

**Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan  
Phase I Report  
November 2016**



**Footprint Futures  
For Lyme Forward &  
Charmouth Parish Council  
November 2016**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan Recommendations</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2 Background</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 Charmouth Policies &amp; Studies</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Charmouth Parish Council Vision for Charmouth Foreshore</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Summary of Charmouth Visitor Questionnaire 2014</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Assessment of Visitor Numbers by Charmouth PC</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Charmouth Beach Management Plan – Summary</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Shoreline Management Plan Area 6 a18</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4 National and Local Planning Policies</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>National Planning Policy Framework</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5 Land Ownership and Covenants</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>6 Charmouth Foreshore SWOT Analysis</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7 Summary of Engagement with Local Stakeholders</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>8 Key Issues, Common Themes, &amp; Potential Actions</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>9 Interpretation &amp; Information Signs</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Proposals by Jurassic Coast Team</b>	
<b>10 The Economic Value of the Environment &amp; The Jurassic Coast &amp; Potential Funding Sources</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>11 Concluding Comments</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>12 Recommendations</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Appendix 1 - Consultancy Brief</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendix 2 - Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan Initial Environmental Appraisal</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Appendix 3 - Charmouth Foreshore Committee Letter</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Appendix 4 - Coastal Communities Bid Process</b>	<b>62</b>

*PowerPoint Presentation summarising the project and work undertaken also available*

# Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan

## Recommendations

The following Recommendations arising from this Phase I Foreshore Appraisal and Management Plan are put forward for consideration. It is recommended that:

- This Report is considered formally by both the Charmouth Parish Council and Lyme Forward, with a view to it being to be supported and endorsed
- An early Charmouth stakeholder meeting and workshop be held to share the outcome of the work and seek local input and views.
- A joint meeting be sought and arranged with appropriate Officers of Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council and the Environment Agency, to discuss the Management Plan and especially with regard to the beach access proposal.
- The Charmouth Foreshore Consultative Group be established as a priority to ensure good communication and engagement with key local stakeholders
- Communication with all organisations consulted as part of this study also continue on a regular basis.
- A coordinated and more detailed action plan be developed, based on the suggestions, conclusions and recommendations in Section 7, with priorities and timescales for implementation.
- Future funding opportunities being explored, as advised in the report, to assist in implementing projects.
- Consideration be given to taking forward the next stage of the project as identified at the outset and included in the consultancy brief included as Appendix 1.

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Parish of Charmouth is located on the south west coast of Dorset between Bridport and Lyme Regis and has a population of approximately 1300, the majority of whom live in the village. This Phase 1 report for the Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan provides an initial and independent examination of the current situation at the Charmouth Foreshore and beach area. It is fully appreciated that similar exercises have been undertaken before by the Parish Council and associated agencies and that other improvement plans have been prepared. In particular it is recognised that the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Team have recently undertaken a similar appraisal in the context of the pilot signing improvement scheme that they are progressing. It is confirmed that full regard will be had to this work and that there has been engagement with the WHS team, to ensure that there is compatibility and no unnecessary duplication of effort.

1.2 An environmental appraisal of the Foreshore area was undertaken on Thursday 11 August 2016. The weather was good with a mix of sun and cloud, car parks were busy, although not entirely full, apart from the seafront carpark and the beaches and area generally were busy with tourists. As part of the preparation of the management plan, the purpose of the appraisal was to undertake an independent overview of the general facilities and environment around Charmouth foreshore, including the road leading from the village of Charmouth some 4-500m up Sea Lane. The appraisal is provided as a separate background which is included as **Appendix 2** to this report.

## **2 Background**

2.1 The village of Charmouth has a bypass, with the A35 passing to the north and therefore the road through the village is mainly aimed at serving local traffic, holiday accommodation and those wishing to access the beach and seafront at Charmouth. The village itself has a wide range of shops and other services, given the size of the settlement, which provide retail and catering outlets to serve the day-to-day needs of local people and visitors.

2.2 There are a number of caravan sites on the periphery and in the vicinity of Charmouth and so these shops and services are available to meet the needs of staying visitors as well as local people and day visitors. There is some on street car parking in the main street and the junction between the main street and Sea Lane can become congested at times.

2.3 Shops in the main street are within easy, flat walking distance of the seafront, however it is considered unlikely that very many people walk this distance in order to use the facilities. The road down to the foreshore has a number of chicanes in order to help reduce traffic speeds and these seem to be working satisfactorily. There are double yellow lines to prevent on street parking, but there is a wide range of publicly and privately owned carparks serving the needs of visitors to the seafront and beach.

### **3 Charmouth Policies & Studies**

#### **Charmouth Parish Council Vision for Charmouth Foreshore - March 2015**

It is most beneficial that the parish council has considered the foreshore as a special place within the area and developed Vision for its future, as follows:

##### ***The vision***

***A Charmouth foreshore that retains its character but with good toilets and shower facilities (open when demand is there), manned by qualified staff who can assist visitors and give or direct visitors to first aid, good signage, well-maintained beach huts, good refreshment facilities, an efficient car park and a thriving Heritage Coast Centre. New quiet attractions such as kayaks might be incorporated and there might be a fossil museum nearby. The foreshore's sea defences will have been strengthened so that there is more protection from storms and access to the beaches will have been improved. Disabled access, in particular, should be looked at.***

In the light of the appraisal, it is considered that the full aspirations of the vision have yet to be achieved.

#### **Summary of Charmouth Visitor Questionnaire 2014**

3.2 A questionnaire, visitor survey, was undertaken in the period Easter to August bank holiday 2014, with forms being placed in a wide range of locations; holiday parks, shops, cafés etc. A total 253 completed questionnaires were returned, many of which were from family groups and therefore represented over 800 people.

3.3 The sample had a good range of age groups, with large numbers of families, family groups and old age groups. Most respondents were happy with their visit to Charmouth, with a strong theme being that they wish Charmouth to remain unspoilt and un-commercialised. Many of the visitors were people returning to Charmouth after previous visits and others came as a result of reading about Charmouth, the internet or recommendations from friends and family.

3.4 Most staying visitors stayed for at least 4 days, with nearly half staying for a week or more. With two thirds of the sample staying at one of the four holiday parks within the village.

More than 90% of respondents had visited village shops, followed by the Charmouth Visitor Centre and pubs, which scored nearly 80%. Visits to the playing fields were at 30% and the library at less than 25%.

3.5 Positive attributes and comments about Charmouth were the beach, scenery, friendliness of locals and fossils, with also the combination of Charmouth's location, it's facilities and being a good base to visit nearby attractions being positively reported. In terms of potential improvements the need for more eating out options in the village, followed by poor beach toilets, difficulties of parking in the village centre, access to coast paths and generally poor disabled access at the beach, controls of dogs was also cited as an issue.

3.6 In response to the survey Charmouth Parish Council identified a number of potential actions that could be implemented as follows:

- New finger posts and foreshore maps to identify key locations within the village, playing fields, library etc.
- Continuing to generally preserve the ethos and management of the foreshore.
- Highlight the potential and demand for a range of better quality eating out options.
- Pursue discussions with the District Council about the quality and maintenance of beach toilets.
- Provision of new dog waste bins.
- Pursue the County Council in respect of coastal paths.
- Monitor village parking situation.
- Identify potential opportunities for more activities for children.
- Baby changing.
- Free Wi-Fi.
- Cheaper evening parking and;
- Provision of drinking water at the foreshore/beach.

3.7 Overall, therefore, the visitor survey provided good evidence that most visitors to Charmouth had a positive experience, but with potential opportunities for improvements, some of which are taken forward as part of this Management Plan in 2016.

### **Assessment of Visitor Numbers by Charmouth Parish Council**

3.8 It has been estimated in the past that approximately 400,000 bed nights are accommodated per annum at the 4 main holiday parks, which, if the average stay is 7 days,

results in approximately 57,000 visitors per annum. It is estimated that approximately 40,000 bed nights are provided in hotels, bed and breakfasts and self-catering in the village, and again if the average is 7 days this would generate approximately 6,000 visitors per annum. The 2014 visitor survey identified 10% of the sample as day trippers, which results in approximately 40,000 day visitors per annum.

3.9 Overall therefore this equates to approximately 100,000 per year. This does, however, exclude a large number of educational and other group visits that come, particularly to the Heritage Coast Centre, by bus for fossil walks and related activities. The centre itself recorded approximately 100,000 visitors to the centre in 2015, which suggests the estimate above of a figure overall of 100,000 visitors, is probably an underestimate.

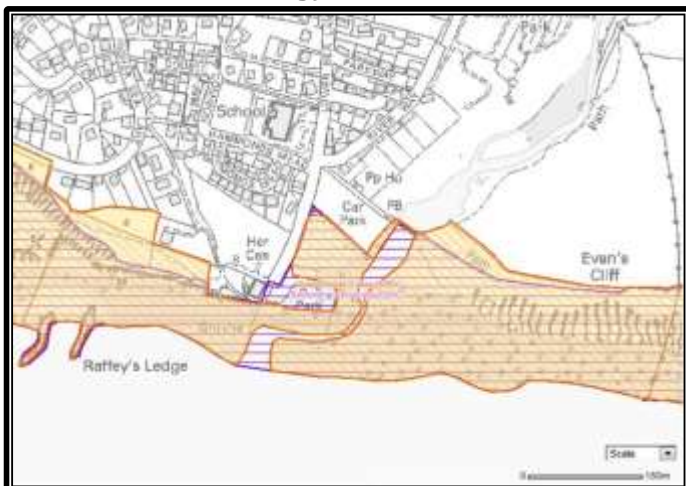
3.10 An assessment of car park capacity, notably in a July-August period, would again suggest that visitor numbers are in the region of 100,000. This, therefore, is a useful guide to assist in future management considerations, although it does need to be borne in mind that the vast majority of visitors come during those two summer months of July and August.

### **Charmouth Beach Management Plan – Summary [Version J]**

3.11 The Charmouth Beach Management Plan, prepared by Charmouth Parish Council and other agencies, is a plan that is aimed at creating order, understanding, control and discipline whenever the Parish Council as the land owners believes it is appropriate to intervene in a way of managing nature's process, whether it be for the benefit of public safety, sustaining the biodiversity or maintaining the habitat.

This Beach Management Plan will be for a five year period and the Parish Council looks forward to a continuing working relationship with the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Dorset County Council and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Team.

### **SSSI and SAC Geology; Reed Beds; Grassland**



**The following summary highlights the key policies for the different areas of the Foreshore:**

**Reed Bed**

To cut a quarter of the reed bed each year and the straw to be burnt in situ, in the autumn, thus ensuring the area is appropriately managed, minimising the disturbance to the possible wild life within.

To maintain a safe edge within the perimeter hedge and or fence around the reed bed for safety reasons and to stop the spread of the reeds.

**River Char**

To manage the River Char's mouth across the foreshore to ensure that outflow is within acceptable limits in a southerly direction across the shingle foreshore; and to remove man-made structures placed by the public that dam the river's flow, to ensure the river's continued flow, thus allowing fish from the sea access to the fresh water and preventing flooding up stream.

There is no intention to change the flood defence systems or affect the provisions of the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2).

**Anti-tank Traps**

There are a number of anti-tank cubes on Charmouth's East Beach some of which are buried within the shingle. At times they become exposed due to shingle movement caused by either sea or river erosion. On occasions the anti-tanks traps have presented significant safety hazards and it has been necessary to either re-bury or relocate the anti-tank traps and this remains the policy.

**Public Access Ramp**

To maintain a public access ramp through the shingle between the car park and the River Char ensuring a safe access route through high ridges of shingle.

**East Beach Ramp**

To maintain a public access ramp from the lower area of Evan's Cliff near the Soft Rock Café, to ensure a safe exit route from the east beach during high tides. Material for the ramp is to be collected by 'grazing' small amounts in the vicinity and in areas that are well trampled on by the public so that the appearance of any mechanical or machinery operation is soon lost.

**Grassed Lands**

To cut the lower grass land on Evan's Cliff fortnightly during the summer season; whilst the higher grassed areas in the 20 metre area northwards from the cliff edge (a coastal belt) should be uncut and only mowed with a loose cut, if and only if, the area becomes a problem from scrub and a like.



This is to ensure the establishment of grassland flora (thrift etc.). Any required cutting of the coastal belt is only to be undertaken in September of any year. Grassed lands further north of the 20 metre coastal belt, may be mowed once with a loose cut twice a year.

### **Sand and Shingle Extraction**

To move small amounts of sand and shingle between the rock groyne to the west of the blue huts and the mouth of the River Char to provide a safe access to the blue beach huts. For the avoidance of doubt, this provision does not provide for extraction of material for any other purpose, unless stated elsewhere in this Beach Management Plan.

