

REPORT OF HEAD OF RECREATION AND TOURISM

SUBJECT:

REQUEST FROM RNLI FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDRAISING ON BEACHES

Purpose of Report

To ask members to consider a request from RNLI to extend the period of time that they are allowed to fundraise on beaches owned by the National Park Authority:

Introduction/Background

With beaches where we either own the freehold of the beach-head or lease the foreshore we have always been quite cautious about permitting commercial and charitable activities. In the past for example, we have not allowed NT recruitment on our land. When the RNLI took over life-guarding in 2008 they asked if they could carry out recruitment and fundraising and provision of information on the beach heads and we took the proposal to the authority.

There was general support for this change from authority members and we agreed a limited amount of time on three beaches where we had landownership control and the RNLI also made arrangements with PCC for some of their beaches. We pointed out that on any of the beaches, if the fundraising effort lasted more than 28 days they may run into planning issues no matter who owned the land. Fundraising has taken place for the last three years.

Now the RNLI have contacted us to extend their activities. They have asked for the agreement of the NPA to put a maximum of two fundraisers on a beach entry point at Whitesands, Poppit and Newport between 9th April and 26th June (Weekends and bank holidays) and between 2nd July and 18th September. In the main season period fundraisers would be in place for a maximum of five days per week. They would like to have their staff 'courteously asking members of the public at beach entry points, who are interested in the RNLI, to do so with a regular donation through direct debit' and point out that they would not approach people already set up on the beach. They stress that 'although regular support is the principal goal, the fundraising team also deliver key beach safety messages 'Swim between the flags' and 'always swim at a life-guarded beach'' and they feel that their professional and tactful approach helps to raise awareness of the lifeguards, helps to make beaches safer and helps to offset the costs of life-guarding for partner organisations. They request an agreement for the next two years.

Comparisons

I have spoken to PCC on their experience. They greatly value the contribution of the RNLI and welcome the fundraising element but suggest that, rather than limit the number of days or beaches where the fundraising takes place, any concerns should

be addressed by setting an agreed way for the fundraisers to act – e.g. perhaps only talking to those who actually seek contact with them.

Options

- ❖ Remove or reduce consent for use of NPA beaches
- ❖ Keep status quo of limited number of days on limited beaches
- ❖ Allow additional days subject to an agreed protocol about the physical presence and the approach taken by the fundraisers.
- ❖ Agree to all or part of RNLI request – Perhaps focus on most ‘commercial beaches’ e.g. Whitesands,

Financial considerations

No cost either way to NPA but RNLI significantly subsidise the lifeguard service saving PCC funding.

Risk considerations

Risks-

- ❖ If we refuse; being seen to refuse RNLI who are doing an important job on a ‘voluntary’ basis – though lifeguarding is more of a grey area than the lifeboats.
- ❖ May also be seen to reduce opportunities for the provision of safety information, especially if there was an incident resulting from lack of information.
- ❖ If we agree – a concern that our beach users will feel that beaches are that bit more developed and commercialised and they will resent the approach – reducing enjoyment. No reports of formal complaints from present system but some anecdotal unease.

Compliance

Not a clear policy issue here, past policy has been to avoid commercialisation, Authority decision in 2008 and 9 to permit this activity to a limited extent. Extract of reports of that meeting, along with a copy of the original request, attached at Appendix 1

Human Rights/Equality impact issues

No evidence to suggest possible issues, although - as referred to in the final point under the 'Risk considerations' heading above - the right to a person's quiet enjoyment of the beach could be impinged upon. This could, however, be overcome by agreeing a protocol of working as referred to in the third point under the 'Options' heading above, together with regular monitoring of the situation.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

No implications

Welsh Language statement

Do not consider that this is an issue here.

Conclusion

RNLI have asked us for an agreement to extend their number of weeks where they can fundraise on three of the beach-heads which we own.

Recommendation

Seek an agreement about the character of the beach presence and the way in which fundraising is carried out and agree a limited extension on a trial basis for two years subject to that approach being followed. Monitor.

Background Documents

Anything published previously in relation to this report (e.g. previous reports to Authority/Committee, consultation reports, etc.)

- ❖ Face-to-Face (F2F) Beach Fundraising Campaign Brief 2008 – Original RNLI proposal
- ❖ NPA report from Recreation Management Officer outlining initial proposal April 2008
- ❖ Minutes of NPA April 2008 when authority agreed initial consent.
- ❖ Minutes of NPA 2009 when authority agreed to extend consent.

