water safety in Swanage and Studland bays.

A briefing note had been circulated prior to the meeting detailing the work undertaken by the various agencies that are working together to tackle safety issues in the bays. It had been reported that improved systems for reporting inappropriate behaviour on the water had been established and had proved successful.

It was reported that the key areas of concern are use of the parish slipway, enforcement of the bye-laws, noise pollution, signage, and education of/communication with water craft users.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions following the presentation which included a request for clearer/additional signage and ensuring that water users that launch from other areas are aware of the byelaws relevant to their destination.

In response Ms Betts stated that a signage audit was in progress and that costings for new signage would be provided in due course. In addition, it was noted that the Marine Police were investigating ways to inform/educate water craft users, however, it would be a long-term project and need multi agency working to be successful.

A thorough discussion ensued regarding the use of vehicles whilst launching motorised craft at the parish slipway, and the safety issues for pedestrians in doing so. Having given detailed consideration to this matter it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

TO RECOMMEND: That the Town Council gives consideration to the installation of bollards at the top of the parish slipway to prevent vehicular access on safety grounds, and that legal advice be sought accordingly.

The chairman thanked Ms Bridget Betts for her informative presentation and for the progress made to date.

6) **Dorset Council – report on outcome of public consultation on a Dog related Public Space Protection Order**

It was reported that, further to recent public consultation, the regulations regarding dogs on beaches in Swanage are due to remain unchanged under the new Public Spaces Protection Order which is due to come into force on 1st January 2021. It was noted that the Dorset Council report on the matter could be accessed online via the link on the agenda.

Ms B Betts left the meeting at 3.00 p.m.

7) **Shore Road – report on responses to public consultation on the potential pedestrianisation of the southern section between the Mowlem and Victoria Avenue - update**

A briefing note prepared by the Management Support Officer had been circulated prior to the meeting, setting out the responses to the public consultation on the potential pedestrianisation of the southern section of Shore Road between Victoria Avenue and the Mowlem. It was noted that on 23rd September 2020 the Roads and Transport Committee had agreed that a formal request be made to Dorset Council for that section of Shore Road to be closed on a permanent basis to improve public safety. It had since been confirmed that this measure would be considered together with the flood defence enhancement scheme, which was currently under development by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management team. An update would be provided at a future meeting.

8) **Update from the Visitor Services Manager Swanage Information Centre**

- **Beach Huts** - It was reported that it had been a busy summer, however, due to Covid-19 restrictions the beach huts had not opened until 4th July with every other hut available to hire. The financial impact was reported as around a 50% downturn.
- **Seafront Advisers** – three out of the four advisers had been recruited for the 2020 season, however the Town Ambassador role had not been utilised this year.
- **Incidents**- the level of incidents had been much lower than in previous seasons with no reports of lost children.
- **Green Seafront** – The increased use of Sandpit Field, Prince Albert Gardens and The Downs had alleviated some pressure from the beach and the overcrowding witnessed in other seaside towns had not occurred.
- **Lifeguards** – praise was given to the lifeguards for providing invaluable assistance on the beach.

9) **Updates from representatives/organisations**

Swanage RNLI - The position of lifejacket lockers was discussed and it was decided that a site meeting would be scheduled within a few days with the VSM, chairman and RNLI representative to decide on the most appropriate location, with the intention of the lockers being ready for use during the 2021 season.

RNLI Lifeboat – Post lockdown, a busy summer was reported. Training had been suspended to conform with social distancing measures, however the team were now completing exercises every two weeks. The dates for Lifeboat Week 2021 would be scheduled and shared in due course.

RNLI Lifeguards – Risk assessments had been completed and had shown that Swanage was not classed a ‘high risk’ beach and therefore earlier in the season resources had been focussed elsewhere. During June additional lifeguards had been made available and returned to Swanage Main Beach.

Swanage Coastguards – A busy season was reported with around 200 incidents this year

including four fatalities. Some incidents of campers at Tilly Whim caves and of climbers getting into difficulties were noted. It was reported that training had recently recommenced. In addition it was recognised that a member of the coastguard team had recently retired and praise was given for their contributions to the town.

Beach Concessions – A slow start was reported but an improving situation as the season progressed. No incidents from water craft users were reported and an improved situation in 2021 was hoped for.

Ocean Bay Watersports – The slipway access was noted as a possible safety concern, however, a councillor and a representative from Ocean Bay Watersports had agreed to meet to discuss potential solutions.

Swanage Pier – a slow start reported but much improved end to the season. It was noted that a different representative of the Pier may attend future meetings.

National Trust – A challenging year was reported with 1/3 fewer staff than in previous seasons. A high volume of visitors was reported with car parks full and overflow carparks utilised. A few incidents had been reported including the fire risk due to BBQ usage which resulted in a ban on fires and BBQs. Some antisocial behaviour was reported with support provided by the police. One fatality had been reported due to swimming in the cold water.

Land and Wave – the service offered had been adapted to provide watersports for families rather than groups of individuals from different households. No paddlesports were offered at this time.

Angling Club – It was reported that some fishing competitions had taken place but some cancelled due to restrictions.

10) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

a) Swanage Town Centre Flood Defences

An update would be provided at a future meeting.

11) Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as .

The meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.