### **Invasive Plants**

To allow for the removal of giant hogweed (*heracleum mantegazzianum*) around the lower areas of Even's Cliff

To allow for the removal of Himalayan balsam (*impatiens glandulifera*) and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) within the reed bed

## **Durlston Head to Rame Head Shoreline Management Plan - Area 6 a18**

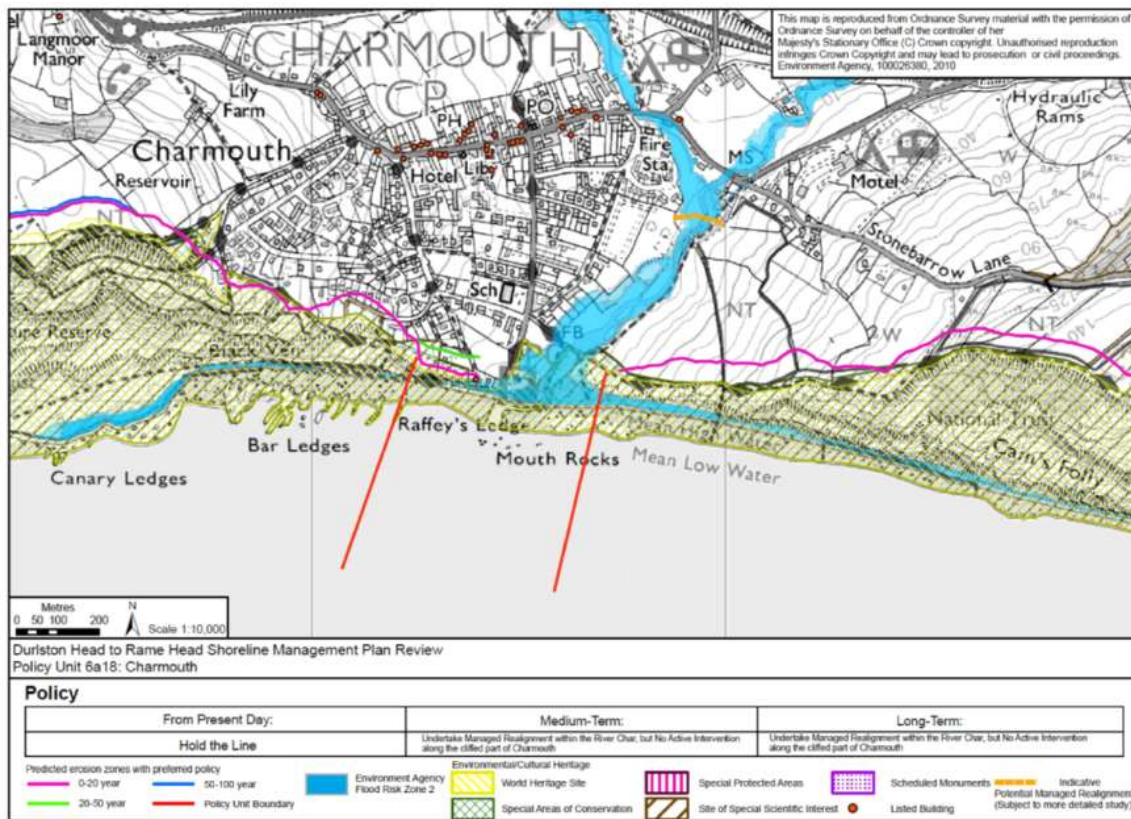
3.12 The Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) for the area between Durlston Head to Rame Head<sup>1</sup> was issued in June 2011 and provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal evolution. It includes a policy framework to address these risks in a sustainable manner with respect to people and the developed, historic and natural environment.

3.13 SMP2 describes the shoreline between Thorncombe Beacon to Beer Head, as characterised by dramatic, geologically important cliffs which are subject to large-scale complex landsliding. These events are difficult to predict with any certainty, making management of this shoreline difficult. At Charmouth and the eastern side of Lyme Regis, there is a need to address the increasing risk further recession of the landslide complexes causing outflanking or even loss of the presently defended areas.

3.14 Therefore the risk in these areas may be managed in the short to medium term through either maintenance of existing defences .... **However, the long term defence of these areas will be determined by the extent and location of future cliff recession and so it may be necessary to consider measures to enable assets to be relocated away from the areas at risk.** This would be based on continual monitoring. In summary, the current policy is to '**Hold the Line**' whilst in the medium to long term it would be '**No Active**

**Intervention'** and **'Managed Realignment'**, which could have significant implications of Foreshore assets. However there is no fixed timescale to determine what Medium to Long Term means in practice and the whole coastline is monitored.

Policy Unit	Preferred Policies		
	Short Term <sup>1</sup>	Medium Term	Long Term <sup>2</sup>
Charmouth	Maintain existing defences through a <b>Hold the Line</b> policy to continue to provide protection to Charmouth.	There would be a move towards <b>No Active Intervention</b> along the cliffed western part of Charmouth. <b>Managed Realignment</b> within the River Char, through providing set-back flood defences as it becomes increasingly technically difficult to maintain defences in the existing	Continue the policy of <b>No Active Intervention</b> along the cliffed western part of Charmouth and <b>Managed Realignment</b> within the River Char.



## 4 National and Local Planning Policies

4.1 In considering the future management and improvements at the Charmouth Foreshore, it is important to have regard to national and local planning policies.

### National Planning Policy Framework

#### 4.2 Section 10 addresses “Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change”

*Paragraph 93 states: Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.*

*Paragraph 94 States : Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.*

*Paragraph 106: Local planning authorities should reduce risk from coastal change by avoiding inappropriate development in vulnerable areas or adding to the impacts of physical changes to the coast. They should identify as a Coastal Change Management Area any area likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast, and:*

- *be clear as to what development will be appropriate in such areas and in what circumstances; and*
- *make provision for development and infrastructure that needs to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Areas.*

*In respect of tourism the NPPF Section 3: Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy states:*

*Paragraph 28: Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:.....*

- *support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres;*

### Local Planning Policies - West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan

4.3 With regard to the West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Local Plan the following policies are relevant to the Charmouth area, which is within the West Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and where the coastline forms part of the Jurassic Coast, Dorset

and East Devon World Heritage Site. Policy ENV1 relating to landscapes, seascapes and sites of geological interest highlights the importance of these designations and requires that development should be located and designed, so that it does not detract from the local landscape, other characteristics and designations.

## **ENV 1 - LANDSCAPE, SEASCAPE AND SITES OF GEOLOGICAL INTEREST**

**The plan area's exceptional landscapes and seascapes and geological interest will be protected, taking into account the objectives of the Dorset AONB Management Plan and World Heritage Site Management Plan. Development which would harm the character, special qualities or natural beauty of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Beauty or Heritage Coast,**

- i) including their characteristic landscape quality and diversity, uninterrupted panoramic views, individual landmarks, and sense of tranquillity and remoteness, will not be permitted.**
- ii) Development should be located and designed so that it does not detract from and, where reasonable, enhances the local landscape character. Proposals that conserve, enhance and restore locally distinctive landscape features will be encouraged. Where proposals relate to sites where existing development is of visually poor quality, opportunities should be taken to secure visual enhancements. Development that significantly adversely affects the character or visual quality of the local landscape or seascape will not be permitted.**
- iii) Appropriate measures will be required to moderate the adverse effects of development on the landscape and seascape.**
- iv) Development should maintain Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) for their scientific and educational value. Development that significantly adversely affects local geological features will not be permitted unless comparable sites can be identified or created elsewhere or the impact adequately mitigated through other measures.**

4.4 Policy ENV10 again relates to the landscape and townscape setting and requires development to contribute to local identity, distinctiveness and have regard to the character, the sights and its surroundings etc. The policy also supports enhancing local character by including public art, linked to history, ecology and a geological interest to the site where this

is appropriate and which could therefore, form an integral part of any proposed improvements at the Charmouth foreshore.

#### **Policy ENV10 Townscape and Landscape Setting**

- i) All development proposals should contribute positively to the maintenance and enhancement of local identity and distinctiveness. Development should be informed by the character of the site and its surroundings.**
- ii) Development will provide for the future retention and protection of trees and other features that contribute to an area's distinctive character. Such features may not always be designated or otherwise formally recognised.**
- iii) Development should only be permitted where it provides sufficient hard and soft landscaping to successfully integrate with the character of the site and its surrounding area.**
- iv) Opportunities to incorporate features that would enhance local character, including public art, or that relate to the historical, ecological or geological interest of a site, should be taken where appropriate.**

4.5 Charmouth is one of the few more rural settlements that does have a development boundary in the recently adopted Local Plan and the relevant policy linked to this is SUS2 Distribution of Development. Compared with other smaller settlements, therefore, Charmouth has a degree of priority when it comes to new development in the rural areas of West Dorset.

4.5 As regard to coastal defence the Local Plan reiterates what is highlighted above in relation to the Shoreline Management Plan, where it states that ...*"a number of smaller communities will not be defended because of the ongoing sustainability of maintenance and the associated costs."* With regard to coastlines which are expected to continue to erode, specific reference is made to the River Mouth at Charmouth. In addition specific reference is made to coastal land instability zones and again, Charmouth is specifically mentioned and shown on the policies map, with such instability due largely, to natural processes.

4.6 On a more positive note **Policy ECON5** relates to tourism, attractions and facilities, which are positively supported in appropriate locations.

#### **ECON5. TOURISM ATTRACTIONS AND FACILITIES**

- i) Proposals for new, or extensions to, tourism attractions and facilities will be encouraged and supported, particularly where they would:**

- enhance an existing attraction or facility; or
  - provide wider environmental benefits, such as helping maintain an historic building; or
  - provide wider community benefits, such as a new recreational facility that will be used by the local community as well as visitors; or
  - increase the quality and diversity of the tourism offer in the local area and benefit the local economy.
- ii) Development should, where possible and practicable, be located within or close to established settlements, or make use of existing or replacement buildings.
- iii) Major tourism attractions should preferably be located within the towns and will be expected to provide adequate visitor facilities, such as parking and toilets, rather than relying on community facilities in the area.

4.7 With regard to camping and caravan sites **Policy ECON7** requires that proposals for the expansion or reorganisation of existing sites, of which there are 4 in the Charmouth area, need to demonstrate that the development forms part of a longer term management plan to improve the quality and appearance of the site and with further requirements when developments do take place.

#### **ECON7 Caravan & Camping Sites**

- i) New caravan and camping sites should be well located in relation to existing facilities or make appropriate provision for facilities on site. Farm diversification projects (for agricultural and other land-based rural businesses) for new caravan and camping sites will be supported, provided they are in keeping with the rural character and the development makes an on going contribution to the business that is diversifying.
- ii) Proposals for the expansion, intensification or reorganisation of existing sites must clearly demonstrate that development forms part of a long term management plan to improve the quality and appearance of the accommodation and site.
- iii) All development (including the change of use from touring to static units) must not, individually or cumulatively, have a significant adverse impact on the distinctive characteristics of the areas landscape, heritage or built environment. Proposals in the Heritage Coast are unlikely to be supported.
- iv) Development proposals must include an appropriate landscape scheme and provision for its ongoing maintenance

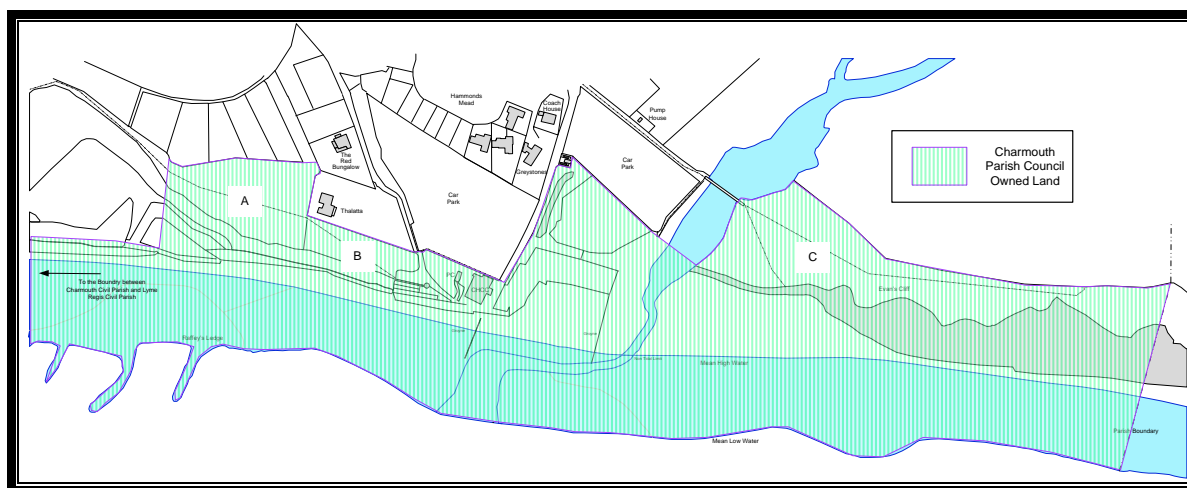
4.8 It would be expected that consideration be given to matters such as this within the Charmouth Neighbourhood Plan, which is at the early stages of preparation, rather than specifically within this Foreshore Management Plan. It is important, however, that both this Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan recognise the other and refer to actions that may have implications for the respective plans. It is therefore important that any actions that may be planned have due regard to the national strategic, district wide, as well as more local planning context, when considering the management of the foreshore.

4.9 The above national and local policies therefore helps provide a context for the future management of the Charmouth Foreshore and there are no proposals or actions that are considered to be in conflict with these policies.

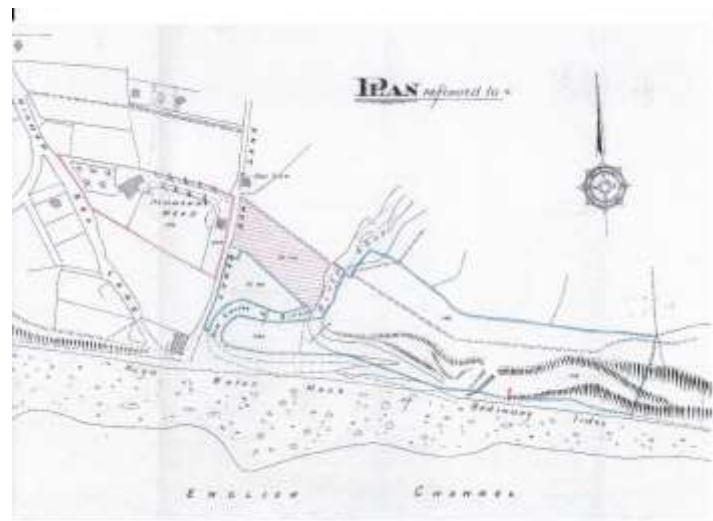
## 5 Land Ownership and Covenants

5.1 As noted in the environmental appraisal, which is provided as a supplementary document in Appendix 2, the Charmouth foreshore and beach area is unusual in that the Parish Council has extensive land ownerships, in addition to the buildings that include the Heritage Centre [the former cement works] and the foreshore carpark. Land known as the marsh area and the area of land on the eastern side of the River Char known as Evan's Cliff was bequeathed to the Parish Council many years ago and has a number of restrictive covenants that are relevant to the consideration of the foreshore, as they do restrict the ability for certain activities and developments to take place in these areas.

