

Minutes of a Meeting of the **BEACH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE** held at the Swanage Tourist Information Centre, Shore Road, Swanage, on **WEDNESDAY 31st JANUARY 2018** at **2.00 p.m.**

In Attendance: Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman
Councillor G Green

Mr S Hill – Swanage Boat Hire
Mr G King – Swanage Angling Club
Mr J Lovell, Wessex Water
Mr R Marsh – Quay Representative
Mr G Richardson – RNLI Community Sea Safety Team
Mr J Taylor – Pierhead Watersports
Mr D Turnbull – Swanage RNLI

Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk
Miss N Clark – Acting Administration & Communications Manager
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer

Other Attendees: Four pupils from St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, and Teaching Assistant Mrs Nash
Four pupils from St Mark’s CE Primary School, and Teaching Assistants Miss Canning and Ms Langley
Miss M Manley - Litter Free Coast & Sea and Litter Free Dorset
Mrs B Mayes - Litter Free Purbeck

Public Participation Time

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed pupils from St Mary’s Catholic Primary School and St Mark’s CE Primary School. The pupils took the opportunity to ask the Committee a variety of questions during Public Participation Time. Questions and comments raised included:

- Concerns regarding the lack of litter bins along the seafront and in the town centre. The Visitor Services Manager confirmed that he would bring these concerns to the attention of the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP).
- A query regarding pier and jetty jumping. The RNLI Community Safety Officer reported on the dangers of this type of activity and that, in the interests of safety, members of the public should report such incidents to the Piermaster. Swanage Pier did not permit bathing or jumping from the Pier.
- Concerns regarding instances of dog fouling seen around the town, and whether more dog waste bins could be provided. The Chairman confirmed that the Town Council provided bins in all its parks and gardens, and continued to work with Dorset Dogs to advise dog owners about best practice, although it had now banned dogs from Northbrook Cemetery due to repeated instances of fouling seen in the cemetery. It was reported that dog waste could be disposed of in DWP’s litter bins, and that DWP would not be providing any new dog waste bins in the town in future.
- Concerns regarding cyclists using Shore Road when it was closed and pedestrian Safety. The Chairman reported that the Town Council had agreed to fund a ‘Seafront Adviser’ who would be employed to advise members of the public on

- local byelaws and beach regulations during the summer season.
- A question raised as to how the pupils could assist with cleaning the beach. The Visitor Services Manager gave details of the #2 minute beach clean initiative. It was also reported that St Mark's Primary School pupils would be taking part in a future beach clean with the Litter Free Purbeck volunteers.
- A question raised as to what action should be taken in an emergency on the beach if there were no lifeguards on duty and the Information Centre was closed. The Chairman advised the pupils to call 999 and request coastguard assistance. There were three information signs situated along the beach which all had a unique reference number, and which would provide the telephone operator with the caller's exact location.
- A question regarding children seen playing around the Ulwell Stream outfall. The Chairman reported that although a new grille had been installed at the outfall, it was advisable for children not to play in the stream.
- Further queries were raised regarding trailers obstructing the slipway in the boat park, instances of vandalism and graffiti seen around the town, and whether there were any proposals for a 'plastic free' Swanage.

The Chairman thanked the pupils for their valued input to the meeting, and extended an invitation to the pupils and their parents to attend any of the Town Council's meetings in the future if they so wished.

The Chairman also confirmed that he would visit the schools in due course, along with the Acting Administration and Communications Manager, to provide feedback and to discuss all questions raised in more detail, and looked forward to welcoming them again at a future Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Marsh, Mr A Allison (Swanage Angling Club), Mr K Bragg (Private Beach Hut Owners' Representative), Mr I Brown, Mr N Field & Mrs K Jury (Maritime Coastguard Agency), Ms R Compton (Ocean Bay Watersports), Mr J Deare (North Beach Representative), Mr P Jones (Durlston Country Park), Mr R Martin (Swanage Sailing Club), Mr E Stevens (Environment Agency), Mr E Taylor (Wessex Water), Mr C Wiggins (Beach Concession Operators' Representative), Mr R Wilson (Purbeck District Council), and Ms E Wright (National Trust).

