

## Item 6 - Report on Planning Applications

**Application Ref: NP/13/0557**

<b>Application Type</b>	Full
<b>Grid Ref:</b>	SM85560749
<b>Applicant</b>	PCNPA
<b>Agent</b>	Mr R Morgan, Atkins
<b>Proposal</b>	Replacement of concrete stepping stones with concrete box culvert
<b>Site Location</b>	Stepping Stones, Sandy Haven, Pembrokeshire, SA62 3DN
<b>Case Officer</b>	Caroline Phillips Bowen

**Summary**

This planning application is reported to members, as the application is being made by the National Park Authority.

Planning permission is sought for works to replace the existing concrete stepping stones across Sandy Haven Pill with concrete box culverts, which will form a new path surface for the low tide crossing. The stepping stones are part of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail between Herbrandston and Sandy Haven, and the new box culverts will be positioned on the same route.

No objections have been received to the proposal from statutory consultees or third parties. The application site falls within the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the Milford Haven Waterway Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Under Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 there is a legal requirement to consider whether a plan or project which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site is likely to have a significant effect on that site and, if so, to make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of its conservation objectives. In this context the term 'plan or project' includes development proposals or anything else that could result in an activity that could have implications for the integrity of a European site and the Natura 2000 network. The appropriate screening has been undertaken by the Authority's Ecologist, who has advised that there will be no likely significant effect on the features of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC arising from the project described in the planning application and supporting documentation.

The proposal has arisen out of concern in respect of the condition of the existing timber foot crossing and stepping stones across Sandy Haven Pill, which can be accessed at low tide. Maintenance of the existing concrete stones is hampered by the prevailing ground conditions and the frequency and cost of maintenance of the existing path is considered to be unsustainable. The nature of the stepping stones is such that they prevent access by all users of the National Trail, with young children, the less ambulant and cyclists not able to achieve safe access. It is considered that the installation of box culverts would provide a safer, more level surface, and

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would result in this section of the National Trail being more accessible to a wider range of users. Whilst more engineered in appearance, the culverts would have a sand textured, non-slip surface, which would blend appropriately with the surrounding landscape. The culverts will be set to the same alignment and at the same height as the existing stones, so as to allow boats to freely navigate at high tide.

The recommendation is, therefore, of approval, subject to Natural Resources Wales confirming the test of likely significant effect. Any grant of planning permission would be subject to conditions relating to time, accordance with submitted plans, and conditions recommended by statutory consultees.

### **Consultee Response**

**Natural Resources Wales:** No objection - Comments from Copy of letter to Atkins

**Natural Resources Wales:** Standard Advice

**St Ishmaels Community Council:** Suggestions made to increase safety and reduce maintenance costs

**PCNPA Access Officer -** As this is to facilitate a Coast Path improvement the Coast Path Officer will respond

### **Public Response**

A site notice was posted adjacent to the application site in accordance with statutory requirements. No third party responses have been received as a result of the consultation process.

### **Policies considered**

Please note that these policies can be viewed on the Policies page Pembrokehire Coast National Park website - <http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=549>

LDP Policy 01 - National Park Purposes and Duty

LDP Policy 07 - Countryside

LDP Policy 08 - Special Qualities

LDP Policy 11 - Protection of Biodiversity

LDP Policy 15 - Conservation of the Pembrokehire Coast National Park

LDP Policy 17 - Shore Based Facilities

LDP Policy 30 - Amenity

PPW5 Chapter 05 - Conserving and Improving Natural Heritage and the Coast

TAN 05 - Nature Conservation and Planning

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## TAN 12 - Design

### **Officer's Appraisal**

Sandy Haven Pill is a stretch of estuarine river channel located north of the main Haven Estuary, and the stepping stones are to be found bridging the channel between the coastal edge of Herbrandston, and Sandy Haven village. The site falls outside of any Centre Boundary as defined for the purposes of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan.

The coastal landscape at Sandy Haven Pill is mainly low lying sand deposits, and the crossing, which is submerged at high tide, has been used for over 20 years.

### **Current proposal**

Planning permission is sought for the removal of 23 stepping stones, replacing these with 7 precast concrete box culvert sections – each measuring 2.4 metres in width and 1.1 metres in depth – aligned to the same route and at the same height. The sections will be bedded on a thin layer of concrete over a base of rock (for stability), and will be bolted together. The box culverts have an opening of 2.1 metres in length by 0.8 metres deep, to allow the free flow of tidal waters. A sand textured external finish is proposed to improve safety and provide a more natural finish to be sympathetic to the existing setting.

### **Recent planning history**

There are no recent planning applications relating to this application site.