### Charmouth Parish Council – Full Land Ownership



5.2 The area covered by the restrictive covenant is shown on the Plan below outlined in blue, with details of the restrictions also included. Essentially they control the extent of trade that can take place, the parking of vehicles, the construction of buildings or similar, although there are some exceptions. Importantly, it requires that the land is to be held and used in accordance with the provisions of the Open Spaces Act 1906, details of which are also set out below. Therefore irrespective of landowners and planning consent, there are additional restrictions over the control of development in these areas:



**Evan's Cliff  
Restrictive Covenants**

- 1 Nothing to be done to or upon the land which would alter its present natural state.
- 2 No trade to be carried-on on the land other than:
  - (i) the grazing of cattle sheep or goats.
  - (ii) the selling of refreshments at the hut mentioned in paragraph (b) of Clause 6.
- 3 No meeting to be allowed on the land whether religious political or of any other kind.
- 4 No bands or itinerant music to be allowed on the land.
- 5 No cars or vehicles to be allowed to be parked or allowed access to the land.
- 6 No buildings or erections of any kind on the land to be allowed with the following exceptions:
  - (a) Bathing huts or tents at the foot of the cliff to the end of point 'X' on the plan;
  - (b) A hut to the east of the said point also at the foot of the cliff for the sale of teas and other refreshments with liberty to allow such sale to be carried on subject to the regulation herewith after mentioned;
  - (c) Temporary foot bridges across the Char where it runs through the said land.
- 7 Not to be used or permit anything to be done on the said land which may be a nuisance to annoyance to residents or visitors.
- 8 To make and exhibit on the said land regulations to be observer in respect of the said land and to take such steps as may be necessary to enforce compliance with such regulations
- 9 The land to be held and used in accordance with the provisions of the Open Spaces Act 1906



## The Open Spaces Act 1906

The Act of Parliament primarily gives powers to local authorities to own land for open spaces and burial grounds. Nothing within the Act nullifies the provisions of the deed of trust relating to Even's Cliff.

Below are the various heading of the Act.

### Introductory Text

An Act to consolidate Enactments relating to Open Spaces.

### Local Authorities

1. Local authorities.

### Power to transfer open spaces and Burial Grounds to Local Authorities

2. Power of trustees under local Act to transfer open space to local authority or admit other persons to enjoyment thereof.
3. Transfer to local authority of spaces held by trustees for purposes of public recreation.
4. Transfer by charity trustees of open space to local authority.
5. Transfer to local authority by owners of open spaces subject to rights of user.
6. Transfer of disused burial grounds to local authority.
7. Power of corporation, &c. to convey land for open space.
8. Special resolutions and consents.

### Powers of Local Authorities with respect to Open Spaces and Burial Grounds

9. Power of local authority to acquire open space or burial ground.
10. Maintenance of open spaces and burial grounds by local authority.
11. Special provisions as to management of burial grounds and removal of tombstones.
12. Powers over open spaces and burial grounds already vested in local authority.
13. Provision for compensation.
14. Power of county councils as to public walks or pleasure grounds.
15. Byelaws.
16. Power of local authorities to act jointly.
17. Expenses of local authorities.
18. Borrowing.

### Supplemental

19. Savings.
20. Definitions.
21. Application of Act to Ireland.
22. Extent.
23. Repeal.
24. *repealed*
25. Short title.

Modifications to the Act not altering the text. The Act is extended by Section 8 (1) of the Parish Councils Act 1957.

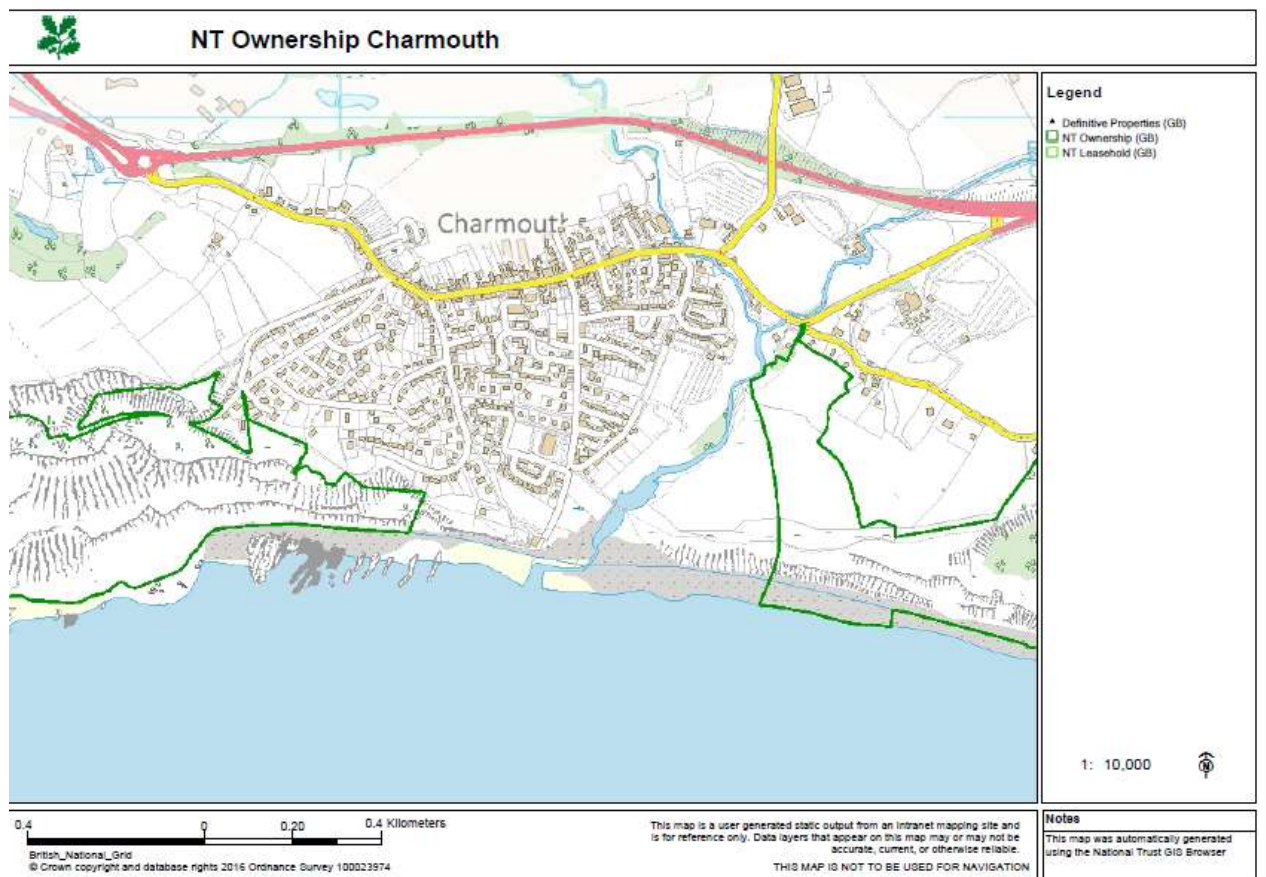
### **8 Powers to be exercisable without reference to county council.**

- (1) Every parish council shall be a local authority for the purposes of the Open Spaces Act, 1906, whether or not invested with the powers of that Act by the council of the county within which the parish is situate.
- (2) The approval or consent of the county council shall no longer be required for any of the following matters—
  - (a) *repealed*
  - (b) by reason that it will involve a loan, for the incurring by a parish council of any other expense or liability; or
  - (c) for the borrowing by a parish council of such sums as may be required for any of the purposes mentioned in section one hundred and ninety-five of the Local Government Act, 1933.

## National Trust Ownership

5.3 Although the National Trust does not own land actually within the Charmouth Foreshore Area, as the plan below illustrates they do own land either side of Charmouth and in close proximity. The Trust is therefore an important interest, stakeholder and partner.

5.4 This is particularly important in the context of public access and use of the South West Coast Park, which is referred to further in the schedule in Section 7 below.



## 6 Charmouth Foreshore SWOT Analysis

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

6.1 In any assessment of a locality such as this, it is always beneficial for local businesses and interests to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the local area and any planned improvements as this helps to both develop a consensus and also identify and/or fine tune any planned actions. An initial assessment is set out below but this will be refined following the planned stakeholder engagement e workshop in November 2016, prior to the report being finalised.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close to A35 main Trunk Road &amp; easy reach of public transport service</li> <li>• Accommodation available at Caravan Parks and other premises in Charmouth</li> <li>• Excellent range of local shops nearby in High St</li> <li>• Attractive coastal location</li> <li>• Access to the Beach and Jurassic Coast World Heritage</li> <li>• Extensive car parking areas – easy &amp; safe off road parking and some coach parking</li> <li>• Renowned for Geology &amp; Fossil collecting</li> <li>• Heritage Centre focussing on geology</li> <li>• Much used destination for educational groups</li> <li>• Access point for Stonebarrow &amp; Golden Cap [Iconic symbol of WHS &amp; Highest Point of South Coast]</li> <li>• Access to SW Coast Path to both directions, [subject to paths reopening in 2017/18] &amp; to National Trust land.</li> <li>• Attractive landscape &amp; nature areas: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</li> <li>• Visitor facilities Car Parks, cafes &amp; toilets close to west beach</li> <li>• Fossil shop at Foreshore</li> <li>• Clean beach &amp; water</li> <li>• Foreshore area protected from development; comparatively unspoilt</li> <li>• Landowners and others with interests in land engaged in discussion about improvements</li> <li>• Charmouth Parish Council &amp; Lyme Forward working together to plan improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some car park have fixed ‘All Day’ fee [£4] which reduces flexibility but others have pay and display</li> <li>• Some car park areas liable to flooding</li> <li>• Private car parks close at set times</li> <li>• Access to beach is unclear and difficult in places; no clear and effective signage; access down steep steps potentially dangerous &amp; access to West beach difficult</li> <li>• Facilities for disabled people are limited; no safe access to beach</li> <li>• No bicycle storage racks</li> <li>• Off season facilities are limited</li> <li>• Plethora of old &amp; untidy and generally tatty signs and other infrastructure</li> <li>• Unsightly metal gates and chains</li> <li>• A dynamic environment &amp; increased storminess and coastal erosion leading to uncertainty and difficulty in placing signs etc. due to inundation by the sea in storm conditions</li> <li>• Old/ out of date interpretation panels &amp; safety signs, some not replaced; some signs blank or missing</li> <li>• Access to Char bridge via Foreshore car park and riverside very difficult and rough with no defined path</li> <li>• Public toilets in need of improvement, better maintenance needed</li> <li>• Single line traffic route can cause problems at busy times</li> <li>• Several projects that have been put forward in the past, but have come to very little in reality</li> <li>• Currently, no coordinated management plan &amp; actions</li> </ul>


Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to bid for future Coastal Communities Fund money to implement projects</li> <li>• More flexible and inviting parking charges in private car parks....short stay option</li> <li>• Potential for pedestrian route to bridge alongside river from Foreshore area</li> <li>• Design high quality coordinated, up to date Interpretation and safety signs that are engaging, interesting and informative</li> <li>• Design new signing scheme overall for Charmouth with clear messages addressing, safety, environment, local history etc.</li> <li>• Design improved access route to beach for public, including disabled people</li> <li>• Enhanced business opportunities</li> <li>• Better on line information and scope for using 'Apps'</li> <li>• Improve management and maintenance of WCs</li> <li>• Opportunity for Local Leadership to be shown by the Charmouth Parish Council through potential for good &amp; improved partner engagement and establishment of local Foreshore Management/Consultative Group for local stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dynamic environment which is very exposed during the winter storms, which can result in improvement works being destroyed.</li> <li>• Higher frequency and greater intensity of storms resulting in severe damage</li> <li>• Shoreline Management Plan which does not propose protection of Charmouth coastline in long term</li> <li>• Absence of close and improved communication and partnership working by local stakeholders</li> <li>• Lack of consensus over '<i>what needs to be done</i>'</li> <li>• Unwillingness of parties to revisit old problems with a fresh look and find solutions, through compromise</li> <li>• A difficult national &amp; local environment in which to find funding</li> <li>• In due course, absence of funds to implement projects, leading to disillusionment</li> <li>• River bank erosion causing subsidence</li> <li>• Pedestrian bridge destroyed or damaged by storm/flood</li> <li>• Appearance of area deteriorates further with resulting negative experience for visitors</li> <li>• Increase in visitor numbers and pressure becomes a problem.....if car parks fill up</li> <li>• Too much 'improvement' spoils natural environment &amp; character of Charmouth Foreshore</li> <li>• Opposition to improvements from public or designated authorities</li> <li>• Funding inadequate to complete works</li> <li>• Damage to sensitive areas if not carefully managed</li> <li>• Long term maintenance of improved assets as result of actions...will they be sustainable?</li> <li>• Any coastal engineering works need to respect World Heritage status of coastal edge &amp; SSSI status</li> </ul>

## 7 Summary of Engagement with Local Stakeholders

7.1 A letter to local stakeholders was sent out by the Parish Council at the start of the project advising organisations and businesses that the work was being undertaken. A copy of the letter is included as **Appendix 3**.

