

SOUTH EAST BEACH MANAGEMENT GROUP
TWELFTH MEETING

11.00am, 8th September 2006
Brighton & Hove City Council – Hove

		Action
Present:	<p>Chris Holm (CH) – Brighton & Hove City Council Viki Miller (VM) – Brighton & Hove City Council John Rodway (JR) – Adur District Council Julian Morgan (JM) – Adur District Council (for Clive Bramble) Graham Kean (GK) – Wealden District Council Matt Stickels (MS) – Canterbury City Council Doug Arponen (DA) – Canterbury City Council Joe McCarthy (JMc) – Thanet District Council Richard White (RW) – Chichester District Council Angela Howard – ENCAMS (let after item 6) Anne Clay (AC) – Brighton & Hove City Council</p>	
Apologies:	<p>Gary Paunceforth – Canterbury City Council Matt Ryan – Weymouth David Piper – West Wittering Les Hawes – Hastings Borough Council Clive Bramble – Adur District Council Steve Benn – Rother District Council Mike Williams – Swale Borough Council</p>	
1.	<p><u>Welcome and introductions</u> CH welcomed the group and said that as it had not been possible to have a meeting in the Spring, it was important that one should be held in the Autumn. He thanked JMc for arranging the issuing of the invitations. JR proposed that CH should chair the meeting, as neither Steve Benn nor David Piper was able to attend. Seconded by MS. CH introduced Angela Howard of ENCAMS who would give a presentation on the new Quality Coast Award scheme. He then outlined the programme for the day, which would include the opportunity to look at the new beach safety signage and to visit the Sand Sculptures at Black Rock.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of last meeting</u> JR pointed out that Item 7.1 should read: "... the need to concentrate on beach rather than just water safety." There being no further amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2005 were agreed.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Matters arising</u></p>	

	<p>Thanet Coast Project Presentation</p> <p>JM/JR and MS outlined similar schemes operated by Adur and Canterbury - JMc, JM and MS to meet to exchange ideas.</p> <p>JMc updated the group on the North East Kent European Marine Sites Management Scheme. The initial public consultation had been well attended by environmental groups, a three-day seminar was held to enable people to express areas of concern, and comments were incorporated into the Management Scheme. He undertook to circulate a copy to interested members of the group. Three years on an updated version of the scheme has been developed following public consultation and a voluntary Coastal Code of Conduct for all beach users has been produced.</p> <p>There are now 39 voluntary coastal wardens who have collated a wealth of information and identified areas to focus on including protected bird species, dogs on the beach and repairs and maintenance. An assistant has been recruited and more educational presentations and workshops held over the summer. JMc had encountered incidents of large groups of people picking shellfish at low tide. Although some was being cooked and eaten on the prom, the rest was being taken away. The scale of this harvesting is having a detrimental effect on the chalk reef and sea life. He asked if any of the group had similar problems and JR/RW confirmed that they had. Many had also had problems with theft of pebbles and shingle from the beach by members of the public.</p> <p>JMc went on to report that £300,000 has been spent on a play area in deprived areas on the seafront as part of the coastal project scheme and further plans are being considered for next spring. CH said that Brighton & Hove did not have a coastal project, but did support an educational scheme called "Low Tide". JR said that Adur had helped support World Oceans Day.</p> <p>JM reported that the Sussex Nature Coast project now had 16 wardens and work on educational projects for schoolchildren e.g. moth evenings had started. Local schemes to adopt a beach were being encouraged.</p> <p>There followed discussion about the pros and cons of the Maritime Conservation Society "Adopt a Beach" scheme. The group agreed that while the lists of rubbish produced could be useful, there was a risk that the</p>	<p>JMc/JM/MS</p> <p>JMc</p>
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	<p>evidence collated did not promote a positive image.</p> <p>The group also discussed the role of English Nature in conservation projects.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Items to be added to the agenda</u></p> <p>Members of the group requested that items on dog control, disabled walkways and public rescue equipment be added to the agenda.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2007</u></p> <p>JR read out a farewell message from Gary Paunceforth. CH undertook to reply on behalf of the group thanking him for his contribution.</p> <p>It was agreed that CH/JR should share the Chair/Vice Chair and host the meetings in 2007. JMc agreed to be Secretary. RW offered use of Chichester facilities for meetings. Chair/Vice Chair to move to east of the area in 2008.</p> <p>The question of collaboration with European groups was raised. JR suggested that the group could pursue links with European coastal groups who face many of the same issues as the UK. There had been a South North Sea coastal project for which funding is now finished. JMc commented that this initiative focused primarily on disability issues rather than services and projects. CH pointed out that there are a number of current Inter-reg projects such as links between the Brighton Fishing Museum and Dieppe and funding via Maritime Heritage for the Volks Railway track-work and accessibility train. There may still be some European funding under Inter-reg 7. Inter-reg 8 will come in next year and AH suggested that the group consider putting in an application. JR asked that this be put as an agenda item for the next meeting – in the meantime, all to investigate possibilities. CH said he would consult BHCC's European department. AC said that ENCAMS may be interested in becoming involved as a partner. AH said that matched funding would be required. CH said that Cherith Moses of Sussex University has experience of European funding for the University's coastal defence project.</p> <p>JB enquired whether anyone had twinning arrangements with European partners: CH said Brighton is not twinned, RW said that Portsmouth was twinned with Le Havre. MS thought that Canterbury was twinned and undertook to establish details. CH asked if ENCAMS had a European counterpart. AH did not think so, but</p>	<p>CH</p> <p>JMc CH</p> <p>MS</p>

