

**SEBMG Meeting
Kings Hall Herne Bay 18-11-08**

1) Introduction

MS welcomed representatives to meeting, which was being chaired by MS subject to election of new chairman and vice chair.

2) Apologies

Diane Cliff – Encams
Andy Roberts – MCA
Colin Ingram – MCA
John Rodway – Adur DC
Richard Waite – Chichester
Liz Holliday – KCC
Chris Drake - KCC

3) Election of new Chairman and Vice Chair.

Volunteered and elected - **Nick Sangster** and **Steve Benn**.

4) Minutes of the last meeting held on 8th September 2006 (Brighton)

The minutes were agreed as a true statement of the meeting (from what can be remembered!)

5) Matters arising from previous meeting

Coast Projects – **MS/JM/NS/DP** mentioned information on schemes operated in own areas. Concerns were raised that volunteer beach cleans could have adverse publicity on the amounts of litter collected. For further information on Thanets scheme which has been going 5 years thanet.coast@thanet.gov.uk or www.thanetcoast.org.uk , For Canterbury's Scheme Visit www.canterbury.gov.uk/coast or email foreshore.services@canterbury.gov.uk

6) NATIONAL BEACH SAFETY COUNCIL

MS read out issues raised at recent meeting in Poole at the RNLI training centre. The NBSC will meet twice per year (one meeting for all members / AGM to link in with RoSPA conference and one meeting for regional Chair, Vice Chair, active working group members and national bodies)

Regional groups to meet 2 – 4 times per year and be open to all interested groups (ours being SEBMG) RNLI to provide secretaria role for both NBSC and Regional meetings

Working groups to be established as follows;

WG1 – Coasteering / Tombstoning

WG2 – PWC – TBC

WG3 - Flags and Signage (Dormant)

WG4 – Public Rescue Equipment (Dormant)

WG5 – Beach Safety Data Requirements for WAID - TBC

MS showed a copy of a Beach Safety flag that was being used by someone in Germany. The NBSC do not promote this flag as it is not recognised internationally and can cause confusion to members of the public. The Group agreed to support the NON USE of this flag.

SAFETY FLAGS/SIGNS/WINDSOCKS

SB enquired as to how other areas react in winter periods ie are signs/windsocks etc removed or left on site.

DP stated that he left red flag sign out all winter.

DL commented that more areas are now conforming to national recommendations for signage and flag systems.

DP advised on reasonable outlet for purchase of windsocks.

*Action – **DP** to inform group of details of supplier (www.hampshireflag.co.uk)*

DL advised windsocks should be sited where they are easily visible.

SB raised issue on his concerns as to traders selling inflatables.

7) ENCAMS AWARDS

MS read out statement from Diane Cliff which are attached to these minutes

Blue Flags – 82 IN England (Thanet had 10 – Thought I would mention that)

24 beaches will lose year

Main reason is that they had poor water quality results due to wet weather conditions

82 Quality Coast Awards for next year

New QC awards changed due to pressure on Encams

Debate on the cost of the awards and the increases set by Encams (BF £300 - 2008/ £630 - 2009)

NS/JM mentioned that beaches in their areas would enter into a daily water quality monitoring scheme for next year

Long debate on the visits by Encams inspectors

To summarise it was generally felt that this practice should discontinue and that representation should be made on this to Encams and UKBMF

*Action – **MS** to write to UKBMF (on behalf of SEBMG) ref beach operators accompanying ENCAMS inspectors on visits*

Future visits should be a joint inspection where any problems for whatever reason can be solved sensibly on that day in an adult manner.

8) BEACH LIFEGUARDING (Volunteer)

VM - Where clubs are working there are concerns on the similarity of the uniforms worn as to the professional staff and where conflict or confusion may arise.

DP questioned how many lifeguards should be on site at any beach. **DL** commented that this would be identified in risk assessments.

DL to comment later on availability of RNLI audit visits.

*Action – **DL** to advise on availability of RNLI audit visits.*

9) BEACH EQUIPMENT

MS commented on new beach huts for lifeguard accommodation instead of the mobile trailers that were used previously

MS changed to throw bags instead of lifebuoys on beaches. Lifebuoys are still used where there is a drop to the water.

Constant vandalism is a problem all around the coast - this was a general comment.

TS commented on cheap supplier for LB boxes - ASPLI (www.aspli.com)

LJ Branding equipment can help reduce losses

VM asked for contact for high chairs – (anyone for tennis) – **MS** showed CCC High Chairs after meeting – available from (www.clicksports.co.uk)

10) TOMBSTONING/COASTEERING

MS outlined points from recent meeting at Poole and the difference in these types of activities

Companies already operate in the UK with no actual control in place but recent meeting set up advisory panel to set up guidelines.

This type of activity can be seen more so on YouTube.