<b>Organisation and Contact</b>	<b>Key Issues and Responses</b>	<b>Action and Next Steps for Charmouth PC &amp; Lyme Forward</b>
<b>Lyme Forward &amp; Charmouth Parish Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed to good management of beach and foreshore area</li> <li>• Identified need for an appraisal of current situation and development of ideas for improvements and actions.</li> <li>• Particular concerned about poor access to beach and consider potential for enhanced structure to replace current steps and which could assist in some coastal protection</li> <li>• Commissioned current report to be prepared</li> <li>• Looking towards potential of a Coastal Communities Fund Bid in due course</li> </ul>	<p><i>Take forward implementation of recommendations and development of a detailed action plan.</i></p> <p><i>Improve communication and partnership working with other stakeholders and interests, Explore potential for grant aid for improvement projects.</i></p> <p><i>Establish Foreshore Consultative Group</i></p>
<p><b>West Dorset District Council Engineers,</b> Grant Armfield &amp; Henry Middleton</p> <p>Phone call &amp; written notes provided by HM. Phone call and email 10/9/16</p>	<p>Access onto beach steps is an issue as they are damaged each year by storms, so Charmouth PC has taken on maintenance and repair. These have a recreational access as well as a plus sea defence role. Previous partnership meeting between CPC/WDDC and EA [Neil Watson] to discuss new access onto beach. Key points :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lyme Forward &amp; CPC keen to improve access steps and seawall at Charmouth.</li> <li>• SMP policy for Charmouth is ‘hold the line’ in the short term but moving towards managed retreat/do nothing in some years’ time.</li> <li>• Therefore very difficult to obtain EA funding for coastal protection work at Charmouth given the current policy and as a result, WDDC would only be</li> </ul>	<p><i>Further consideration of options to improve access to the beach which would involve detailed engineering design input, costings and liaison with WDDC &amp; EA as well as Natural England &amp; World Heritage Team. Planning Consent would also be required from West Dorset DC.</i></p>

<p><b>Director WDDC</b> Meeting Martin Hamilton</p> <p><b>Chris Hibberd/Carol Hunter WDDC Property Team</b> Responsible for public conveniences</p>	<p>maintaining the service life of the current seawall while it was economical and sustainable to do so in line with the SMP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WDDC carry out maintenance work to the existing coastal defence structures. This can involve work to maintain the structural integrity or repairs to remedy health and safety issues such as trip hazards.</li> <li>• The access steps on the stepped seawall regularly require repairs. These are currently maintained by Charmouth Parish Council.</li> <li>• There is potential for obtaining monies from the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) with regards improving/replacing the access to the beach (but not the defences).</li> <li>• The World Heritage Team is working on improving signing and the visitor experience at Charmouth, partly with CCF money.</li> <li>• The idea of constructing a new curved access at the eastern end of the stepped seawall in front of the Heritage Centre that could also provide some subtle protection to the adjacent structures. This type of project could potentially be eligible for attracting money from the CCF, with potential for linking in with recent feasibility work that had been completed at Seatown.</li> <li>• Discussion about WDDC support for taking forward the project notably in respect of designing the access to the beach and securing all necessary consents</li> <li>• Positive response and agreed that WDDC would discuss partnership approach with Dorset CC and Environment Agency [and to potentially include similar input for Seatown coastal proposals] all with a view to a possible joint future Coastal Communities Bid.</li> <li>• Churchill are new WC cleaning contractors for whole of the area. Understand and appreciate issues about cleaning in busy summer period Contractors cover wide area and clean 3 times per day between 07:00 and 22:00. However other work and traffic delays do cause problems in busy periods. Consideration of management and organisation of cleaning by Parish Council could be an option and is worthy of discussion. The repair of the steps is currently under consideration and discussion with CPC.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Welcome initial indications of support. Continue to engage with WDDC and other potential partner authorities/agencies</i></p> <p><i>Discuss alternative management/cleaning options with WDDC</i> <i>Finalise issue of steps and their re-opening</i></p>
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<p><b>Dorset Coast Forum</b>, Bridget Betts Meeting 12/9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion about work planned at Charmouth and potential links with Seatown. Also potential for working with WDDC regarding other schemes along the coast. Need to explore which elements might be eligible for CCF funding with partners.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Following further work, liaise with local authorities and DCF Officer with view to planning a future round of Coastal Communities Fund bid</i></p>
<p><b>Dorset Countryside</b> Russel Goff Senior Ranger</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows and understands the local area and access issues. Close working with SW Coast Path team and endorses points by them</li> </ul>	<p><i>Ensure liaison with DCC Countryside &amp; SWCP Team in respect of coast path footpath works &amp; re-opening in late 2017/18</i></p>
<p><b>South West Coast Path Team &amp; Association</b> Mark Owen Phone call 7 October</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWCPA secured £1million Coastal Communities grant in 2014 to repair, improve and promote the Coast Path, which was increased in January 2016 by a further £130,000, though most spent in Cornwall and Devon. A further Round 1 CCF approval was received in October 2016.</li> <li>• Further funding secured for <b>Discover England 4. South West Coast Path – Amazing Experiences and Making Memories</b>, a project using new technology along the South West Coast Path, including scenery, activities, places to eat and accommodation, for German and Dutch visitors who want to explore on foot.</li> <li>• Keen to work in collaboration with destination management organisations in the South West to develop and market this online product, so potential support for Charmouth as local input into the project is essential.</li> <li>• Improvements to England Coast Path planned either side of Charmouth, following a public inquiry into objections elsewhere. Final decision expected Autumn 2017, with improvements to follow. DEEFRA funded but coordination by Dorset CC.</li> <li>• Supportive of coastal footpath artworks if appropriate, but not something SWCP commission; more a matter for landowners</li> <li>• However, SWCP Team and Association keen to engage with Charmouth in respect of future projects with some potential for funding.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Engage with SWCP Team with regard to Discover England Project and with Association with regard to potential grant support for small schemes.</i></p> 
<p><b>Environment Agency</b>, Neil Watson Phone call</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See note above under WDDC Engineers/Director. Whilst no capital funding for a new beach access would be forthcoming, it may be possible to request some support for engineering survey and scheme/plan preparation works.</li> </ul>	<p><i>As above under WDDC</i></p>
<p><b>Natural England</b>, Richard Warren</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beach management Plan with CPC has had long development</li> </ul>	<p><i>Continue to engage with NE in respect of the Beach Management</i></p>


<p>Phone call 14/9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Char River course changes which has generated some discussion and management issues</li> <li>• Some concerns about need to ensure that non native imports are not brought in for the beach when works done.</li> <li>• Accept that SSSI designation alongside west side of River Char adjacent to car park is poor and eroded and NE would support improved public access route</li> <li>• Discussed rubber walkways for summer and concrete along riverside to make proper path</li> <li>• Agreed that moving East Beach café [Rock Follies] back into bank may be beneficial and could provide space at front for external seating, though NE aware of covenants where previous decking had caused some concerns.</li> <li>• Supportive of partnership approach to rationalise of signing and may be prepared to consider some funding</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Plan and any issues that arise on the Foreshore area.</i></b>  <b><i>Explore potential for grant aid support, e.g. for information signing improvements</i></b></p>
<p><b>World Heritage Jurassic Coast Team</b>, Sally King Meeting 12/9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explanation of background to current study by SW on behalf of LF/CPC with emphasis on ensuring no duplication of effort in recognition of WHS Team’s plan.</li> <li>• Discussed details of scheme for information hub on east side of River Char, funding, scope and limitations. <i>[See Section 9.6 below for details.]</i></li> <li>• Agreed importance of any further funding on western side of River Char should coordinate in design terms with that planned by WH Team. Signs by CPC have consent but not yet implemented. Close liaison needed to ensure design coordination.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Continue &amp; improve communication and engagement with WHS Team in respect of their planned information and interpretation.</i></b>  <b><i>Establish Charmouth Foreshore Consultative Group for all relevant stakeholders to ensure that <u>all new</u> signing is coordinated</i></b></p>
<p><b>National Trust</b>, Rob Rhodes Phone call 7 October</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NT do not own land directly in Charmouth but on either side along the coastline, to both the west and east; See Plan above</li> <li>• They are aware of and supportive the proposed reopening of this part of the England Coast Path</li> <li>• NT would welcome the development of a joint signing strategy and a partnership approach towards implementing any new signing in an integrated manner with all interested parties involved.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Continue &amp; improve communication and engagement with National Trust in respect of information and interpretation, as well as coast path issues.</i></b>  <b><i>Establish Charmouth Foreshore Consultative Group for all relevant stakeholders</i></b></p>




<p><b>HM Coastguard,</b> N Bale Phone call 10/9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charmouth considered generally safe from coastguard perspective</li> <li>• West beach issues: people getting cut off by tide and trying to walk to Lyme.... no escape route up cliff. No signing at beach entrance warning of this.</li> <li>• East beach mudslides catch people, especially as tide comes in and they are cut off and walk onto nose of slip and get stuck. However fortunately, no fatalities in recent times</li> <li>• Key issue is need for joint signing by all partners; same message or all in one place rather than disparate organisations.</li> <li>• Speak to and liaise with R Edmonds as well who is auxiliary coastguard and former Charmouth HC officer</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Continue &amp; improve communication and engagement with HM Coastguard in respect of information and interpretation, notably beach and cliff safety. Establish Charmouth Foreshore Consultative Group for all relevant stakeholders</i></b></p>
<p><b>RNLI, Adrian Ragbourne</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important role in d safety information. Consultation with RNLI Poole head office undertaken by AR. Meeting planned in Charmouth to review the current signage against both the known risks and incidents, and the environmental and aesthetic impact on the seafront.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Outcome awaited but input of RNLI requirements needed into any joint signing project</i></b></p>
<p><b>Foreshore Carparks Owner,</b> Robert Vincent</p>	<p>Awaiting meeting or appointment for phone call</p> <p><i>Proposed Issues to raise with car park owner as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Poor state of signs, posts and equipment in both car parks, ...old and rusted,</i></li> <li>• <i>The site entrance to the first car park requires improvement, with stone wall suggested</i></li> <li>• <i>All of the above creates a poor first impression for Charmouth Foreshore to visitors.</i></li> <li>• <i>Kiosk in large car park in poor condition and needs refurbishing and painting</i></li> <li>• <i>Large gates and locks convey an unwelcoming impression; again with rusted posts</i></li> <li>• <i>Closure at 21:00 is early, given demands from people to be on the beach later....scope for increased income, the later people stay....potential for an evening charge rate. Whilst there are other open car parks, this does not address those who have parked in these car parks and stay on perhaps later than expected</i></li> <li>• <i>Locking cars in a car park is a poor customer service and will not encourage revisits and damage reputation of Charmouth as a whole</i></li> <li>• <i>If closure is to prevent camper vans entering the site in the evening to sleep over, then first gate could be closed and a height restriction barrier placed over the</i></li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Discuss all of these issues with car park owner with view to a partnership approach to addressing the identified problems, so that visitors have a better impression and improved experience.</i></b></p>

	<p><i>second opening, thereby preventing campers entering when the first gate is closed but still allowing access for campers in day time. In addition, if required, 'dragons teeth could be laid across entrance, to enable vehicles to leave after gate is closed, but not to enter; a well-established and successful technique for car parks.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>An improved pedestrian footway is needed alongside the River Char to access the bridge which is on the edge of the car park, so large stones needed to prevent vehicles parking too close to river.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre,</b> Phil Davidson Meeting 27/9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The building is the former cement works and there is an old Lime Kiln at the rear. The Centre has approx. 100,000 visitors per annum so key contact and organisation for engaging with visitors, both in relation to the centre's geologically focused purpose and generally for other issues.</li> <li>Employ 3 full time staff plus 2 extra full time in the season from March to October with part time administrative officer.</li> <li>80 Volunteers help run and manage the centre on a day to day basis and also construct the display backgrounds and other fittings within the Centre</li> <li>Board of 12 Trustees oversees the operation of the Centre with building owned by Charmouth PC. The trust has local business representatives and meets formally 3 times per annum. However the centre team does meet with some trustees once per month</li> <li>Educational and other groups are a key part of the visitor market</li> <li>New signing plans under consideration for the Centre. Agreed important to coordinate with signing work planned by World Heritage and also Parish Council in Foreshore Areas Beach Safety and sensibly enjoying the World Heritage Site is <b>the</b> key issue from Centre's viewpoint and need for improved signing, though Safety Officer in summer on the beach is very effective method of getting messages across to visitors about cliff stability and safety etc.</li> <li>Clearly longer term issues about the SMP policy for the area and sea defence are crucial, with the consequential impacts for the Centre building. Query...Is there a long term plan for Charmouth seafront?</li> <li>The storms of 2014 were significant reminder of the vulnerability of the foreshore and indeed, damage to the Centre's roof lights caused by the storms has still not been fully resolved.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Continue &amp; improve communication and engagement with HM Coastguard in respect of information and interpretation, notably beach and cliff safety.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Establish Charmouth Foreshore Consultative Group for all relevant stakeholders. Invite CHC to Town Council Foreshore Committee on occasions.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Review situation at WCs steps and consider taking on management from WDDC</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Consider all other points raised, as the Heritage Centre is in pivotal position to engage with large numbers of visitors</i></b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would welcome greater partnership working and communication with both the World Heritage Team and the Parish Council; for example attendance at some Foreshore Committee Meetings to discuss common issues and greater consultation over issues that affect the centre.</li> <li>• Aware of ideas proposed about improved pedestrian access to beach which may also provide some ancillary sea defence very much supported. Referred to previous slipway installed but which was buried within the beach.</li> <li>• Welcome further engagement in the project as it develops.</li> <li>• Joint meeting with Chair of Trustees JR also planned.</li> <li>• The public toilets are insufficient in number and during the busy summer period queues are common and maintenance/cleaning is inadequate. Complaints are received as they are perceived to be the responsibility of the Centre. No notice is given by WDDC when they are closed for any reason.</li> <li>• The steps to the Ladies WC have been closed for over a year due to one person falling</li> <li>• There is no provision for First Aid on the seafront/foreshore. The centre deals with problems within the centre building or on a guided walk</li> <li>• A more coordinated approach and greater clarity over responsibilities is needed to deal with Lost Children, which is an issue in the summer holidays. The Centre's volunteer's handbook does however have a procedure.</li> <li>• The Centre has no major plans and has no fund raising campaign at present.</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>Prof Jim Rose Chair of CHC Trustees &amp; Eden Thomson, Trustee</b> Meeting 12 October</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorsed comments made by PD, above.</li> <li>• Very supportive of greater communication, engagement and partnership working with Charmouth Parish Council and other agencies.</li> <li>• Most appreciative of response and repairs to building after 2014 storms by CPC as owners, although some work still to be completed.</li> <li>• Endorsed comments by others about need for improved maintenance/cleaning of public toilets</li> <li>• Endorsed comments by others that potential for enhanced catering offer at the foreshore area and for evening opening</li> <li>• Supportive of proposal to improve pedestrian access to the beach but important that any design take account of the fact that the River Char is depositing gravel as a result of bank erosion along its length, into the sea at Charmouth to form a 'delta'. [See JR's Photo]. This gravel tends to be spread along the beach so any new structure should aim to retain more material close to the mouth of the river to add to protection.</li> <li>• Suggested that if a wall in front of the café was to be extended then it should be rebuilt as a small 'wave return' wall, as shingle tend to shoot over the wall in its present position and form/design</li> <li>• The small reed bed is an important area for biodiversity but is not fully appreciated or interpreted.</li> <li>• Agrees a coordinated approach to signing, information and interpretation essential.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CHARMOUTH FORESHORE – THE RIVER AND THE SEA</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>9</b></span></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most erosion is at the cliffs and not at the river mouth</li> <li>• The reasons:</li> </ul> <p><small>The River Char is a gravel transporting river and takes boulders, cobbles and gravels out to sea at times of flood</small></p>  <p><b>Note and take on board comments about design of beach access and other points raised</b></p>
<p><b>Facilities Manager &amp; Beach Supervisor Dave Humphries &amp; Alan Toothill</b></p>	<p>Comments to be submitted following publication of Management Plan</p>	
<p><b>Rock Follies shop, Jacqueline Mitchell</b> Phone call 2/ November</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reiterated points by others namely:</li> <li>• Poor signage to WCs &amp; poor maintenance cleaning of WCs...continual complaints in the summer</li> <li>• General tattiness of parts of the foreshore area</li> <li>• No external shower for people to wash off</li> <li>• Potential for car park ticket machine to accept card payments</li> </ul>	<p>As per other comments above. Issue of WC maintenance is clearly a priority</p>


