

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

NOTICE OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY DECISION FOLLOWING REVIEW OF DIRECTION RESTRICTING CROW ACCESS

Prepared by Natural England

Access Authority: Dorset County Council
Relevant Authority: Natural England
Local Access Forum: Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole Local Access Forum

Direction reference: 2012056430

Land Parcel Name	Direction Reference	Details of restriction on original direction
Weymouth Beach	2012056430	Specific dates for the 2012 Olympics, then 19/8/12-22/6/18. Outline Direction, up to 28 days annually For Special Events

Natural England has now decided how to proceed following its review of the above mentioned long-term direction to restrict CROW Access rights on this land.

A second consultation has been held between 18th October 2017 and 31st October 2017 with statutory consultees and the general public. We received feedback from the Ramblers, Dorset Area, who had hoped the direction would be revoked but they acknowledge that the restriction area has been reduced and note the reasons for extending the direction.

Outcome of the review:

Natural England's decision is to extend the direction for a further six years.

This direction was made as part of Natural England's proposals for the Rufus Castle (Portland) to Lulworth Cove (Dorset - Weymouth) stretch of the England Coast Path. The Coastal Access rights came into force along this stretch of coast on 29 June 2012.

The approved route is part of the South West Coast Path National Trail, coastal access rights also apply within the coastal margin (including along the coast path itself).

As part of the proposals for this stretch it was determined that a direction would be required under s24 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 to close the landward and seaward coastal margin and divert the England Coast Path at Weymouth Beach, Weymouth (SY680794), when it is being used for special events. The first of these events were during the 2012 Olympic sailing events held around

Weymouth, and then an outline direction was given for up to 28 days annually for use during other events the council might wish to stage.

During the review process Natural England spoke with the 'Assets and Infrastructure Team', and the Beach Manager, from the 'Dorset Councils Partnership' serving North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council.

They stated that although they hadn't used this direction since the Olympics they would in future as Weymouth Beach is used for a variety of events such as Motorcross, Beach Quad racing, beach volleyball, trampolining, re-enactments, iron man events etc.

Section 8.16 of the Coastal Access Approved Scheme (2013) considers the need for special measures in relation to a variety of recreational activities, events and other temporary land uses.

In 8.16.8 the Scheme states: *Some activities are more sensitive to public access than others and intervention is therefore more likely to be necessary, for example it may not be feasible to allow a general right of access over land where there is an event taking place for which an entry charge is made.*

8.16.10 states: *Intervention may be necessary to separate dangerous activities from areas where people are exercising coastal access rights. The need for intervention will depend on*

- *The nature of the risk and to what extent people can be expected to take account of it without further management*
- *The patterns and levels of public access and the availability of a safe and accessible route through or around the area of risk*

The Scheme then discusses Alignment Solutions, i.e. aligning the trail away from the location of regular events, and then goes on to discuss informal management solutions such as signage, barriers and stewards.

Where the above solutions are not sufficient to prevent significant disruption or danger it says in 8.16.18 that: *Directions may be used for land management purposes or to prevent danger to the public where:*

- *Other solutions are unavailable; or*
- *We conclude that they are likely to be insufficient or they prove to be so in practice.*

8.16.19 *Directions for land management reasons are most likely to be necessary where there is a charge for entry to an event, or when land is being used for a private function. Where necessary they are likely to exclude access from the area being used for the event.*

8.16.20. *Directions to prevent danger to the public are most likely to be necessary in conjunction with high-speed activities such as motor sports. Where necessary they will usually exclude access from the area of risk while the event is taking place.*

The Dorset Council's Partnership believes it will be using the beach in the future for events in a similar way to the use during the Olympics. These events could be

charged for, or free but with space for limited numbers only, and therefore require restricted access to prevent overcrowding.

Therefore as there are plans to continue to use the beach for events Natural England proposes to extend the direction for a further 6 years.

The original direction gave the maximum permitted extent of closure area with the understanding they will only close the minimum area of beach necessary for that particular event, and only while that event is taking place or being set up or taken down. During this review process the council have also stated that they won't require restrictions on the beach to the north of the Jubilee clock, so that area has been removed from the direction.

The council have also notified that if the beach is closed to an extent that onwards access is not possible the temporary route will run on the promenade.

This will all be managed on the ground with signage/ fencing/ barriers/ stewards as appropriate, and the council will also notify the Open Access Contact Centre of closure dates so they can be displayed on Natural England's website.

Summary of changes made to the existing directions:

Land Parcel Name:	Details of restriction on original direction:	New details of restriction
Weymouth Beach	2012056430	Outline Direction, up to 28 days annually until 03/11/2023 For Special Events

Details of the restriction will appear on the relevant map of access land on the Open Access website - www.openaccess.naturalengland.org.uk.

You should note that the applicant has the right to appeal within six weeks against our decision not to act in accordance with the application originally submitted to us. Only the applicant can appeal against this decision. Details of any appeal will appear on the Planning Inspectorate's website at www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/countryside/countryside.

Date review completed: 3rd November 2017