2) **To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 1st November 2017**

It was proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Mr G King and AGREED:
That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 1st November 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

3) **Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 22nd February 2017**

There were no matters raised.

Further to Standing Order No. 12) a) viii, it was proposed by the Chairman and AGREED:

That Item 5. on the agenda be brought forward to Item 4.

4) Water Quality in Swanage Bay - Update from Wessex Water

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Mr James Lovell, the new Divisional Waste Manager, Wessex Water, to the meeting.

Further to Minute No. 5) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 1st November 2017, Mr Lovell gave an update on operations at the Swanage sewage treatment plant, and advised that a significant programme of membrane replacement works would be undertaken at the plant in the near future. Five sewage treatment tanks would also be replaced prior to the 2018 bathing season, which would see capacity increase at the plant, and further improvement works were planned for October 2018. It was reported that the water quality classification for Swanage Bay had remained 'excellent'.

Further to Minute No. 9 b) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 1st November 2017, it was noted that Wessex Water's 'Stop the block in Swanage' campaign had reached circa 200,000 people, and that a total of 150 'gunk pots' had been handed out at the roadshow held at the Co-op Supermarket in Swanage in October 2017.

Thanks were given to Mr Lovell for attending the meeting, and for the updates provided, which had been appreciated.

5) Litter Free Coast and Sea & Litter Free Dorset – presentation by Matilda Manley, Project Co-ordinator

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Miss Matilda Manley, Project Co-ordinator, Litter Free Coast and Sea & Litter Free Dorset, to the meeting.

A presentation was given by Miss Manley which gave an overview of the project groups, and included details of the following campaigns and initiatives:

- The Great Dorset Beach Clean, and Litter Free Coast and Sea Week, which were annual events, usually taking place in April each year.
- #BinYourButt - 'only rain down the drain' – a sizeable number of discarded cigarette butts were being washed into drains, blocking them, and were also being washed out to sea. The butts could take up to ten years to decompose, the filters, however, did not degrade or dissolve. Free portable ashtrays were available from Litter Free Dorset to encourage smokers not to drop butts on the floor.
- Plastics Surgery and #TheLastStraw – highlighting the effects of plastic pollution, and the impact and damage caused to the marine environment by single-use plastic, (e.g. takeaway food packaging, plastic straws), and 'nurdles'.
- #2 minute beach clean – which encouraged people to reduce marine litter two minutes at a time.
- #RefillDorset – free tap water outlets.

It was noted that Litter Free Dorset worked with a wide range of stakeholders to reduce the social, economic and environmental impacts of litter, and promoted positive behaviour change throughout the county through its campaigns and 'clean up' events.

Miss Manley welcomed the opportunity to work with Wessex Water on its 'Stop the Block' campaign, and also enquired whether an article about the project groups could be included in a future edition of the Swanage Matters newsletter.

The Chairman thanked Miss Manley for attending the meeting, and for the informative presentation.

Mr J Lovell, Miss M Manley and the representatives from St Mary's Catholic Primary School left the meeting at 3.00 p.m.

6) Lifeguards and sea safety

a) Plans for 2018

Further to Minute No. 5) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 22nd July 2015, Mr Gary Richardson, RNLI Community Safety Officer gave a presentation on ‘Developing Swanage’s Community Lifesaving Plan’, which provided an update on information collected and actions taken to date, conclusions so far, and detailing next steps. Data had been gathered regarding incidents on/in the water, and drownings, and the aim was for the data to be proactively used to reduce drowning figures in the UK and ROI by 50% by 2024, through communication and education regarding the dangers of the sea.

The Chairman gave thanks to Mr Richardson for the informative update. A copy of the presentation slides would be provided to Committee Members for their information in due course.

It was reported that the RNLI Lifeguards would be in situ on Main Beach again in 2018, and it was anticipated that the hut/service would be located in the same position as last season. The service would run from 26th May 2018 until 9th September 2018.

The representatives from St Mark’s CE Primary School left the meeting at 3.10 p.m.

b) Five knot speed limit enforcement in the bay – update

Further to Minute No. 7 b) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 1st November 2017 there were no updates to be given.