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planting of flower beds would improve area</li> <li>• Beach superintendent is not available a key peak times; beach hut rental etc.</li> <li>• Would improve area if bins were emptied at the end of each day</li> </ul>	
<b>Fossil Shop,</b> Tony Gill Phone call 26/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadly satisfied with current situation and accommodation for business. Would welcome larger premises but recognises constraints.</li> <li>• Key issue of long term and coastal defence concerns. Critical to the future of Charmouth seafront and of greater importance than other issues such as signing.</li> <li>• However understands and recognises the Shoreline Management Plan policy for the area in the long term</li> <li>• Would support improved access to beach, especially if this assisted in a degree of further protection.</li> </ul>	<i>Ensure regular communication about Foreshore issues</i>
<b>West Beach Café and Beach Goods Shop,</b> Angela Vincent Meeting 30/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current operator has run the café for 21 years. It opens from March – October with precise dates flexible. Opening hours are approximately 09:00-18:00 but later if demand warrants it, or earlier subject to weather.</li> <li>• The cafe is on 3 year lease from the Parish Council and is a successful business</li> <li>• There is usually at least one break-in at the rear of the promises each year.</li> <li>• The shop sells general beach merchandise, is more seasonal and again to a degree, weather dependent. There are damp problems in this part of the building.</li> <li>• The café &amp; shop units, being at the front of the building are susceptible to storm damage and this has caused problems in the past. Noted that wall in front of café/shop does not extend full length of building</li> <li>• The public toilets are a major issue. Customers assume they are the café's responsibility and complain. [Sign posted advised they are not the café's] Daily maintenance in the busy summer period, especially of the Ladies is the major problem that needs to be addressed as a priority.</li> <li>• Signing for the Gents is confusing</li> </ul>	<i>Ensure regular communication about Foreshore issues</i> <i>Explore potential for CPC taking on management of WCs</i> <i>Ensure access to WC via steps resolved</i> <i>Rationalise signing generally for WCs</i> <i>Explore potential for extending the wall in front of café/shop to provide 'wave return' wall</i>
<b>Soft Rock Café,</b> Steve Postle/Carol King Meeting Carol King 13 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open 09:00- 20:00 in summer and 10:00 – 16:00 at other times and subject to weather.</li> <li>• Previously opened in evening, for which high demand, when covered decking area provided, but required to remove this due to restrictions</li> <li>• Supportive of general improvements in Foreshore are as first impressions by visitors important and not as positive as they might be.</li> </ul>	<i>Re-open discussions and explore options for providing some form of sitting out area subject to the covenant and any consents required. Potential to consider moving cabin back towards cliff a</i>

		<p><i>short distance to provide more space on beach side for small uncovered sitting out area. Potential to paint cabin to reflect local distinctiveness; fossils and beach/marine life etc. Improved and rationalised signing also required.</i></p>
<p><b>National Coast Watch</b>, Michael Seaman Meeting 13 October</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastwatch started as satellite to Burton Bradstock station in summer 2016 in Napoleonic Lookout owned by Parish Council located above esplanade near beach huts.</li> <li>• Operated by volunteers and focussed on marine, beach and sea safety. Work with HM Coastguard and other search and rescue/emergency series.</li> <li>• Operated weekends and bank holidays but plan to widen out to Friday – Mondays.</li> <li>• Acts as general and informal information provider for visitors</li> <li>• Agree improved signing needed especially regarding all aspects of safety</li> <li>• Important to retain essential character of Charmouth Foreshore but scope for some improvement and tidying up.</li> <li>• Potential for foreshore to host ‘pop up’ events/food festivals/craft fairs etc. to add diversity to interest and attract/retrain visitors</li> <li>• Welcome greater communication with other organisations and agencies</li> </ul>	<p><i>As above, establish Foreshore Consultative Group to ensure all stakeholders are well informed about local issues and have a real input into a future plans and projects. [Photo Courtesy Neil Mattingley via Michael Seaman]</i></p> 
<p><b>Mark &amp; Sally Osbourne Seadown caravan Park</b> Meeting 12 October</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caravan Park extends down to the seafront and provides good access.</li> <li>• 140 static caravans and 70 touring pitches. Statics full throughout busy summer periods; Whitsun to end of September as well as busy touring pitches, and statics also very busy into shoulder periods as well. March/April &amp; October</li> <li>• Note that complaints are received from their visitors about condition of public toilets and also bins not being emptied regularly.</li> <li>• Clean up of storm damage undertaken quickly by Seadown at southern end of site, but note that debris elsewhere is not cleared at all quickly, which presents the foreshore and seafront areas in a poor light and is a poor first impression for visitors.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Further adverse reports about public conveniences that need to be addressed with WDDC. Consider timing of seating provision in shoulder periods. Take forward consideration of improved access to the beach to next stage.</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider there is good scope for good quality evening catering provision at foreshore.</li> <li>• Important to recognise that all Charmouth caravan sites accommodate the visitors who support the shops, pubs and other businesses in the village and local economy in general.</li> <li>• Concerned that foreshore seating is not put out early enough in season and taken in too soon as shoulder periods are busy with visitors.</li> <li>• Support idea of improving pedestrian access to the beach and elsewhere along the foreshore as this is also a common complaints made by visitors, particularly those with a mobility impairment.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Charmouth Traders</b>, Phil Tritten, representing the shops and businesses on Main Street Meeting 1/9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Improvement to the stepped access to the beach, potentially a spiral ramp</li> <li>• Importance of considering the 2014 visitor survey and estimates of visitor numbers</li> <li>• Need to address poor quality facilities, notably public toilets and the fact that there are no showers and no shelter</li> <li>• The importance of protecting the natural environment</li> <li>• The potential for enhanced catering at the seafront</li> <li>• The importance of extending the season, noting that during July and August the key visitor market is families, where there is potential for older ages groups in the shoulder periods</li> <li>• The need for visitors to be encouraged to visit the shops on the Main Street via footpaths and trails, clerks, leaflets etc. Reference puzzle and history trails.</li> <li>• The potential for creating some form of attraction or exhibition space in the village to encourage movement between the foreshore and the village.</li> <li>• The importance of the southwest coast path and the potential for walking festival.</li> <li>• Recognition that environmental improvements needed to enhance pedestrian access around the foreshore and between the west and east beaches is an important consideration.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Consider the range of important issues highlighted to be taken forward as part of the action plan associated with the Foreshore Management Plan; trails , leaflets; extending the season etc..</i></b></p>

<p><b>Peter Wilde</b>  <b>Covenant holder,</b>  so an 'interest' in  the area, especially  Evans' Cliff  Meeting 27/9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explained background to the covenant which his property has inherited since the land was gifted to the Parish Council in 1950's. List of restrictions included in Section 5.2 of this report.</li> <li>• Appreciates scale of car parking is major benefit for Charmouth compared with other locations on the coast [eg Seatown]</li> <li>• Recognises the poor environmental quality of the area generally; fencing, signing etc. both general information and interpretation and signs advising where dogs can and cannot go.</li> <li>• WDDC car park underused and scope for improved signing and for more use by coaches for special groups visiting, though some organised school group do tend to use it</li> <li>• Some previous covenant issues with Soft Rock café, but scope to review situation as access to seating area for the public there is not satisfactory, but any works would need to be done with sensitivity and within the area leased to the café and coastal erosion and sea level rise could also make this difficult.</li> <li>• Absence of WCs at East Beach has been raised as an issue by some people but realistically it would not be possible to provide these and is also restricted by covenant.</li> <li>• Considers there is potential for enhanced catering offer at Foreshore, if feasible which would attract people to stay and/or visit into the evening.</li> <li>• Current closure of SW Coast Path is major issue but this is being addressed and hoped to be resolved in 2017. Art installation project planned [John Calder]</li> <li>• Scope for enhanced 'Walking Trails' or potential for new 'Sculpture Trail' with leaflets to encourage visitors to access Charmouth Village and wider area and not just focus on beach and foreshore. <i>[Plan showing precise lines of footpaths required.]</i></li> <li>• Plan for steps / improved access to beach fully supported in principle.</li> <li>• Beach huts are a real asset for the foreshore are now well maintained and able to be used by both local people for the summer period and visitors on a more casual occasional rented basis. Relocation to car park essential in winter months due to storminess.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Explore potential for improved signing to Sea Road car park with WDDC; walking trails, the scope for work within constraints of covenant. Involve representative of covenant holders on proposed/recommended Foreshore Consultative Group.</i></b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of Beach Supervisor and Council's Works Manager are valuable assets for the area generally.</li> <li>• Overall emphasis Charmouth Beach remains extremely popular with locals and tourists alike because of its undeveloped nature and commercial development is not appropriate. The unspoilt asset of Charmouth beach is something to be preserved and will ultimately be of much more value to the people and businesses of the village than short term commercialisation.</li> <li>• Welcome the current initiative and recognises that improved communication and more partnership working and coordination is essential.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>John Calder</b> Wood Sculptor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Artistic/Sculpture installation works to celebrate the re-opening of the South West Coast Path to both the west and east of Charmouth as important aspect of the World Heritage Site experience</li> <li>• Installations subject to landowners and any other consents where needed</li> <li>• Welcome the opportunity to be part of a wider partnership project for Charmouth and to engage with other organisations and businesses.</li> <li>• Examples of John Calder's work are include below, for illustrative purposes.</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Engage with JC with view to promoting art sculptures on SW Coast Path when re-opened</i></b></p>
<p><b>John Calder</b> <b>Sculpture Trail</b> <b>Lyme Regis 2016</b></p>		

## **8 Key Issues, Common Themes, Conclusions and Recommendations for Potential Actions, [following Appraisal work and the engagement and discussion with stakeholders and interested parties].**

8.1 These have been developed as a result of the initial appraisal work and as a result of discussions with a wide and diverse range of organisations, [nearly 20 in total], businesses and stakeholders with an interest in Charmouth Foreshore. There are a number of common themes that have emerged, with many of the same issues being raised by, or discussed with many organisations and broad consensus on what should be done to address the issues or problems. These can be summarised as follows and includes some comments on the issues raised:

- Charmouth is an important local gateway to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage site and is especially renowned for its fossils and location for educational groups.
- The foreshore is visited by a very large number of visitors/tourist each year and therefore the need to provide a good range and high quality facilities and service in a manner that is expected in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, is of crucial importance to the local economy of Charmouth and the wider West Dorset area.
- The Parish Council is unusual in that it owns the foreshore and beach and has developed both a positive vision for the area and a Beach Management Plan, although the aspirations of the vision have yet to be fully achieved.
- Part of the area [Evans' Cliff] is covered by a restrictive covenant which does provide some constraints, but at the same time, this has helped ensure that the area has retained its charm and not become over developed or over commercialised.
- It is crucial therefore that the 'first impression' is a good one and yet it is considered that there is much that needs improvement visually, to achieve this objective.
- However the on site management provided by staff employed by Charmouth Parish Council is very much supported.
- The presence of 4 large caravan/camping sites in and around Charmouth provides a large number of visitors and their presence therefore contributes significantly to the businesses in Charmouth High St, where the number and diversity of shops and other businesses is far greater than might be expected in a village of this size.
- There is a strong desire and need for improved communication between the Parish Council and Foreshore businesses and related organisations. As well as one-to-one engagement, this could be delivered through the establishment of a **Charmouth Foreshore Consultative Group**, to involve the organisations who have been consulted as part of this Management Plan exercise.

- The proposal to provide a new sloping pedestrian access to the beach in front of the Heritage Centre building is broadly welcomed. Initial approaches to both the District Council and Environment Agency have indicated that they may be able to support the development of the project with technical assistance and this is now under consideration by the relevant organisations, with a view to developing a design, leading to securing necessary consents. **See Section 8.6 below for further discussion.**
- However due regard should be given to the characteristics of the River Char and its transference of gravel and this could have implications for the design and operation of any new pathway.
- There could be scope for introducing a small wave return wall instead of the current stone wall in front of the café building which does not extend the full width of the frontage and which could mitigate at least some of the potential damage during storm conditions. This would need to be discussed, agreed and costed with West Dorset & Environment Agency engineers.
- There is also need to improve access from the Foreshore to the Char River bridge via the two car parks, with improved access for pedestrians being a priority. This could be achieved partly through the provision of rubber matting, [which can be removed in the winter] and partly through the provision of a hard surfaced riverside footpath.
- Improvement/changes to some car park signing, machines, boundaries and open times is required
- The Shoreline Management Plan policy of ‘Hold the Line’; followed by ‘No Active Intervention & Managed Realignment’ is a serious matter of concern resulting in long term uncertainty for the Foreshore and its assets.
- The current closure of the South West Coast Path is a serious issue for visitors and all parties welcome the proposed works to re-open the path in 2017/18. This is being coordinated by the South West Coast Path Team and Dorset Countryside and is very much welcomed.
- There may be scope for public art to be incorporated within the new path, with a local artist/sculpture; John Calder keen to participate in this and potential for grant aid to be explored from a range of organisations.
- Parts of the Foreshore area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and there is scope for this to be subject to more interpretation than at present, notably the reed bed close to the car park which is of biodiversity interest.