AS mentioned debate on possible control measures to stop dangerous occurrences.

AOB

DP mentioned scheme Shopwatch – Countrywatch - combination of police/shop owners/beach users as a general control through radio contact and panels to discuss benefits.

VM similar scheme in Brighton

PL - Marine Watch Scheme – Police to work closely with councils to reduce crime

MS – Offered to take anyone interested along the coastline to see how CCC manage the coast and to look at the Lifeguard Beach huts (4 people accepted)

Meeting Closed 1.30 pm

Lunch was provided by Canterbury City Council Foreshore Services Department

Next Meeting Hastings TBA.

Delegate List

(TS) Tony Still	Lewes District Council
(DP) David Piper	West Wittering Estate PLC
(SA) Sandra Austen	Swale Borough Council
(MW) Mike Williams	Swale Borough Council
(LJ) Lyn Jones	Southend Borough Council
(VM) Viki Miller	Brighton and Hove City Council
(JB) Jayne Babb	Brighton and Hove City Council
(DL) Darren Lewis	RNLI
(NS) Nick Sangster	Hastings Borough Council
(SB) Steve Benn	Rother District Council
(MY) Matthew Young	Canterbury City Council
(AS) Andy Small	Kent Police
(JM) Joe McCarthy	Thanet District Council
(MS) Matt Stickels	Canterbury City Council

Hi Matt

I've put a batch of QCA promotional leaflets in the post to you and have made a few notes for you for your meeting on Tuesday:

Blue Flag

- This year there were 82 Blue Flags in England which was 3 less than in 2007.
- The water quality results for 2008 have now been classified and are available on the Environment Agency website. The bad weather we have experienced again this year has had a negative impact on the number of beaches achieving Guideline water quality standard. The official data shows that 24 beaches which held a Blue Flag in either 2006, 2007 or 2008 have not achieved Guideline water quality this year. Of the beaches, which held a flag in 2008, we now know that 15 have not achieved Guideline water quality and, therefore, won't be eligible for a Blue Flag in 2009. All wet weather waivers have been applied where applicable. The EA have put the poor results down to the bad weather in most cases, although they have stressed that they will continue to investigate the results and try to identify where other practical improvements could be made.
- FEE has yet to make a decision regarding how they plan to align Blue Flag to the Revised Bathing Water Directive. A further discussion was held at the National Beach Operators' meeting in Turkey at the end of October. A decision from FEE is now not expected until towards the end of 2009. The main discussion point is the sampling frequency as the Revised Bathing Water Directive allows for fewer samples to be taken during the bathing season in most cases, whereas FEE would like to continue with the rule which states that there must be no more than 17 days between samples.
- All Blue Flag beaches were surveyed during the summer season. The majority of issues were fairly minor, however, the displaying of environmental education initiative details is still causing some problems. On a positive note, signage has improved with an increase in the number of Beach Operators adopting the RNLI-style signage.
- The 2009 application forms are now available on the website – www.blueflag.org.uk
- The closing date for receipt of applications is 30 November.

Quality Coast Award

- This year there were 82 Quality Coast Awards which was a small increase on the 2007 figure of 77.
- Following the independent review, which was completed at the beginning of this year, a QCA Advisory Group was established.
- ENCAMS has worked closely with the Advisory Group to review and redefine the categories and criteria. There are now three categories and the look of QCA has undergone a major facelift.
- The application process has been significantly improved. The CD has been replaced with an online application form and this is now available through a new Operators' website - <http://www.qualitycoastapplication.org/> the application process is now much

more streamlined and user friendly and requires less supporting documentation to be submitted.

- All QCA beaches were again surveyed this year and the data shows that there have been some improvements. There is also evidence that some Beach Operators are using the award as the management tool it is intended to be and are using the report surveys to draw in management support and additional resources, which is positive.
- The application form for new applications is now online. For existing awards, Beach Operators will simply need to complete an update form for each beach and Diane Cliff has sent these out to all Beach Operators, along with copies of the 2008 survey reports.
- The closing date for receipt of new applications and for updates for existing awards is 30 November.
- Future plans for QCA include the review and re-development of the public facing website, which will be re-launched next year.

Hope this is OK, if you need any further information, please let me know.

Sorry I'm unable to attend, but would be happy to attend the next meeting if you could plan the start for around 11.30, as the earliest I could get to Herne Bay the same day is 11.00.

Many thanks

Diane Cliff
Programmes Co-ordinator
Operations

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ENCAMS
Elizabeth House
The Pier
Wigan
WN3 4EX

Tel: 01942 612638
Fax: 01942 824778

E-mail: diane.cliff@encams.org
Website: www.encams.org

The new Quality Coast Award Beach Operators' website and online application form are now available. To apply for an award for 2009 go to www.qualitycoastapplication.org