### **Constraints**

- Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation
- Milford Haven Waterway Site of Special Scientific Interest
- TAN 15 – Flood Zone
- Biodiversity
- Historic Landscape
- Safeguarding Zone
- Coast Path
- National Park Authority Foreshore

### **Main issues**

- Principle of development
- Access
- Biodiversity and impact on statutory designations
- Other material considerations.

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*Principle of development*

Whilst the Local Development Plan should be read as a whole, the following policies are considered to be of most relevance:

8 – Special Qualities. This policy seeks to protect the landscape characteristics that define the National Park, and is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape Character Assessment. The application site falls within Landscape Character Area 9 – Marloes Peninsula, with Sandy Haven Pill being a sheltered inlet falling within estuarine land along the northern shores of the Haven. The stepping stones are to the southern end of the inlet, and, whilst the site is more open at this point, there is clear evidence of a man made path at this location, and the replacement path would not be visually intrusive to the existing setting.

15 – Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Criterion b advises that development should not be insensitively or unsympathetically sited within the landscape, criterion c that development should not introduce or intensify a use which is incompatible with its location and/or under criterion d, development should harmonise with or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park. The proposed box culverts will be of greater visual impact than the stepping stones, however, the new path will enable the retention of the public path for amenity uses, which is compatible with the existing use of the site.

17 – Shore Based Facilities. This states that the development of shore based facilities, including those linked to proposals below mean low water, will be permitted within the developed area of the coast where compatible with adjacent uses. The proposal is to improve an existing coastal edge crossing, and would remain compatible with the amenity use as part of a National Trail route.

30 – Amenity. This states that development will not be permitted where, in criterion b, the development is of a scale incompatible with its surroundings and/or criterion d that the development is visually intrusive. Whilst the structure will have a greater visual impact than the stepping stones, it is not of a scale that would be considered intrusive, nor of an appearance which would be incompatible with the coastal character at this setting.

*Access*

The proposed development is primarily to improve pedestrian access at this section of the Coast Path. The existing stones and timber bridge have required increasing levels of maintenance, and the option of continuing to maintain the existing crossing is not considered to be a sustainable use of resources in the long term. The timber bridge element of the crossing – which lies to the western side of the Pill – will be retained and seven 1.5 metre wide box culverts will be positioned on the footprint of the stepping stones. The path will retain the same alignment, and will be of a more uniform level and have a wider, safer non-slip surface. This allows a wider range of people to

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use the crossing. Although the external finish will inevitably be more engineered in appearance, this is mitigated by a sand-textured finish which provides safer grip and is still sympathetic to the coastal setting.