- There is wide range of organisations who are interested in providing general information, environmental interpretation and beach/cliff safety information. This includes the following organisations, a number of which are already planning signing and information in various forms:
  - World Heritage Team
  - Charmouth Parish Council
  - West Dorset District Council
  - Charmouth Heritage Centre
  - Natural England
  - HM Coastguard
  - South West Coast Path Team
  - National Trust
  - RNLI
  - Foreshore and East Beach Businesses
  - Charmouth Traders
  
- However, it is disappointing to note that there is virtually no communication between all of these parties on what is needed, how it should be provided and no planned coordination of signs, information and interpretation, in terms of design, graphics, form, construction and location.
- This is considered to be serious omission that should be addressed as top priority, otherwise there is a danger of a disparate system of information and signing being implemented, with potential for duplication, confusion and a waste of resources.
- The day to day maintenance of the public conveniences is highlighted by many organisations as a serious issue and is a matter of constant complaint by visitors.
- Discussions should therefore take place with West Dorset DC to establish how this can be improved with an increased regime of cleaning at busy times. Consideration could also be given to more localised management and contracting of cleaning which could improve the situation. The closure of the steps to the WCs is also a matter real concern, without apparently any solution being forthcoming, whilst signing of the WCs is cited as being both duplicated and confusing and so in need of rationalisation.
- Clearer policies in respect of both Lost Children and First Aid are required, with responsibilities more clearly defined when incidents occur.
- Many organisations commented that they considered there was scope for an improved catering offer at the foreshore and there was support for evening opening.

In addition there is potential for reconsideration of an improved, open sitting out area at the East Beach café which accorded with the covenant restrictions, [but which does allow for the principle of a refreshment operation in this location].

- The newly established Coastwatch satellite facility in the old Napoleonic Lookout is fully supported and the organisation is planning to continue into the future.
- In order to provide further support to local business and provide added interest for visitors, there is scope to consider 'Walking Trails' to encourage visitors up to the High St. However this may have to await the reopening of the Coast Path.
- There is also potential for hosting 'pop up' events at the foreshore area, potentially food festivals and craft fairs, during shoulder season periods, which would be attractive to both local people and visitors.
- The outcomes of this project should be focused on working towards a bid for Coastal Community Funding and other funding sources for the proposed improvements.
- Any work to address foreshore issues and any potential bid could be taken forward in conjunction with Chideock Parish Council as there are similar issues to be addressed at Seatown and Chideock PC are keen to engage with Charmouth and other partners.
- There are other more detailed and equally important points and suggestions included within the summary table above and it is recommended that these are also fully considered as part of the next stage in taking forward this management plan project, preferably in conjunction with a newly formed Foreshore Consultative Group.
- These should then be developed into a more detailed Action Plan, with identified priorities, timescales, responsibilities and funding requirements.

### **Improved Access to Charmouth Beach**

8.6 As noted above, in Section 7 there is considerable support for the provision of a new sloping, pedestrian access ramp from the Foreshore of between 3-4 metres in width. This would be the largest and most costly project identified as a result of this current work. It could involve the construction of a new curved access at the eastern end of the stepped seawall, in front of the Heritage Centre that could also provide some resulting protection to the adjacent sea defence structures. The access way would be primarily for pedestrians, included easing access for disabled or mobility impaired people, as well as parents with buggies, although trolleyed access for small boats and kayaks could also be possible.

8.7 This type of project would not be a coastal defence structure but could potentially be eligible for attracting money from the Coastal Community Fund as a project that had local amenity benefits and consequential benefits for tourism, visitors and the local economy, thereby supporting Charmouth's role as an important access point to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.

8.8 As noted in Section 7, there have been discussions with West Dorset DC and the Environment Agency about this project and it is therefore proposed this this engagement continues. **However before progressing such discussions and in order to avoid a waste of resources, it is important that there is local consensus and agreement on the principle of this project and that it will receive local support, if it is progressed to the next stage.**

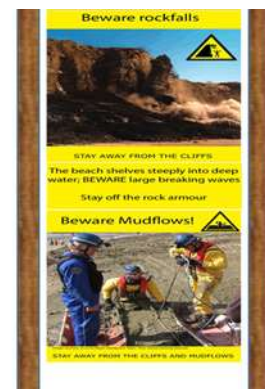
## 9 Interpretation & Information Signs

9.1 Due to its importance, it is considered that all those who are proposing new information and or interpretation should communicate with other agencies with a view to developing a joint approach to signing, or at the very least communicate to ensure that all parties are fully informed as to what others are planning, so as to avoid duplication. **This is not happening at present and should be a priority for all.**

### Potential Content of Signs

9.2 Potential content for signs could include the following material:

- Orientation – a map – toilets, footpaths, short and longer walks using viewpoints as the draw; links to village shops; pubs etc.. This could also be the place where 'information' listed below, is located.
- Geology, fossils and geomorphology – World Heritage stories.
- Safety and danger of cliff falls
- Landscape, wildlife, how it is managed – local landowners; National Trust. This could include a wider orientation map of the local area.



- Historic photos of Charmouth, the cement works now heritage centre, lime kiln and how the foreshore has developed and changed over time.
- The future for Charmouth – coastal management, climate change, increased storminess – the balance between protecting the natural and human interests and the challenges that the future holds here.
- In addition, there is a need to provide space for a plethora of information:
  - Dogs; Litter; BBQ's; Fishing; Rock armour & cliffs – keep off; Water quality

9.3 These could all be combined into one sets of vertical signs or a low lectern style sign, integrating the stories, as proposed by the World Heritage Team at the information hub east of the river Char. These are shown in the sketches below or they could be separate panels, as illustrated here. Links to online resources and 'App' content could provide access to more detailed information.



This is being developed by South West Coast Path Team who are looking for and would welcome inputs of local information.

9.4 It is important therefore that signage provided is ideally, consistent along the coast, although where different landowners own different parts of the coast, this does mean that coordination would be necessary, desirable and beneficial.

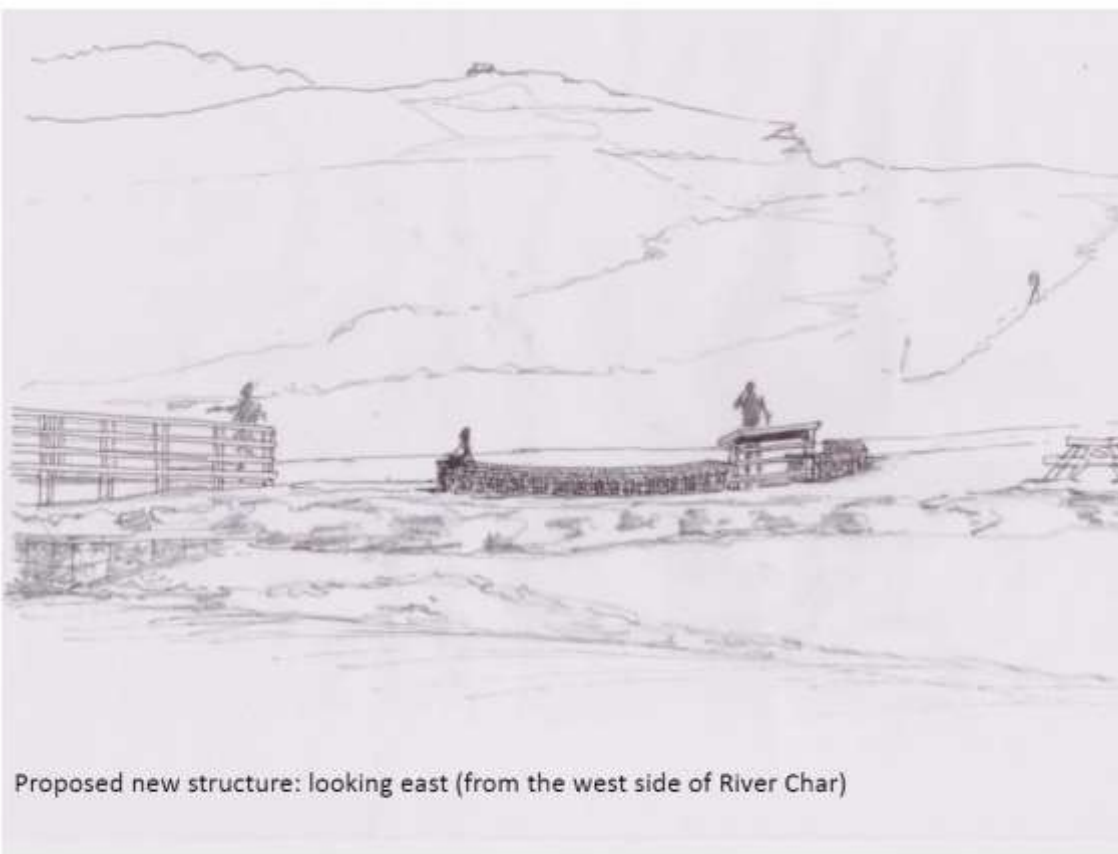
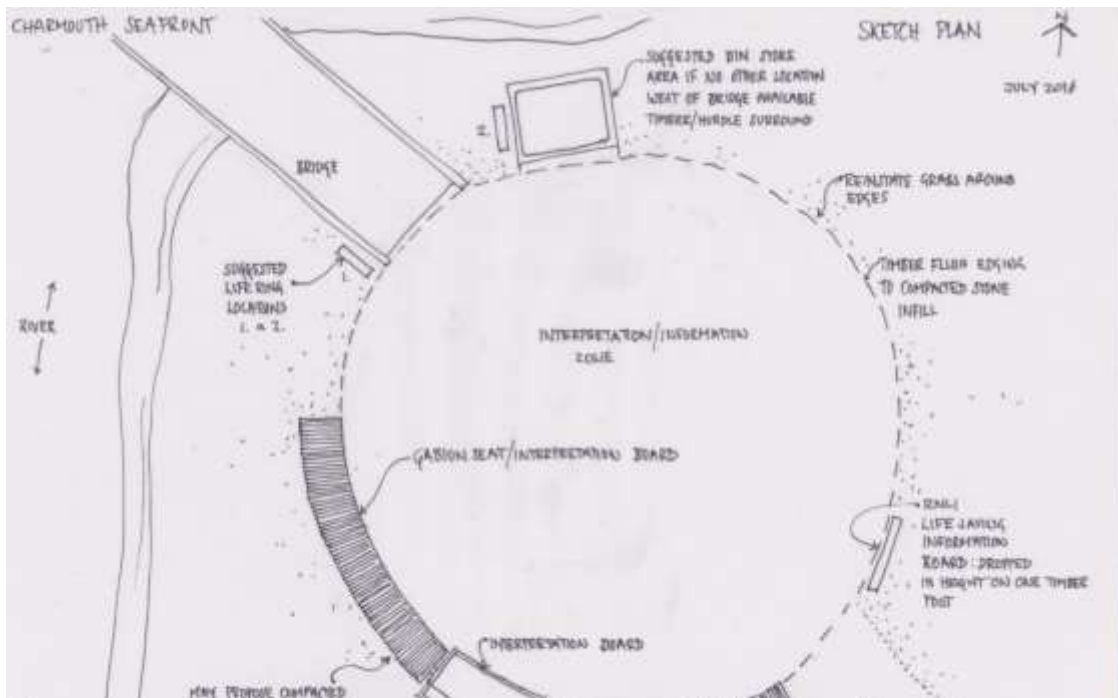
9.5 The aim therefore should be to provide clear, informative safety advice and other information. If there is close partnership and joint agreement on such signing, then it is considered that it will demonstrate that there is unanimity in the messages being provided on the signing, covering all relevant organisations' responsibilities.



Therefore it is proposed that any change to the present signage regime is agreed between all landowners, the local authorities (Parish, District and County Councils), as well as the Heritage Centre, businesses, Maritime Coastguard Agency, National Trust, and the RNLI, as providers of some of the present signage.

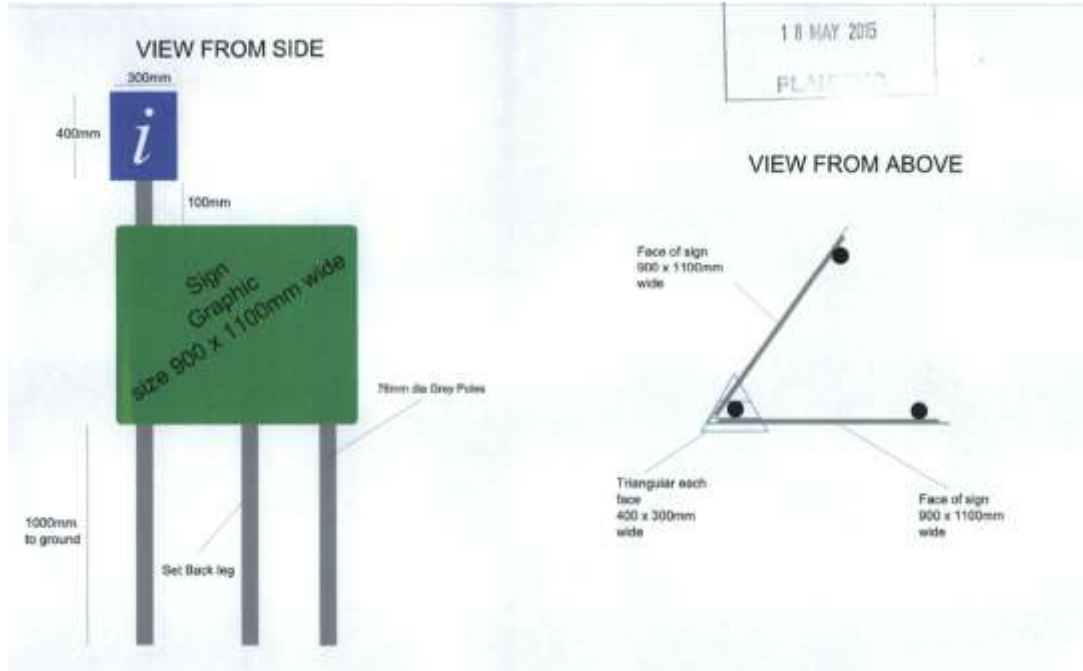
### **Current Proposals for an Information/Interpretation Hub to the East of the River Char**

9.6 As noted in Section 7 there are proposals by the World Heritage Team for an information/interpretation hub on east side of River Char, for which funding is available. The sketches below provide an illustration of the form of the hub, although final scheme may vary.





Planning consent has also been obtained by Charmouth Parish Council for an information sign but this has not yet been implemented and reconsideration of the design approach may be appropriate given the above commentary. However, close liaison is essential to ensure design coordination.



