

National Beach Safety Council - Southern Section
Inaugural meeting - 13th December 2005

Present:

Matt Ryan	Weymouth & Portland BC
Kevin Good	Weymouth & Portland BC
Julie Woodhouse	Bournemouth BC
Brian Cummings	Bournemouth BC
Chris Saunders	Bournemouth BC (Chair)
Gary Foyle	Christchurch BC
Barry Heathfield	RNLI
Matt Horton	RNLI
Peter Aston	Purbeck DC
Peter Sunderland	West Dorset DC
Chris Lewis	PBCLSA (voluntary groups)

Apologies:

Sarah Flamson	Havant BC
Ray Turner	Poole BC

Portsmouth City Council

1. Welcome

CS outlined that this meeting has been arranged with the blessing of the Beach Safety Council for representatives from Dorset & Hampshire. The primary aim was to cut travelling times to safety council meetings in the South West or South East and ensure attendance of the key people. As this is the first meeting some people who maybe should have been invited have been missed, this will be rectified for the next meeting.

2. Terms of Reference

CS tabled the terms of Reference for the National Beach Safety Council and all agreed to adopt these for the Southern Section. Two meetings to be held each year (before & after the season). The next meeting would be held after the National Beach Safety Council meeting, usually held in March.

3. Election of Officers

Chris Saunders elected as Chair
Gary Foyle elected as Vice Chair

4. Poole Bay Safety Management Plan

Barry Heathfield updated the meeting on the progress with the Poole & Christchurch Bays Safety Group and gave a broad introduction to the background. The RNLI are currently putting together ideas for the Poole Bay Safety management plan and will be presenting these to the Local Authorities early in the New Year. Chris Lewis asked that the role of voluntary groups not be forgotten - a balance needs to be achieved.

5. Weymouth Harbour Management Plan

Matt Ryan informed the group about the Weymouth Harbour Management Plan. The key points are:

- The entire bay is under the jurisdiction of the Harbour authority, which means more control can be exercised over water activities.
- Last year a notice to mariners was issued and a permit system for PWC's introduced. This has proved highly successful.

6. RNLI PRE Project

RNLI are reviewing standards of Public Rescue Equipment to try and form a national standard. The group agreed this was a good idea, however aspects such as vandalism will need to be taken into account.

7. Signage

The group was updated on the progress regarding the role out of the beach safety signage.

8. Bye Law Review

This issue was at the centre of what everyone was trying to do. However the process is difficult and time consuming. In addition the model byelaws CS agreed to raise it with the National Beach Safety Council to see if this process can be made easier.

Matt Ryan has agreed circulation of a note to the group on the process for adopting a non-model byelaw (process attached)

The group felt strongly that if the byelaws can be reviewed and changed then most other things would follow.

9. Anti-Social Behaviour

Discussions took place on various measures on how to control the rise in anti social behaviour issues. This was linked back to the byelaw review.

10. BBQ's

Each authority has different ways of managing BBQ's on the beach and it was recognised that some of these management regimes are out of date. The usage of BBQ's has changed with the introduction of disposable BBQ's on the market and the management procedures need to reflect this. This is also linked to the byelaw review.

11. AOB

CS outlined that Bournemouth is currently writing a Seafront Strategy and the scoping report is available for circulation if anyone wished to see it.

Date of Next Meeting:

To be arranged

To be hosted by Christchurch BC

Process for adopting non - model byelaw

Procedure for amending Byelaws

Any changes to the Byelaws must be approved by the ODPM before they can take effect.

- If a decision is made to vary the byelaws, a draft form of wording should be agreed and then the Council should undertake full consultation.
- Following conclusion of the consultation, the Council should consider whether to amend their proposals/wording of the byelaws in light of what has been raised during the process of consultation.
- Once the wording of the amended byelaws has been decided upon, the byelaws have to be approved by the relevant Committee and Full Council. The resolution should allow for the Byelaws to be sealed and advertised if the ODPM provisionally approves the byelaws.
- A questionnaire must then be completed (which deals with issues such as the necessity for the byelaws based on local conditions etc) and the byelaws must be sent with the completed questionnaire, copies of any objections and the Council's responses to the ODPM. The ODPM will then decide whether to give provisional approval. Depending on whether amendments are necessary, the ODPM aim to give provisional approval within approximately 6 weeks.
- Once provisional approval has been obtained, consideration should be given to returning the matter to Committee/Council if amendments have been made.
- The Council can then seal and advertise notice of making the byelaws. The byelaws are also placed in public places for public inspection. The public have a minimum of month to comment on the proposed byelaws.
- Once a month has elapsed from the date of the advertisement, the Council can apply to the ODPM to confirm the byelaws.
- If no objections are received by the ODPM, they aim to confirm the byelaws within three weeks.
- If objections are raised with the ODPM, they will endeavour to request the Council's views on objections within three weeks. The Council would then have to consider any objections and respond.
- The ODPM then endeavour to make a decision about whether to confirm the byelaws. In contentious cases, particularly where the arguments are finely balanced, it is an option for the ODPM to call a public inquiry. Such inquiries are rare and in normal circumstances the ODPM relies on a compromise to be reached locally between the Council and the objectors.

- Once the byelaws are confirmed by the ODPM, they fix a date on which the byelaws will come into force, which is normally one month from confirmation.

This whole process would take between eight and twelve months.