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Consultees: Chris Payne PCC



13. **RNLI Proposal to allow fundraising on beaches**

The Recreation Management Officer informed Members that Pembrokeshire County Council had, for many years, provided lifeguard cover on beaches in Pembrokeshire. However, for the 2008 season, they had entered a partnership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to provide this service. As the Authority owned the beach head and/or leased the foreshore of many of the beaches concerned, the RNLI had requested of it the necessary authorisation to provide an information service at these locations, coupled with a fundraising and membership recruitment opportunity. This would, of course, be linked to the lifeguard service provided on the beaches.

The Recreation Management Officer reminded Members that, in the past, the Authority had limited such activities in order to keep an undeveloped and un-commercial 'feel' to the beaches away from the main tourism centres of Tenby and Saundersfoot. However, he considered that, in this instance, there was sufficient reason to allow this request, and these reasons were set out in the report before Members that day. He therefore suggested that the RNLI be allowed to fundraise and recruit members on beaches under the Authority's management on a trial basis for two limited periods during the 2008 season.

Members considered that the provision of a lifeguard service on beaches in the County was an important factor, and believed that the RNLI's presence was beneficial to all parties concerned. The Chief Executive (National Park Officer) added that the request was sufficiently different not to prejudice possible requests from other organisations in the future.

It was **RESOLVED** that the request of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution to be able to provide an information service, coupled with a fundraising and membership recruitment opportunity on the Authority's beaches be acceded to for two limited periods during the 2008 summer season, and that the situation be reviewed thereafter.

Face-to-Face (F2F) Beach Fundraising Campaign

F2F fundraising on RNLI Lifeguarded beaches has been taking place in the South and South West of England for three years; it is a valuable and cost effective form of fundraising for the RNLI. Since the campaign started in 2004 more than £150,000 has been raised. The very nature of F2F recruitment means the public receive a valuable and completely unique, tailored and personable experience of the RNLI.

We pride ourselves on maintaining and continuing the RNLI's traditional approach of a 'soft ask' and therefore would never hard sell or approach people on the sand. Our teams work in pairs from small stands usually positioned at the entrance point to the beach. All recruiters are fully trained and very often have an affiliation with the RNLI.



2007 team training at RNLI HQ, Poole



Matt and John with typical stand layout

Although regular supporter recruitment is the principal goal, the F2F team also deliver key beach safety messages. For example "swim between the flags" in 2006 and "be seen to be beachwise" in 2007 are two recent messages which were communicated directly to beach users, both verbally and through handing out branded flags, leaflets, stickers. F2F teams even hand out free sachets of sun cream to promote sun safety! In addition, the team are raising awareness of the RNLI Lifeguards and our charity status directly with beach users.



Sarah handing out Beachwise flags and stickers



Lucy at Holywell

Teams will talk with the Lifeguards on duty at the start of the day and then communicate important safety information directly to the beach users i.e. if there is a strong rip current, offshore wind or hidden rocks etc at high tide. Thus the information is completely relevant to the member of public.

We conducted welcome calls to all new regular supporters following the 2007 campaign. The following comments are an insight into the experiences of our new regular supporters with the F2F beach teams:

"John was very friendly and approachable, happy to keep paying the £3 a month for the lifeguards."

Beach – Porthtowan F2F Recruiter – John Herbert

"My son surfs and we feel safe knowing that the RNLI are there"

Beach – Perranporth F2F Recruiter – Lucy Knight

"I live in the area and my grandchildren come to visit. I think the lifeguards do a good job"

Beach – Perranporth F2F Recruiter – Matt Linham

"I liked the sun screen, thought it was a good idea for being down on the beach and very useful. I did have to use the lifeguards that day as well so was even more pleased to support the RNLI"

Beach – Chapel Porth F2F Recruiter – Lucy Smith



Plan for 2008

As the RNLI Lifeguard service has expanded in recent years and will continue to do so the potential for F2F recruitment activity has grown and will continue to grow. It is crucial that we support our Lifeguards through fundraising and creating awareness of the excellent lifesaving work they do.

The outline plan for Pembrokeshire would be to visit the area during the following dates:

26th July – 7th August 2008

23rd August – 4th September 2008-02-06

I would envisage a total of eight staff working during these periods for the entire area. As our staff always work in pairs this means that only a maximum of four beaches would be covered at any one time. Teams only work four days per week, usually Saturday through until Tuesday. Though as you can appreciate we are somewhat governed by the weather. We plan to visit all our RNLI Lifeguarded beaches as far North as Poppit Sands down to Saundersfoot.

I do hope this has given you a good insight in to the great work our teams carry out each year. I am aware that historically fundraising by any charity in this manner has not been permitted, and I do wholeheartedly understand why this decision has in the past been made. However I do hope that you will consider allowing us to visit this summer, be it only on a trial basis, to enable us to support our Lifeguards and their vital lifesaving work.

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me, **Naomi Lush** (F2F Beach Campaign Manager) **on : 01202 662232 or naomi_lush@rnli.org.uk**