## 10 The Economic Value of the Environment & The Jurassic Coast to Dorset's Economy & Potential Funding Sources for Projects

10.1 In 2015, Dorset County Council commissioned study of the Economic Value of the Environment to Dorset's Economy that includes an assessment of the benefit of the Jurassic Coast to the economy. Amongst other matters, this has concluded that the Jurassic Coast influences £92 - £114m of economic output per annum.

10.2 Charmouth is a pivotal gateway location on the Jurassic Coast, due to the presence of the beach, coastal footpaths, extensive areas of parking, the heritage centre, and role of Charmouth as a location for finding fossils and for educational visits. If the Jurassic Coast is of such importance to the local economy, then there is a case to argue that the authorities who are responsible for its management and promotion, should also have some responsibility to provide and support the provision of necessary improvements, to ensure that visitors to this World Heritage Site have the best possible experience and to ensure its protection for the long term.

## **Potential Future Funding**

10.3 Potential funding sources that can be investigated for the future implementation of projects could include the following:

### **The National Coastal Communities Fund**

This is national programme, which has funded a wide range of projects around the coast in recent years. The latest round of funding totals £90m for the UK, with the first tranche having now been allocated following 'Expressions of Interest' that were invited in summer 2016. The Dorset Coast Forum Team, based at Dorset County Council is closely involved with this programme and there is scope for joint bids with locations such as Seatown. Therefore close liaison and partnership working with authorities, agencies and businesses is essential. A summary of the Round 1 requirements for a CCF bid is provided at **Appendix 3**.

### **Lottery Sources**

There is a range of Lottery programmes and funds that can be explored for funding, potentially Big Lottery, Awards for All; focuses on community based projects and also possibly Heritage Lottery sources, as the natural environment does qualify as 'heritage' for lottery purposes.

### **Local Authorities & Environment Agency**

Whilst fully recognising the financial constraints being experienced by local authorities at this time, given the World Heritage status of the area and their coastal management responsibilities and interests, the problems identified in the study, exploring how local authorities and the Environment Agency can assist, either financially or with technical officer support in developing coastal engineering designs and related work should be a priority

### **Local Businesses with an interest in Charmouth**

As noted above there is a significant number of local businesses that are directly involved in Charmouth and whose income is very much directly dependent upon the tourism industry. They therefore should have a real 'ownership' in ensuring that some of the improvements and projects identified are implemented. Further discussions with these business is therefore strongly recommended.

### **Local Community Fundraising Initiatives**

This might include local fundraising events as well as Parish precept specifically identified for helping to fund projects identified in this study; for example the proposed signing improvements.

### **The South Dorset EU LEADER Programme**

This EU funded programme is coordinated by team based at Dorset CC and the fund focuses on farming, business development and tourism in rural areas. The programme is still been open for bids to be submitted and it has recently been confirmed that access to funding is still available, whilst the UK remains a member of the EU.

## **11 Concluding Comments**

11.1 This initial assessment has been undertaken on behalf of the Charmouth Parish Council and Lyme Forward and addresses some key visitor management issues at Charmouth Foreshore, many of which will no doubt have been discussed locally, over the years. The aim has been to undertake a review of the local situation, canvass opinions of stakeholders and provide a report of the findings with suggested recommendations for future action.

11.2 A strong partnership approach is essential which has to involve close engagement and support for local stakeholders which should include:

- Parish Council
- Local landowners,
- Local authorities,
- Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Team
- National Trust
- Heritage Centre
- Businesses
- Other interests.

11.3 The conclusions and recommendations highlighted in Section 7 now need to be worked up into a more detailed programme which identifies the following:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Funding Requirement &amp; Source</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	££	<b>Quick Wins 2016-2018</b>
YYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY	YYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY	£££	<b>Larger Priority Projects</b>
ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ	ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ	££££	<b>Longer Term Project and/or Aspirations</b>

11.4 It is recommended that by developing closer partnership working and pooling funding, partners have the potential to deliver at least some of the short term projects over the next few years, for the benefit of all; residents; visitors, landowners and businesses.

11.6 It is intended that by presenting both the issues and opportunities for improvement in a single comprehensive Foreshore Management Plan document, then this will provide a sound framework or strategy for understanding the problems, as well as taking forward projects for implementation, in a phased manner through the fund bidding process. This will enable potential partners to appreciate that problems, challenges and potential solutions are being considered in a coordinated and strategic manner and that the ideas have been developed through stakeholder and public engagement.

11.7 Charmouth is an important location on the Dorset & East Devon, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and a key tourist location within West Dorset. The representative local authorities, Dorset County Council has responsibilities for local highways, the World Heritage Site and Dorset Coast Forum, all of which are relevant to this study and management plan, whilst West Dorset District Council has interests in tourism, economic development, coastal defence and community interests generally. It is important therefore that the authorities are engaged with early on as the next step in the process, a view to securing their general support for the projects and potentially seeking support for their implementation, either financially or through technical support, or indeed both.

## 12 Recommendations

12.1 The following **Recommendations** arising from this Phase I Foreshore Appraisal and Management Plan are put forward for consideration. It is recommended that:

- This Report is considered formally by both the Charmouth Parish Council and Lyme Forward, with a view to it being to be supported and endorsed.
- An early Charmouth stakeholder meeting and workshop be held to share the outcome of the work and seek local input and views.
- A joint meeting be sought and arranged with appropriate Officers of Dorset County Council, West Dorset District Council and the Environment Agency, to discuss the Management Plan and especially with regard to the beach access proposal.
- The Charmouth Foreshore Consultative Group be established as a priority to ensure good communication and engagement with key local stakeholders.
- Communication with all organisations consulted as part of this study also continue on a regular basis.
- A coordinated and more detailed action plan be developed, based on the suggestions, conclusions and recommendations in Section 7, with priorities and timescales for implementation.
- Future funding opportunities being explored, as advised in the report, to assist in implementing projects.
- Consideration be given to taking forward the next stage of the project as identified at the outset and included in the brief within the consultancy brief in **Appendix 1**.

**Simon Williams MBE, BSc, Dip TP, MSc, MRTPI**

**Footprint Futures – Planning & Regeneration**

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## Footprint Futures – Planning & Regeneration

### Charmouth Seafront Improvement - Feasibility Study Proposal July 2016

Adrian Ragbourne

Lyme Forward/Charmouth Parish Council

#### Consultancy Services for undertaking Feasibility Study in respect of Charmouth Seafront Improvement Project – Phase I

Following an approach by Adrian Ragbourne on behalf of Lyme Forward and Charmouth Parish Council [LF & CPC] and a discussion/meeting on 20 July, a request was made for a proposal to help take forward the planning for an improvement scheme at Charmouth Seafront. It was agreed that this would best be progressed in a phased manner, so that these bodies and local stakeholders could explore issues and identify opportunities, prior to making further commitments of time and funds.

This proposal therefore sets out the initial work that would be undertaken by Simon Williams Planning & Regeneration Consultant and Chartered Town Planner and is based on a similar approach adopted recently at Seatown, as part of a Coastal Revival project. If required at later stages, additional expertise can be brought into the project, subject to agreement with the commissioning organisations, as occurred at Seatown.

Essentially the first phase of the feasibility study will involve the examination/analysis of existing environmental, traffic/parking, information/interpretation, beach access and visitor management issues at Charmouth Seafront, with a view to identifying actions and improvements to address identified problems. The aim is that the outcome of the first phase of the study can be used by LF/CPC to decide on how to progress to the next stage of the project, with ultimately bidding for funds to implement some, or all of the projects and improvement identified.

It is proposed that this **First Phase** will include:

- Initial discussions with LF/CPC Representatives to ensure brief is accurate and what is required and subject to confirmation:
- Seafront Visual and Photographic Assessment
- Analysis of any previous improvement schemes/plans and ideas
- Identification and initial discussions with key landowners
- Initial discussions with key authorities and agencies to include:
  - West Dorset District Council, with their economic development, tourism, coastal defence and planning responsibilities
  - Dorset County Council due to their highway authority role
  - The Jurassic Coast Team due to their Jurassic Coast role and current work on visitor signing on the coast and at Charmouth
  - Charmouth Heritage Centre as the key local attraction for visitors
  - The Dorset Coast Forum, in view of their role in bidding for Coastal Community Funds
  - The Environment Agency in view of the coastal defence and public access and environmental responsibilities and as potential funder
  - South West Coast Path Team

- Organising and leading a stakeholder workshop with all interested parties as agreed with LF/CPC
- Visual presentation of initial findings
- Identification of Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats, through a group workshop
- General questions and discussions
- Following the workshop, analysis of workshop results and preparation of summary report of the work and conclusions to that stage, with a schedule of potential projects and improvements that will have emerged from the workshop and discussions
- Meeting with LF/CPC representatives and agreement on any next steps or phases of work if considered appropriate

*In the light of current knowledge, this further work could include the following, but which are **not proposed** at this initial stage and may not be comprehensive:*

- *Further meetings with LF/CPC representatives*
- *Further stakeholder meetings/workshops*
- *Agreement of priorities for project implementation*
- *Coordination/preparation of a land survey of the seafront area to enable any plans that may be required to be prepared accurately*
- *More detailed discussion with agencies highlighted above regarding any projects and improvements and their requirements*
- *Identification of any consents that may be required for proposed works*
- *Coordination of inputs from other consultants that could include architect, coastal engineer, coastal visitor/interpretation consultant*
- *Preparation of detailed engineering plans for any coastal works by experts in this field*
- *Identification of potential funding sources for projects that LF/CPC may wish to progress, either independently or in partnership with other organisations.*
- *Preparation and submission of planning applications as may be deemed necessary, together with further reports which may require other external expertise in view of coastal environmental designations; environmental assessment etc*
- *Preparation of funding bids as required*
- *Preparation of final report*

**Signed: Simon Williams**

**Date: 27 July 2016**

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**Appendix 2**

**Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan  
Initial Environmental Appraisal  
August 2016**



**Footprint Futures  
For Lyme Forward &  
Charmouth Parish Council  
August 2016**



<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 Charmouth Car Parks</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 Foreshore Area</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4 General Observations of the Foreshore</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5 Riverside and Access to the East Beach Area</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>6 Summary and Initial Concluding Comments</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendix 1 - Photographs</b>	<b>11</b>

# **Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan: Initial Environmental Appraisal – August 2016**

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 This environmental appraisal provides an initial and independent examination of the current situation at the Charmouth Foreshore and beach area. It is fully appreciated that similar exercises have been undertaken before and that other improvement plans have been prepared. In particular it is recognised that the Jurassic Coast World heritage Site Team have undertaken a similar appraisal in the context of the pilot signing improvement scheme that they are progressing. It is confirmed that full regard will be had to this work and that there will be full engagement with the WHS team, to ensure that there is compatibility and no unnecessary duplication of effort.

1.2 The following environmental appraisal was undertaken on Thursday 11 August 2016. The weather was good with a mix of sun and cloud, carparks were busy, although not entirely full, apart from the seafront carpark and the beaches and area generally were busy with tourists. As part of the preparation of the management plan, the purpose of the appraisal was to undertake an independent overview of the general facilities and environment around Charmouth foreshore, including the road leading from the village of Charmouth some 4-500m up Sea Lane.

1.3 The village of Charmouth has a bypass with the A35 passing to the north and therefore the road through the village is mainly aimed at serving local traffic and those wishing to access the beach and seafront at Charmouth. The village itself has a fairly wide range of shops and other services, which provide retail and catering outlets to serve the day-to-day needs of local people and visitors.

1.4 There are a number of caravan sites on the periphery and in the vicinity of Charmouth and so these shops and services are available to meet the needs of these visitors as well as local people and day visitors. There is some on street car parking in the main street and the junction between the main street and Sea Lane can become congested at times.

1.5 Shops at main street are within easy, flat walking distance of the seafront, however it is considered unlikely that very many people walk this distance in order to use the facilities. The road down to the foreshore has a number of chicanes in order to help reduce traffic speeds and these seem to be working satisfactorily. There are double yellow lines to prevent on street parking, but there's a wide range of publicly and privately owned car parks serving the needs of visitors to the seafront and beach.

## **2 Charmouth Car Parks**

2.1 **Lower Sea Lane Carpark:** this is accessed easily from Sea Lane via a junction and then right turn into the carpark. There is one sign indicating the carpark for both cars and caravans and the fact that there are public toilets there. However, from observation, it is apparent that many cars pass these signs, some pausing to view, but then traveling on down to the main car parks, closer to the seafront and foreshore.

2.2 The carpark is owned by West Dorset District Council, has been relatively recently refurbished and is attractively laid out, with high quality public toilets, easily accessible spaces, a parking machine etc., although the site does slope up quite steeply to the west. There are 27 car parking spaces, plus 2 for disabled people and 3 coach parking spaces, that are also used for campervan/caravan parking and some motorcycle parking. On 11 August it was approximately a third full with only one campervan space being occupied and no disabled spaces used. The sign with the together with the charging regime is clear and demonstrates that the carpark is, in fact, the cheapest of those serving this general Sea Lane/seafront area, with charges being £0.30 for 1 hour, £1.20 for 4 hours and £2.00 all day. **See photographs in Appendix 1.**

2.3 Further down Sea Hill Lane is the Charmouth Primary School, which has a relatively large carpark to its front, which is unused and unavailable for parking for visitors.

2.4 **Beach Car Park 1:** Approximately 100m from the foreshore itself on the eastern side of Sea Lane is the largest carpark at Charmouth, providing an estimated 200-300 spaces. This is privately owned, with the parking regime being £4 all day and £3 after 1:00 PM. The carpark is unsurfaced and the ticket machine, general signing and chain link fencing, notably at the roadside frontage of the carpark, are in a tatty and somewhat unkempt state. Although there is a pay and display machine [*check whether this carpark is, on occasions, also manned*]. **See also photographs in Appendix 1.**

2.5 **Foreshore Car Park:** Closest to the foreshore itself is the other Charmouth Parish Council owned carpark, which accommodates 50 vehicles, including parking for disabled people, with the car parking charges as follows: £1.00 per hour and £4.00 all day. This is a flat partly tarmaced carpark, with direct access to Charmouth beach, although the access itself is not particularly clear or easily accessible. On route to this carpark, along Sea Lane, is a sloping grassed area, which contains a number of seats, benches and picnic benches, together with a stone information cairn, but with no information panel in place.

