



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Application for designation as a bathing water

East Cowes Esplanade, East Cowes, Isle of Wight

February 2022

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We work closely with our 33 agencies and arm's length bodies on our ambition to make our air purer, our water cleaner, our land greener and our food more sustainable. Our mission is to restore and enhance the environment for the next generation, and to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.



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# Background

Popular beaches and inland waters that attract a large number of bathers are designated as bathing waters under the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 (S.I.2013/1675) (“the Regulations”) to protect bathers’ health against faecal pollution. During the bathing season, which in England runs from 15 May to 30 September, the Environment Agency monitors the water quality to test for intestinal enterococci and *E.coli*. Bathing waters are classified annually as ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘sufficient’ or ‘poor’, based on an assessment of the level of bacteria in the water over the preceding four years. If the site is designated, the Environment Agency will develop a bathing water profile and put plans in place to monitor and protect the bathing water, with the aim of achieving at least a ‘sufficient’ classification.

The Regulations define a bathing water as a surface water where “...*the Secretary of State expects a large number of people to bathe, having regard in particular to past trends and any infrastructure or facilities provided, or other measures taken, to promote bathing at those waters.*” (Reg. 3(1)). We have not defined a “large number” because there is a wide variety of bathing waters in England that attract a level of usage proportionate to their size and location and setting a minimum number could exclude smaller sites. Designation also takes into account any facilities that are provided to promote and support bathing (for example lifeguarding, first aid facilities, public toilets, shops and cafes) because the presence of such facilities demonstrates that the site is an established bathing area and is promoted and managed for bathing.

Under the Bathing Water Regulations 2013, the local authority must display public information about water quality and pollution sources at designated bathing waters during the bathing season (15 May to 30 September). The information displayed is provided to the local councils by the Environment Agency.

Defra provides guidance for those applying for bathing water status and requires that the application provides information on the facilities provided, the number of bathers and description of local consultation<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Bathing waters: apply for designation or de-designation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bathing-waters-apply-for-designation-or-de-designation)

# Proposal for new designation

East Cowes Town Council & Community Volunteers have applied for East Cowes Esplanade, Isle of Wight to be designated as a bathing water. This consultation sets out our summary of the application and seeks your views on the proposal to designate this site as a bathing water.

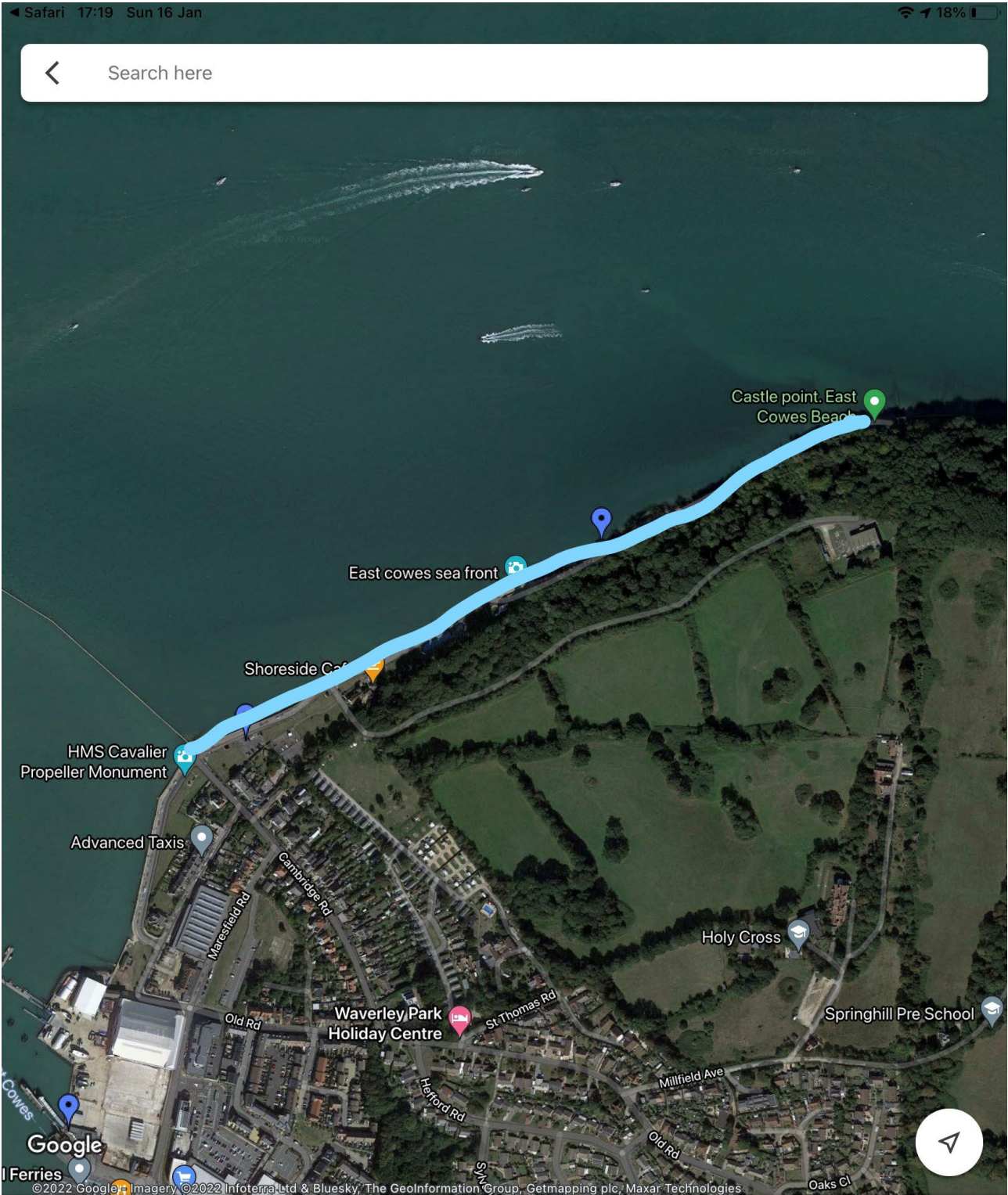
Previously, we received an application for the same area in 2014. The application was made by the Fight Against Environmental Contamination of Estuaries and Seafronts group but was declined because usage was mainly for sailing training. The usage survey showed very low numbers of bathers and the training was taking place too far from the shore for bathing water monitoring to be relevant to trainees capsizing their boats.