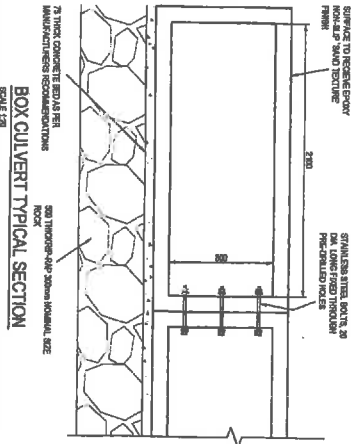
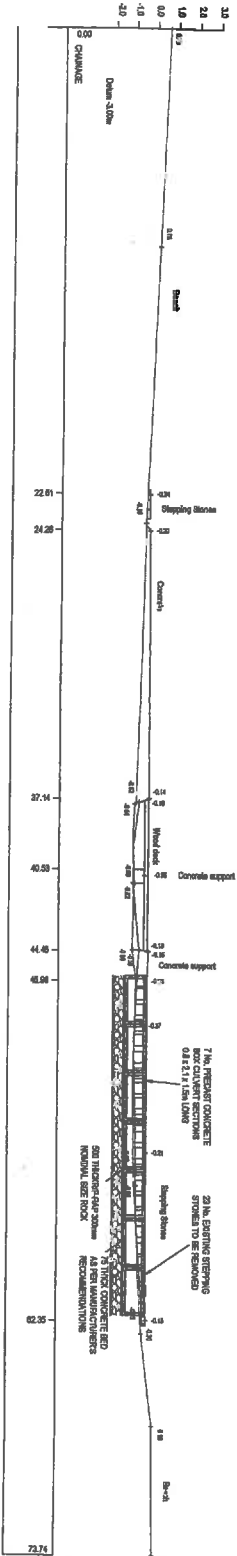
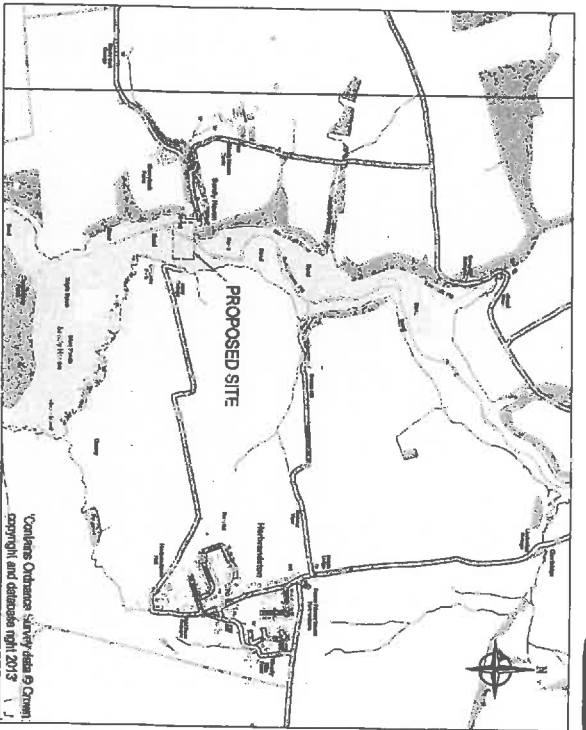
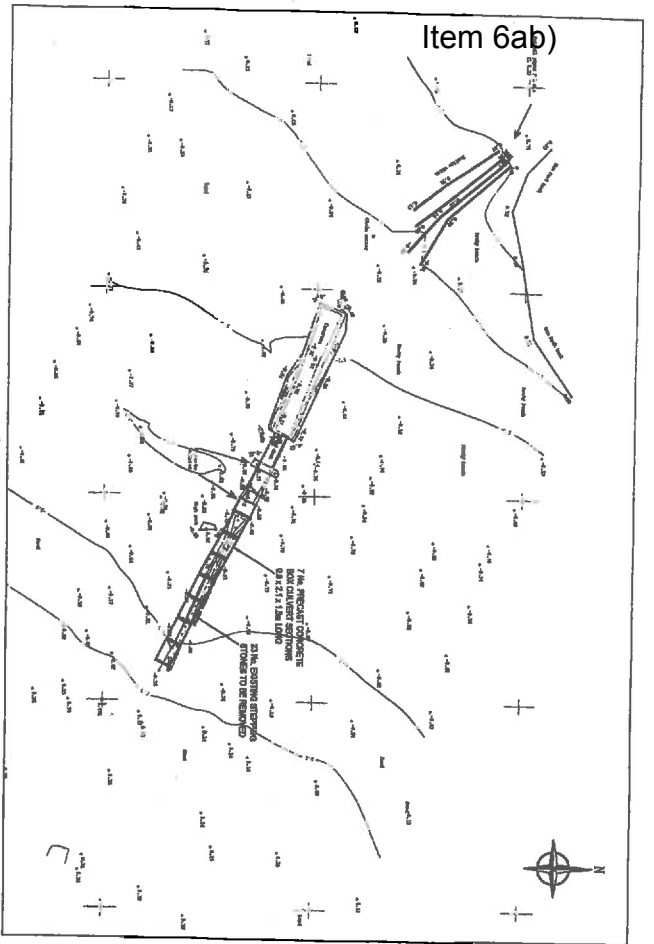
### *Biodiversity and impact on statutory designations*

The application site falls within the protected sites of the Milford Haven Waterway Site of Special Scientific Interest and Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation. Natural Resources Wales have been consulted on the proposal, and have advised that they have no objection to the proposal in respect of the impact of the development on the C2 Flood Zone and the Protected Sites.

Under Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 there is a legal requirement to consider whether a plan or project which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site is likely to have a significant effect on that site and, if so, to make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of its conservation objectives. In this context the term 'plan or project' includes development proposals or anything else that could result in an activity that could have implications for the integrity of a European site and the Natura 2000 network. The appropriate screening has been undertaken by the Authority's Ecologist, who has advised that there will be no likely significant effect on the features of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC arising from the project described in the planning application and supporting documentation.

### **Recommendation**

That the application be approved, subject to Natural Resources Wales confirming that the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the SAC and SSSI features. Any grant of planning permission would be subject to conditions relating to time, accordance with submitted plans, and conditions recommended by statutory consultees



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**ATKINS**

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Client	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority NP 13		
Project Ref	5082867.195 - RCF - P - 100		
Original Scale	Drawn	Checked	Authorised
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Checked	MM	MM	MM
Authorised	MM	MM	MM
Drawn	MM	MM	MM
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**PROJECT INFO**

Project Name: SANDY HAVEN COASTAL PATH

Client: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority NP 13

Project Ref: 5082867.195 - RCF - P - 100

Original Scale: Drawn, Checked, Authorised

AS/BRM: MM, MM, MM

Drawn: MM, Checked: MM, Authorised: MM

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Drawn: MM, Checked: MM, Authorised: MM