

Seatown Regeneration Project – Update & Press Release February 2017

The Seatown Regeneration Project Feasibility Study and report was supported by the Coastal Revival Fund and was completed in March 2016. Since that time, work has progressed on planning the implementation of the series of projects set out in the report and an update was presented to the Parish Council in October 2016 and January 2017. The project aims to achieve improvements that will benefit both local people and visitors and improve the quality of life for all.

A key aim has been to develop closer working relationships and a partnership approach to taking forward and implementing the projects, involving the local community and Parish Council/Chideock Society, the local authorities; [Dorset CC and West Dorset DC], as well as the private sector businesses and other landowners, who have particular interests at Seatown; notably The National Trust; the private owner of the beach; West Dorset Holidays due to the ownership of the holiday park and Palmers Brewery, due to their ownership of the Anchor Inn and the separate public car park.

Positive discussions have taken place with Dorset CC Highways Department about the proposed passing places at Seahill Lane, but projects such as this do have to be part of a wider package of regeneration projects, that would need to be taken forward at the same time.

The proposed reinforcement to the seafront concrete apron is the most important planned project within the study and West Dorset DC engineers had re-evaluated the proposals in the study report and concluded that the formation of the new turning head would be extremely difficult and costly from an engineering point of view. A revised and more modest scheme has therefore been developed, in partnership with the landowner and others, involving the use of rock armour; effectively extending the existing scheme that is already in place on the beach. WDDC are considering the need to progress the planning application for these rock armour works and initial discussions have taken place with Natural England, to ensure that any requirements they may have, are met.

With regard to the proposed changes to the car park charging regime, that is considered to be part of the solution to congestion problems, this is under discussion and would benefit short term visitors especially.

Discussions have taken place about the need for improved information and interpretation signing, highlighting the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, the natural environmental assets of the area, the history, as well as health and safety issues. This would be valuable to all visitors to Seatown, whether coming for the beach, fishing, the Anchor Inn, National Trust and South West Coast path walks and especially, the large numbers who stay at the Golden Cap Holiday Park. This project would also need to include the removal of extraneous, blank and rusting signing that are evident at Seatown, which would be a benefit to all.

Rationalisation of signing within and near the car park is also an issue that needs to be addressed, as part of this programme.

With regard to other possible projects highlighted in the study report, these may be examined and potentially progressed by landowners independently.

If the Seatown Regeneration Project is to be successful, then it is important that all parties recognise and appreciate the different roles that each organisation can play, notably;

- The local community organisations, by initiating and progressing the overall project,
- Local businesses who support the local economy and provide valuable jobs,
- The beach owner and other local landowners and interests,
- Local authorities, whom it is hoped will help with implementing some of the schemes.

A high degree of goodwill and support is already being provided by this range of partners that needs to be continued and extended, to include all interests and a good start has been made. It is also important that all parties recognise the value and quality of the local environment which is of World Heritage Site status and attracts the many people who come to Seatown, throughout the year.

Chideock Parish Council & Chideock Society

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