Concerns were again raised regarding safety in the bay, the launch and speed of some jet skis, and the previous incorrect positioning and inadequacy of the five knot buoys.

A question was raised as to whether designated areas could be introduced in the bay to segregate types of beach user, e.g. jet/water skis, and that a similar system had been introduced in Poole. Committee Members were in agreement that advice should be sought from Poole in this respect, and that this matter should be placed on a future agenda for further consideration.

It was reported that the District Council still had a small budget available for an ‘on the water’ enforcement officer, and that any interested party should contact the Town Council accordingly.

It was noted that the Town Council’s boat park attendant would again be providing water users with advice and guidance at the boat park regarding local byelaws and speed restrictions during the upcoming season.

c) RNLI lifejacket lockers - update

Further to Minute No. 7 c) of the Beach Management Committee Meeting held on 1st November 2017, it was reported that the draft Licence Agreement was currently being reviewed. Once signed by the Town Council and the RNLI, delivery and installation of the lockers could be arranged.

Details of the lockers would be publicised by the RNLI and the Town Council on their respective social media pages and websites.

7) Shore Road – consideration of guidelines for authorised vehicles using closed section

The Visitor Services Manager (VSM) reported on proposals for improvements to be made to vehicle access arrangements and driving procedures in Shore Road when it was closed during the summer season. Concerns had been raised regarding the number of vehicles/persons using the road when it was closed, including delivery vehicles, event organisers/stallholders, council and cleaning staff, the emergency services, and for seaweed removal activities. Further concerns were raised regarding the speed of vehicles, and that some larger commercial vehicles had regularly undertaken three-point turns in the road.

The proposals included new locks on the gates to provide greater control over the issue of keys in the future, a new application form for users, a one-way traffic system, a speed limit of 5 mph with hazard lights flashing, deliveries to be undertaken before 10.00 a.m. or after 4.00 p.m., and that delegated authority be given to the VSM to remove keys from any user not adhering to the new guidelines.

During the ensuing discussion Committee Members agreed that clear guidelines were required in the interests of vehicle and pedestrian safety, and a question was raised as to whether consideration could be given to digital keypads instead of keys so that codes could be issued for set periods, removing the need to issue keys.

The VSM would explore options in greater detail, and Committee Members were in agreement that this matter should be given further consideration at a future Council Meeting.

8) Updates from representatives/organisations

Quay Representative

It was reported that the areas around the Council's slipways were extremely slippery with green algae at present, and a question was raised as to whether the Operations Team could clear the algae in the interests of health and safety. It was confirmed that this matter would be referred to the Operations Manager accordingly.

Concerns were raised regarding the condition of some of the jetty rings, and a question raised as to when the Stone Quay refurbishment would be undertaken.

A request was also made as to whether consideration could be given to the letting out of the Council's empty rings, and it was agreed that the Visitor Services Manager would look into this matter and report back to a future meeting.

Swanage Angling Club

The current guidelines regarding bass fishing were discussed.

The Chairman passed on the Town Council's thanks and appreciation to the Club for the use of the Clubhouse whilst the stabilisation works were being undertaken at the boat park.

Mr R Marsh left the meeting at 3.50 p.m.

Swanage RNLI

It was reported that the team were settling in well to the new lifeboat house, and the new recruits were undergoing training at the present time.

Maritime Coastguard Agency

The Station Officer had passed on his thanks and appreciation to the Swanage RNLI Lifeguard Team for its sterling work during the 2017 season, and the Coastguard Team was very much looking forward to working with the lifeguards again in 2018.

One of the Coastguard Team's key aims this year would be to remind members of the public that during a beach or coastal emergency they should dial 999 and request coastguard assistance.

9) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

a) Environment Agency – Flood Warden Newsletter winter 2017/18 – a copy of the newsletter was provided to Committee Members for information purposes.

It was noted that the Town Council would be considering the possible introduction of a new Flood Warden scheme at a future Council Meeting.

10) Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 6th June 2018 at 2.15 p.m.

The Chairman gave thanks to Committee Members for their continued support, and time and valued input given to/at Beach Management Advisory Committee Meetings.

The meeting closed at 3.55 p.m.