2.6 Close to the entrance to the Foreshore carpark there is a three-board interpretation plinth which is in relatively good condition, although the boards are somewhat faded and look dated and in need of replacement. These address fossil hunting for children, world heritage and general coastal and environmental issues.

2.7 Although the main part of the Foreshore carpark is metalled there is an overspill carpark area to the east, approximately 30 further spaces, which is gravel surfaced with the River Char forming its eastern boundary. **See also photographs in Appendix 1.**

2.8 **Seafront Carpark:** Opposite the western side of the Foreshore carpark is another large, privately owned carpark understood to be in the same ownership as the one further up Sea Hill Lane. This is informally laid out with an element of wooden paling fencing to separate parking areas, and the site slopes up towards the west. This carpark has a plethora of signs as indicated on the photographs in **Appendix 1**, together with a number of Pay and Display machines, at the entrance and further into the carpark. These are generally in a visually poor state with areas of rusted metal etc. with additional signing in felt tip pen. Close to the entrance to this carpark is the disabled access ramp to the upper floor of the Charmouth Heritage Centre, as well as access to public toilets which are to the rear of the Centre.

2.9 In the south west corner of this carpark there is access to the South West Coast Path, National Trail, which is adequately signed with wooden signs, although there are a number of Dorset County Council Temporary Diversion Order maps displayed, which are in an extremely tatty condition and which convey an unkempt and uncared for impression to the casual visitor.

2.10 Adjacent to these signs, on the seaward side is an attractive grassed area with a series of beach huts around the periphery, which were appear to have been recently

improved and or renewed/repainted, although at the time of visiting, there was only one in use. Also within this area is the historic octagonal 'Napoleonic Lookout'.

### 3 Foreshore Area

3.1 Charmouth Parish Council owns the foreshore and buildings at Charmouth seafront and permits access to the beach and fossilising subject to conditions.

3.2 The building complex, which is on the foreshore comprises the following:

- **Rock Follies:** A shop selling general seafront merchandising, some clothing etc. at ground floor level.
- Adjacent to this is the **Beach Superintendent's Office**. The superintendents employed by.....and the post holder's 's role is as follows:
- Adjacent to this, also at ground floor level is **The Fossil Shop** selling rocks, fossils and related materials/goods.
- At the far end is **The Café**, which also has a Beach Shop to the rear. These are all well illustrated on the attached photographs in **Appendix 1**.
- The **Charmouth Heritage Centre** itself is at first floor level and is accessed via a series of steps and the ramp at the rear of the building. As advised in the Charmouth Parish Council's website:..."*The upper floor houses one of the foremost geological and paleontological interpretative centres in the Country, the Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre. This exceptional resource has a permanent professional staff and has recently been extended to provide guidance and instruction for visitors and school parties in geology, fossilising and environmental studies. It is the gateway to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.*" See <http://www.charmouth.com/amenities>

### 4 General Observations of the Foreshore

4.1 There are a number of picnic benches outside the café which are well used. The café itself is a self-service catering outlet serving teas, coffees, light meals, snacks, sandwiches etc. and is unlicensed. The southern seaward side of this side of the building is painted render with a series of galvanised metal shutters over the windows due to the proximity to the sea wall and the inundation from the sea during stormy conditions, however this southern elevation is in need of decoration and presents a blank frontage to the foreshore, having no signing or relief on it at all. This together with the galvanised shutters and a large extraction flue from the kitchen serving the café are therefore the main elevation facing the

foreshore. The seasonal beach shop to the rear has a temporary board sign leaning against a nearby wall.

4.2 There are numerous information boards and A-boards around the frontage of these various businesses and visitor centre, which although providing helpful information convey a somewhat cluttered appearance.

4.3 From the foreshore promenade a flight of very steep concrete steps with metal handrails that lead down to the beach. This is not a very easy route to the beach and few people were observed to use it.

4.4 Adjacent to this area is an extensive area of stepped concrete, which is part of the sea defence and is not intended as a stepped access to the beach. It is bounded by a relatively new galvanised railing and whilst this has undoubtedly reduced the number of people using this stepped area as access to the beach, it is still used as a sitting area.

4.5 At the far western end of the promenade there is a short area of wooden boardwalk with wooden railings leading to the west beach, although access to the beach itself from the end of the boardwalk is somewhat difficult with large boulders etc.

4.6 It is noted that there is a safety sign at the entrance to the boardwalk and also a sign indicating that there may be dangerous debris washed up on the beach, however in this location there is currently no sign indicating that the cliffs might be unstable and therefore potentially dangerous.

## **5 Riverside and Access to the East Beach Area**

5.1 The Foreshore carpark overspill area provides the main but informal pedestrian access route through the car park and alongside the River Char to the wooden bridge that crosses the river to gain access to the East Beach and coastal footpath. The overspill carpark is comprised of rough cobbles with the informal pathway running alongside the periphery of the large, Beach carpark, between parked cars and the River Char. There is no actual footway along this route, it is extremely rough and difficult to negotiate for able bodied, let alone those with disabilities and or with prams or buggies.

5.2 Adjacent to this route and within the overspill car park area, is an area of boat parking, where there is a number of boats which do not appear to have been used for many years, being waterlogged, overgrown with grass etc.

5.3 There is an mobile ice cream kiosk in the Beach carpark close to the bridge across the River Char and a number of informal signs around the entrance to the bridge, that are small, in poorly maintained wooden frames and have a somewhat tatty appearance. On the eastern side of the bridge is a Charmouth Town Council sign, which appears to date from the 1990s, some 20 years ago with signs that are faded, unkempt and generally outdated format. There are a number of other signs on the eastern side of the bridge, details of which are shown in the **photographs in Appendix 1**.

5.4 There is an attractive area of grassland, which is used for just sitting out, kite flying, kick about etc. prior to the access to the eastern beach, which is down a sandy slope leading to the sandy/pebbly beach. At the beach entrance there are rock fall warning signs

5.5 Immediately adjacent to this area is the **Soft Rock Café**, which appears to be a container, which has been converted into a café, serving a range of hot and cold food and drinks, but unlicensed. The servery for the café is accessed via a wooden ramp, and at the front of the café are a number of picnic seats on an area of rough ground, which are not easily accessible for those with any form of walking impairment. It is however, appreciated that this area is impacted upon by adverse sea conditions during storms.

## **6 Summary and Initial Concluding Comments**

6.1 In summary, therefore, it can be concluded that the Charmouth foreshore area has a significant number of car parking spaces, which is a huge benefit to both visitors and local area and it is able to accommodate the large number of people who wish to gain access to Charmouth beach during the summer period, due to it being popularity for fossil hunting and due to the presence of the Charmouth visitor centre, which provides information and guided walks.

6.2 Although there are a number of boats in the area there is no slipway and so access to sea remains a difficulty, although an electric winch is available. This is especially during low water and general access to the beach for pedestrians is not ideal. The beach areas closest to the cliffs are mainly a mixture of sand and pebbles of different sizes and larger

rocks, particularly on the western beach. However, when the tide is low, this exposes large areas of flat sand, as well as rocky ledges etc.

6.3 Visually, the overall impression of Charmouth is one with a significant areas of parked cars, but where information for visitors, and the general condition of signing especially is in a poor condition and in need of significant enhancement and rationalisation, with potential for other environmental and access improvements. There could also be potential for enhanced catering provision as has developed elsewhere along the Jurassic Coast, some associated with visitor centres; for example Durlston & Chesil Beach and other independent; for example at Hive Beach and West Bay.

6.4 As noted in the Introduction, the World Heritage Site, Jurassic Coast Team is currently involved in designing a signing improvement strategy, which includes potential for improvement at Charmouth. Information to date indicates that an interpretation 'zone' is planned on the eastern side of the bridge. Initial consultation with the Jurassic Coast Team has therefore been undertaken and will be continued throughout this project work.

6.5 From initial discussions with **Lyme Forward** it is understood that improving pedestrian access to the beach is a key priority and this can be discussed and examined further as the work associated with the Foreshore Management Plan progresses.

6.6 As set out in the proposals to Lyme Forward in July 2016, the work associated with the development of the Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan could include the following as a **First Phase**:

- Initial discussions with LF/CPC Representatives to ensure brief is accurate and what is required and subject to confirmation:
- Foreshore Visual Environmental and Photographic Assessment
- Analysis of any previous improvement schemes/plans and ideas
- Identification and initial discussions with key landowners
- Initial discussions with key authorities and agencies to include:
  - West Dorset District Council, with their economic development, tourism, coastal defence and planning responsibilities
  - Dorset County Council due to their highway authority role
  - The Jurassic Coast Team due to their Jurassic Coast role and current work on visitor signing on the coast and at Charmouth
  - Charmouth Heritage Centre as the key local attraction for visitors
  - The Dorset Coast Forum, in view of their role in bidding for Coastal Community Funds
  - The Environment Agency in view of the coastal defence and public access and environmental responsibilities and as potential funder
  - South West Coast Path Team



- Organising and leading a stakeholder workshop with all interested parties as agreed with LF/CPC
- Visual presentation of initial findings
- Identification of Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities & Threats, through a group workshop
- General questions and discussions
- Following the workshop, analysis of workshop results and preparation of summary report of the work and conclusions to that stage, with a schedule of potential projects and improvements that will have emerged from the workshop and discussions
- Meeting with LF/CPC representatives and agreement on any next steps or phases of work if considered appropriate

**Simon Williams MBE, BSc, Dip TP, MSc, MRTPI.**

**Footprint Futures – Planning & Regeneration**

**August 2016**

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## Appendix 1 - Photographs

These photographs are simply to illustrate some of the current facilities and general impressions

### Sea Lane Car Park



### Beach Car Park & Signing



### Seafront Car Park Signs



### Interpretation near Foreshore Car Park



### Centre & Cafe



### Visitor Centre & Businesses



General Signing Near West Beach



Steps & Boardwalk access to West Beach



Access to Beach from Foreshore Car Park & From East Beach



Pedestrian route & Access across Overspill Car park and alongside River Char



Diverse Signing – East Beach Area



Soft Rock Café & Seating Area  
General Beach View



## Some General Impressions



# Examples of Warning Signs Planned for World Heritage Coast



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



## **Appendix 3 - Charmouth Foreshore Committee Approved Version (Issue 1)**

### **Letter to Local Stakeholders**

August 2016

Dear Foreshore Businesses

#### **Charmouth Foreshore Management Plan**

In the light of discussions about the need for improvements at Charmouth Foreshore, Lyme Forward (LF), together with the Parish Council (CPC), has appointed a local Planning & Regeneration consultant; Simon Williams, to undertake an initial appraisal of the Seafront area, to engage with local organisations and report on potential improvement projects. This is with a view to potentially submitting bids for funding to the Coastal Community Fund and other sources in due course.

The project will be taken forward on a phased basis and the **First Phase** will proceed over the next 2-3 months and include the following:

- Initial discussions with LF/CPC Representatives to agree scope of work
- Foreshore Visual and Photographic Assessment and report
- Review of previous and current plans and proposals and analysis improvement schemes/plans and ideas
- Initial discussions with key landowners and key authorities and agencies to include:
  - West Dorset District Council,
  - Dorset County Council/Coast Forum/Countryside
  - The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Team
  - Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre as the key local attraction for visitors
  - The Environment Agency
  - Natural England
  - HM Coastguard/RNLI
  - Foreshore Businesses Organisations
- Organising and leading a stakeholder workshop with all interested parties as agreed with LF/CPC
- Following the workshop, analysis of workshop results and preparation of Phase I Report and further discussion with LF/CPC representatives and agreement on any next steps or phases if considered appropriate

Simon Williams has worked in Dorset for the past 30+ years and was a Member of both the Dorset Coast Forum and World Heritage Site Management Committees from their inception until 2013, so is very familiar with coastal management, tourism and regeneration issues along the coast. He has recently successfully completed a similar project at Seatown, for the Chideock Parish Council and Society as part of a Coastal Heritage Revival Project and is based locally in Lyme Regis.

He will therefore be around and about on the seafront over the coming weeks and will be in touch with key stakeholders, to seek your views and discuss issues and opportunities. This project is very much one of partnership and Lyme Forward and the Parish Council, wish to ensure that all interested parties are engaged and have the opportunity to have their input.

We therefore very much look forward to your involvement and support.

**Yours sincerely**

**Paul Oatway**

Chair Charmouth Foreshore Committee

## Appendix 4 - Coastal Communities Bid Process

The Coastal Communities Bid Process has 2 Rounds. The first round requires an explanation of the project, its costing, organisational details, outputs and outcomes. These are summarised below. If the Round 1 bid is successful, *[with an expectation that only 10% of bids will be]*, then a Round 2 bid is invited, which requires significantly more detail and a clear demonstration that the project is deliverable in terms of the following, amongst other factors:

- Full funding, of which CCF grant would be part, with confirmation that other funding is available
- All consents; planning; land ownership etc. in place
- The ability of the organisation or partnership submitting the bid to project manage and implement the project.

**However for the Round 1 Bid, the following issues would need to be addressed:**

- The overall Aim of the Project
- What exactly the project involves
- Estimated Start & Finish dates
- Location of the project
- Links to the local Coastal Community Team and its support
- Delivery of job & economic growth opportunities
- The contribution towards the delivery of local economic plans and CCF priorities
- The organisation, partners submitting the bid and general approach
- How local people businesses and community organisations are/have been involved
- How will the coastal community overall will benefit
- How will project will directly or indirectly create new jobs or safeguard existing jobs
- How many Full Time Equivalent jobs will be created or safeguarded
- How developed the project is
- The situation re Planning approvals and timescales for securing these
- Landowner consents and consents of any other statutory authorities required
- Whether the project involves coastal or flood protection, or improvement bathing water quality and if so whether the Environment Agency and the Coastal Protection Authority support the project
- Whether the project involves acquisition or leasing of land
- Whether it needs Building Regulation Approval
- The detailed schedule of works and timetable
- Cash flow showing when CCF grant is required during implementation
- Any constraints that prevent start within 6 months of grant being made
- Overall project costs and grant requested
- Annual project spending
- Breakdown of project costs
- Whether funding constitutes 'State Aid
- The status of submitting organisation & details of its constitution etc.
- Accounts
- Key contacts

It is clear therefore that even for Round 1 a considerable amount of information is required.

**Simon Williams**

**Footprint Futures – Planning & Regeneration**

**August 2016**