

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

# **Consultation on the proposal to remove Lyme Regis Church Cliff Beach from the list of designated bathing waters**

**August 2015**

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## Background

The Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) is designed to protect public health against faecal pollution at popular swimming areas by setting limits for the level of intestinal enterococci and *E.coli* in the water. Beaches and inland waters are designated as bathing waters if they are used by large numbers of bathers. The safety of the location and the presence of infrastructure to support and promote bathing are also taken into account. Once designated, bathing waters are monitored for compliance with the Directive's standards during the bathing season, which in England runs from 15 May to 30 September. During 2015 the Environment Agency is monitoring water quality at 415 bathing waters.

We have opted not to set a minimum number of bathers to define a "large number". There is a wide variety of beaches in England, ranging from busy resorts to small bays in rural areas, and many of them attract a number of bathers proportionate to their size and location. Setting a minimum number means we could risk excluding small beaches or inland sites that have facilities for bathing but are not used by as many people as a beach in a large resort.

The Bathing Water Directive's standards focus on human health, and de-designation would not have an impact on fisheries or wildlife. Water quality more generally is protected by a number of other measures, including the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC).

The Environment Agency's bathing water profile of Lyme Regis Church Cliff Beach contains detailed information about the catchment and a location map:

[http://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/explorer/info.html?\\_search=lyme%20regis&site=ukk2205-21400](http://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/explorer/info.html?_search=lyme%20regis&site=ukk2205-21400)

## Survey of user numbers 2014

During 2014 the Environment Agency carried out a survey of usage at Lyme Regis Church Cliff Beach, which was anecdotally reported to be seldom used for bathing. We now propose to remove the beach from the list of designated bathing waters on the basis of the outcome of the survey.

In the map, the survey area is shown between two blue lines. The bathing water sampling point is indicated by a red diamond shape.



There are two beaches in Lyme Regis that are designated as bathing waters: Church Cliff Beach and Front Beach, which is to the west of Cobb Gate beach and is not shown on the map. Front Beach is busier than Church Cliff Beach and is patrolled by RNLI lifeguards during the summer. Church Cliff Beach has no dedicated facilities and is not lifeguarded. However, the nearest public toilets and parking are a short walk away and the beach is close to the town centre.

The survey showed that Church Cliff Beach is used for a variety of leisure activities rather than for bathing, and people were observed rock pooling, walking their dogs, fossil hunting, picnicking, fishing and canoeing. The beach is thought to be used for dog walking, and 80 dogs were counted during the survey.

The weather was generally fine and dry on all the days in the survey. Temperatures varied between 15 - 28 degrees Centigrade and no rain was recorded on any of the survey dates.

The daily counts of beach users are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

Date	Time	Bathers (including children paddling)	Paddlers	Water sports	People on beach
26 May	15:30	0	0	0	12
1 June	12:38	0	0	0	20
15 June	15:01	0	1	0	24
19 June	13:23	0	2	0	9
24 June	13:19	0	0	0	12
11 July	15:56	0	0	0	8
22 July	16:07	5	0	0	20
24 July	16:29	0	1	0	58
30 July	12:45	0	0	0	55
3 August	16:09	0	0	0	35
8 August	13:55	0	0	0	35
9 August	12:17	1	4	0	74
10 August	14:53	0	0	0	49
15 August	15:36	0	1	0	84
16 August	15:28	0	0	0	53
17 August	12:22	0	0	0	3
18 August	14:39	0	0	0	34
19 August	12:55	1	2	1	52
22 August	14:32	0	1	2	14
23 August	12:05	6	1	0	20
24 August	12:50	4	10	0	55
29 August	15:23	2	3	1	13
31 August	14:10	0	0	0	18
5 September	14:00	0	0	0	13
7 September	16:14	0	1	0	27
9 September	15:36	0	0	0	18
12 September	13:38	0	0	0	4
14 September	12:37	0	0	0	7
20 September	12:54	0	0	0	1
21 September	15:07	0	0	0	17
Total		19	27	4	844
Daily average		<1	<1	<1	28

# Survey methodology

The criteria used in the survey were:

## 1. Site information

- A check list of facilities available to support bathing, e.g. toilets, beach huts, showers, lifeguards, car park, shop or café.
- A short description of the type of beach and main activities undertaken there, e.g.
  - Water contact activities – bathing, surfing;
  - Other water based activities – e.g. sailing, kayaking, windsurfing;
  - Beach activities – sunbathing, walking, etc;
  - Any public safety advice or warnings.

## 2. Who to count

- Bathers:
  - People in the water (not in boats);
  - Children paddling with bare feet.
- Non-bathers:
  - Adults paddling with bare feet;
  - People on the beach;
  - Water sports participants.

## 3. When and where to count

The surveys covered 30 days, focusing on peak usage times. One count was taken on each day of the survey. Bathers and beach users were counted in an area of approximately 100 metres around the sampling point.

# Water quality

In 2014 Church Cliff Beach failed to meet the minimum water quality standard set by the 1976 Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC), which was then still in force.

## **Annex A – list of consultees**

Because the survey of usage was initiated by Defra, there has been no local consultation on the proposal to de-designate Church Cliff Beach.

British Destinations  
British Long Distance Swimming Association  
Consumer Council for Water  
Country Land and Business Association  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
Dorset AONB  
Dorset Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Dorset Coastal Forum  
Keep Britain Tidy  
Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group  
Lyme Regis Town Council  
Marine Conservation Society  
National Farmers Union  
Outdoor Swimming Society  
River and Lake Swimming Association  
South West Water  
Surfers Against Sewage  
UK Beach Management Forum  
Visit England  
Water UK  
West Dorset District Council

## Responding to this consultation

We would welcome your views on the proposal to remove Lyme Regis Church Cliff Beach from the list of designated bathing waters. Please respond by 30 September 2015 to [bathingwater@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:bathingwater@defra.gsi.gov.uk) or to:

Bathing Water Team  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Area 3D Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1P 3JR

In your response please state:

- your view on the proposal;
- your reasons or evidence to support your view.



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

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