

**Notes of a Meeting of West Bay Ward Matters held
at the Salt House, West Bay, on Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 6.30pm.**

Attendance:

Councillors: Dave Bolwell and Ann Langridge (Chair)

Also present: 32 members of the public and Will Austin (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies and declarations of interest

No apologies for absence were received and there were no declarations of interest.

2. Notes of last meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 were agreed.

3. Ward Issues, including planning applications

The meeting discussed the following:

Boy/girl racers

- Cllr Dave Bolwell updated as follows:
 - A meeting the previous week with the Police and Dorset Council had considered markings in car parks, cameras, speeding, Police response, data from reports, and resourcing.
 - Actions to be pursued for included gates at Station Yard Car Park, CCTV, speed indicator signs, traffic surveys, more Police patrols, and activity by residents.
 - Reporting by residents was critical to addressing the problem.
 - The Police would give informal warnings, escalating to confiscation of vehicles.
- Attendees considered:
 - A desire to focus actions on the sluice gate bridge, the Esplanade, car parks, and West Bay Road.
 - Pedestrianisation of the Esplanade.
 - A Facebook page, "[West Bay Boy Racer Nuisance](#)", for posting anonymous videos.
 - Difficulties getting footage of vehicle registrations.
 - Concerns about aggressive responses and the need to avoid confrontational situations.
 - A need for awareness of potential punishments.
 - Access to the Esplanade for necessary purposes if pedestrianised.
 - Problems in West Bay Road in addition to the central area.
 - Whether action would simply move the problem elsewhere in Bridport.
 - Motorbikes contributing to the problem as well as cars.
 - The potential use of traffic calming.
 - Particular issues on Tuesday nights with vehicles driving at speeds up to 70mph.
 - The impact on residents' wellbeing.
 - Concerns about insufficient patrolling.
 - A possible community initiative to collect vehicle registrations.

- A forthcoming covert operation by Police.
- Varied views on the best locations for additional cameras.
- The increased use of electric scooters, adding to problems.
- A report of speeding from the West Cliff area.

20mph speed limits

- Cllr Ann Langridge reported on work to establish community opinion on 20mph limits. There had been support among residents for a limit in the central area of West Bay and in the harbour area, but mixed opinions about West Bay Road. Informal feedback there had suggested that a 20mph or 30mph limit was irrelevant. Overall in the West Bay Road area, support had been split 50:50, although residents of Wanderwell supported 20mph to enable safe exit onto West Bay Road.
- Attendees considered:
 - The need for enforcement.
 - A possibility of congestion from a 20mph limit.
 - Evidence of reduced speeds in the town centre following the introduction of a 20mph limit.
 - A leaflet, including a survey form.
 - Concerns about the cost of 20mph schemes.
 - A possible need for special lampposts for cameras.
 - The need to report crossing dangers on West Bay Road to Dorset Road Safe.
 - Whether funds would be better spent on speed cameras.
 - Problems at the top end of West Bay Road and around Wanderwell, which Cllr Dave Bolwell advised he would pursue.
 - The effect of increased tourism.
 - Some opposition to a 20mph limit in West Bay Road.
- An informal show of hands indicated:
 - Support for 20mph in central West Bay (25 for, 0 against, 3 abstentions).
 - Opposition to a 20mph limit in West Bay Road (7 for, 15 against, 7 abstentions).
 - Support for increased enforcement (unanimous).

Marsh Barn Road

- Cllr Dave Bolwell reported that a 30mph limit beyond the built-up area was being investigated.

Welcome Hub – ideas for use

- Attendees discussed:
 - A sculpture installation
 - Removal of the stone seating
 - A bandstand/shelter
 - Relocation of the 'bikers'
 - A fountain
 - A desire to retain the greens and not commercialise or add structures
 - No gambling
 - Petanque

Free Parking Days

- The Town Clerk reported that parking would be free on Pirates Day (25 May 2025) and West Bay Day (3 August 2025), and that any voluntary parking fees collected would be donated to West Bay Days.

- One attendee expressed concern about the impact on Meadowlands of event parking.

Harbour Master

- The Harbour Master reported that:
 - The closure of East Beach Car Park was now charged for, and contributions from the free parking days were of great help.
 - Works to the harbour wall were due to commence in October 2025. Licence applications prevented commencement before April 2025 and there was a natural need to avoid works during the summer.
 - Replacement of timber piles around the harbour, which would start in February and would take about three years to complete.
- Attendees discussed:
 - Concerns about the state of the temporary toilets and that some were not open. Cllr Dave Bolwell agreed to pursue this with Dorset Council.
 - The sauna, which Cllr Dave Bolwell had received comments about. The Harbour Master advised he was looking into this along with changing rooms for swimmers and beach wheelchair storage.
 - Concerns about litter from the coffee shop.
 - The beneficial impact of new and larger bins this year.
 - Removal of derelict boats – the Harbour Master advised this took time but boats would be removed.
 - Silent fireworks, the impact of fireworks on dogs, and the amount of plastic they generate. The Harbour Master advised he would look into this. There were mixed views among attendees about these concerns.

West Bay Discovery Centre

- The Town Clerk reported that the building and the Centre's operation were now under Town Council control after transfer from Bridport Area Development Trust.
- John West summarised the history of the Centre and its transfer from 1 October 2024. This would secure its future management and sustainability. The 45 volunteers remained vital, and their work had been recognised by the award of the King's Award for Voluntary Service.

4. Community Engagement/Ward Activity

This item was deferred.

5. Any other matters, including date of next meeting

The following matters were raised:

- The West Bay sign outside West Bay Road Car Park was in need of repair.
- Antisocial behaviour on the sea front – engines running, lights on and shining into properties, noisy teenagers, and vandalism – all late at night and into the early hours. Cllr Ann Langridge reported on a Police initiative to address antisocial behaviour.
- The timetable for reopening the cliff path. This was considered to be unlikely to happen in the near future.
- A request to reinstate antisocial behaviour signs on the Esplanade.
- Whether Dorset Council had provided any results from analysis of the impact of reduced car park fees. Cllr Dave Bolwell advised he was pursuing this. A resident advised that car parks had been quiet during 2024 in part due to the weather. The Town Clerk advised he would ask for feedback.

- Blue badge parking on double yellow lines in George Street and Station Road, which Cllr Dave Bolwell was pursuing with Highways.
- Videos for the Facebook page could be sent to Trevor via WhatsApp.

The meeting closed at **8.15pm**.