## Location and facilities

East Cowes Esplanade, highlighted in Image A, is located on the north coast of the Isle of Wight. The land is owned by the Isle of Wight Council and the management of it is undertaken by the East Cowes Town Council.

However, the Isle of Wight Council has confirmed that they will undertake the statutory duties under the bathing water regulations 2013 at the site, if designated.

Image A



East Cowes, Isle Of Wight

[VIEW MAP LEGEND](#)

If the site is designated as a bathing water, the Environment Agency will determine a sampling point on the basis of where the greatest number of bathers go into the water. The annual classification would reflect bathing water quality at this point.

Along the Esplanade there are public toilets with an external shower, seats with ramped access for wheelchair users and a car park, as well as on road parking.

The other facilities available along the Esplanade include:

- Shoreside café
- Beach huts
- Shelters
- Tennis court and basketball ring
- East Cowes sailing club dinghy store
- Dog bins
- Public seating
- Stepped access
- Emergency equipment
- Public slipway
- Younger child's playground
- Paddling pool
- Older children's playground including zip-wire

## Usage numbers and methodology

The Defra guidance on applying for a new bathing water designation asks for a numerical survey of beach usage covering a minimum of 20 days during the bathing season. The survey must include 10 weekend or bank holiday days and half of the survey days must be during school holiday periods. The guidance asks for the numbers of adults bathing and children bathing/paddling to be shown separately, as children are more likely than adults to become immersed and ingest water and for that reason are counted as a bather.

The applicant has provided a survey of usage taken over 20 days between 15 May and 6 September 2021.

The 20 counts taken during the survey registered a total of 1,097 bathers (adults and children swimming, and children paddling)

The breakdown of numbers reported over 20 counts were:

- 1,097 bathers (adults swimming and children swimming or paddling)

This gives an average per count (rounded to the nearest whole number) of:

- 55 bathers



The total number of bathers for each count is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Date of count</b>	<b>Adults swimming</b>	<b>Children swimming/paddling</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Saturday 15 May 2021	57	8	65
Sunday 16 May 2021	50	4	54
Sunday 23 May 2021	57	8	65
Sunday 30 May 2021	45	5	50
Monday 31 May 2021	61	6	67
Saturday 12 June 2021	62	1	63
Saturday 19 June 2021	64	17	81
Sunday 20 June 2021	47	4	51
Saturday 26 June 2021	48	5	53
Saturday 24 July 2021	30	8	38
Sunday 25 July 2021	34	8	42
Tuesday 27 July 2021	40	0	40
Tuesday 10 Aug 2021	71	16	87
Friday 13 Aug 2021	57	3	60
Saturday 14 Aug 2021	46	10	56
Sunday 22 Aug 2021	31	7	38
Wednesday 25 Aug 2021	36	8	44
Thursday 26 Aug 2021	53	4	57
Sunday 29 Aug 2021	37	8	45
Monday 06 Sept 2021	41	0	41
<b>Totals</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>1097</b>
<b>Daily Average</b>			<b>55</b>

## Local consultation

East Cowes Town Council & Community Volunteers held a local consultation to gather views on the proposal to apply for designation as a bathing water. The consultation was opened on Facebook during the summer 2021. It targeted groups who would be directly affected by the proposal, including residents, environmental and sports groups and businesses local to East Cowes. There were 125 responses.

All respondents were in favour of East Cowes Esplanade becoming a designated bathing water with no-one opposing the proposal.

The application also received 8 letters of support from the local community.



# Responding to this consultation

We would welcome your views on the proposal to designate East Cowes Esplanade on the Isle of Wight as a bathing water.

In your response please state:

- that you are responding to the consultation on whether East Cowes Esplanade should be designated as a bathing water
- your view on the proposal
- your reasons or evidence to support your view

Please respond by 2 March 2022 via Citizenspace, by email to [bathingwater@defra.gov.uk](mailto:bathingwater@defra.gov.uk) or by post to:

Bathing Water Team  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
2 Marsham Street  
Seacole Building  
London  
SW1P 4DF

## Annex - List of consultees

British Destinations and UK Beach Management Forum  
British Long Distance Swimming Association  
Consumer Council for Water  
Country Land and Business Association  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
Marine Conservation Society  
National Farmers Union  
Outdoor Swimming Society  
River and Lake Swimming Association  
Surfers Against Sewage  
Visit England  
Water UK  
Southern Water