	<p>thought they might have a small office. ENCAMS are part of the Foundation for Environmental Education which has one NGO in each centre. ENCAMS work with these organisations within FEE, particularly on the conservation side.</p>	
6.	<p><u>The Seaside/Blue Flag Awards</u></p> <p>AH outlined the background and plans for the new ENCAMS Quality Coast Award scheme, which will replace the Seaside Awards. The new scheme is a response to changes to the Bathing Water Directive and also represents a move towards beach management systems. The Blue Flag Awards will not change.</p> <p>Seminars have been held and AH suggested that it would be a good idea for members of the group to talk to people who had attended. She handed out leaflets outlining the scheme, which has been developed with partners in the Beach Award Discussion Group who represent the whole UK Beach Forum.</p> <p>The application software is being developed by Nottingham Trent University, and ENCAMS are paying the licence fee. Under the licence, some people will pay more – the more beaches you have the cheaper it will be per beach. Applicants will have to purchase the software in advance. CH asked if these costs would be reimbursed if the application was not successful. AC said that there would be further opportunities to experiment with the software at the Coastal Conference to be held in Brighton on 6/7 November.</p> <p>Applications need to be received by the end of November, with an extra opportunity to apply in March for Winter 2007. There are four categories, two rural and two resort. Accreditation for rural beaches can be winter only or all year as bathing water quality is not an issue. Resort beaches will have to comply with the European Bathing Water Directive. The categories are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Away from it all • Bucket and spade • Fun in the sea • Relaxed recreation <p>JMc questioned whether “Bucket and Spade” conveyed the right image – would “Family Beach” be more appropriate? There will be further categories in due course, such as extreme sports.</p> <p>Members of the public will ultimately be able to search the ENCAMS website for information about beaches most suitable for their needs, although they will not have</p>	

	<p>access to the categories.</p> <p>There will be only one flag regardless of the category qualified for.</p> <p>The width of a resort beach will be defined as 500 metres. Rules for rural beaches will be less strict as they have to provide fewer facilities.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Seafront Signage</u></p> <p>VM said that they had received good feedback on the 16 new RNLI recognised signboards, which have been erected on all the main bathing beaches. Each double-sided sign cost £3,000 – there are less expensive versions, but this one has a 10-year guarantee. Adur are considering producing new signs similar to those in Brighton. VM confirmed that the supplier is Tara Signs, Lancing, who may be prepared to give a bulk discount. VM is happy to offer advice – JR said that Lesley Hunt of Adur will contact her.</p>	JR
8.	<p><u>Lifeguarding/training/qualifications</u></p> <p>VM outlined the lifeguard training for Brighton & Hove. Two training courses for 16 lifeguards were held in May. These were in-house courses with assessment by external experts to ensure they were of a consistent standard. It is planned to continue this next season. There is currently no official recognition for the training, but consideration is being given to obtaining this. All lifeguards must be aged 18 or over. Recruitment starts in February to enable CRB checks to be processed. The group discussed the difficulties all had encountered with delays in obtaining CRB clearance. VM said that pairing of lifeguards was used to overcome this.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Dog Control</u></p> <p>JMc referred to new rules, which mean that they will need dog control on their two rural beaches. RW said that there have been no dog bylaws in place since April and these have been replaced by dog control orders. He advised members of the group to consult the DEFRA website for further information. JR said that Adur had simplified the process, with bylaws applying from May to December. JMc described a commercial deal for stickers on dog bins.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Disabled Walkways</u></p> <p>MS asked the group what provision they currently had. VM described the Mobi Mat, which has been trialled throughout the season with great success, although it is time-consuming to peg it out on the shingle each day and remove it at night. The cost for 20 metres was</p>	

	<p>£2,500. So far it has performed well although it has started to fray along one edge. JMc described the system of slats used in Thanet. These are removed in the winter. Cost - £6,000 for 200 metres. RW said that they had found putting handrails on groynes very successful.</p> <p>The group discussed the implications of DDA for the beach in general. The consensus was that as the beach is a natural object there is no provision of a service and therefore DDA legislation does not apply.</p>	
11.	<p><u>Public Rescue Equipment</u></p> <p>The group discussed problems they had encountered with vandalism to public rescue equipment over the season. MD had had problems with balls being taken from lifesaving equipment. JMc said the theft of lifebuoys – none of which had been used – was an ongoing problem. RW said that Chichester had found use of indelible dye to be of some help. JR said that Adur’s tactic was to replace equipment without drawing attention to the fact. JMc said that they adopted a similar approach to graffiti. MS asked for advice on suppliers of red/yellow windbreaks and deckchairs for lifeguards.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Any other business</u></p> <p>JR undertook to arrange a meeting before Easter – Adur to host. Concerted effort to be made to increase attendance.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 13.15</p>	JR