



# POOLE HARBOUR'S BIRD AND RECREATION INITIATIVE

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023 / 2024

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## 1. Introduction

The Local Planning authorities are working in partnership to deliver the Poole harbour recreation mitigation. [The Poole Harbour Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\) 2019- 2024](#) was prepared and adopted jointly between BCP and Dorset Councils and is advised by Natural England. Further information regarding the SPD is available on the [Dorset Council website](#).



## 2. Background

Under the SPD the Local Planning Authorities collect developer contributions from development within 5kms of Poole Harbour Special Protected Area (SPA) sites. These contributions are used to fund Poole Harbour recreation mitigation in the form of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) and Poole Harbour Infrastructure Projects (PHIPs).

In December 2020 a seasonal mitigation warden was appointed, followed shortly by the mitigation coordinator in January 2021. Subsequently in July 2021 the brand identity of Poole Harbour's Bird And Recreation Initiative (BARI) was established. In June 2022 the project recruited its first a full time Coastal engagement warden on a 23 month contract.

### 2.1 Structure and governance of Poole Harbour's Bird And Recreation Initiative (BARI)

#### Staff structure

The Urban Heath Partnership team leader manages the Mitigation Coordinator. The Mitigation Coordinator line manages the Coastal Engagement warden and a part time seasonal Dorset Dogs warden.

#### Governance

The BARI team are employees of Dorset Council and managed by Urban Heath Partnership. The Steering group that advises and supports the initiative is made up of representatives from:

- BCP Planning
- BCP Environment team
- BCP CIL planning and finance
- Dorset Council Planning
- Dorset Council Environment Team
- Dorset Council CIL planning and finance
- Natural England Marine Advice Team Lead
- UHP Team Leader



An agreed Terms of Reference governs the group (appendix 8.1)



## 2.2 The Recreation Zone

Poole Harbour mitigation is delivered within a specified recreation zone (Figure 1)

Delivery is split between the current Local Authority Areas 85% BCP and 15% Dorset Council.

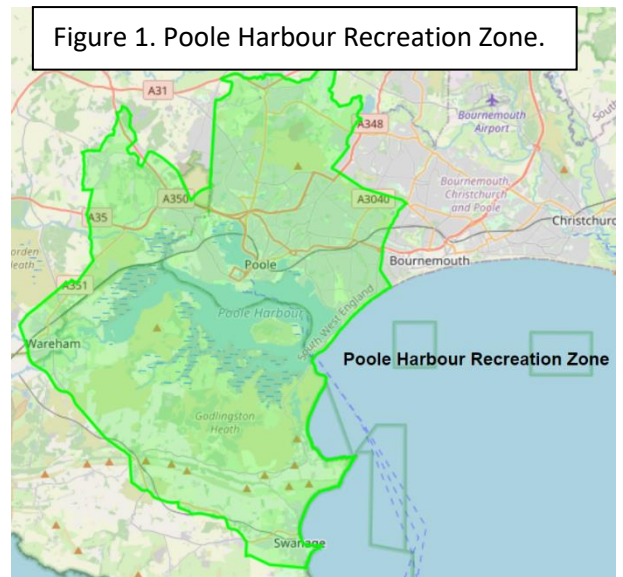
## 2.3 Work areas

### Coordination and Management

The key elements of coordination and management include

- Developing and delivering projects with stakeholders (PHIP and SAMM)
- Developing and delivering key messaging (SAMM)
- Managing the delivery of SAMM through wardening, social media and strategic engagement
- Monitoring and reporting the results of mitigation projects

The wardening element of SAMM is delivered and funded by the Local Planning Authorities along with PHIPs. More detail on PHIP and SAMM delivery in sections 5 and 6.



## 3. Plans and Strategies

- 3.1. [The Poole Harbour Supplementary Planning Document \(SPD\) 2019- 2024](#)
- 3.2. [Poole Harbour disturbance study. 2019. Footprint Ecology](#)
- 3.3. [Poole Harbour Aquatic Management Plan 2006 \(Amended 2011\)](#)
- 3.4. [Natural England, Site Improvement Plan. Natura 2000](#)

## 4. Finance

Dorset Council will collect SAMMs contributions through CIL and BCP Council collects the SAMMs through planning obligations. The budget is split between the two Unitary Councils from developer contributions collected from development within 5km of Poole Harbour SPA sites. Dorset Council contribute 15% plus hosting costs and BCP Council contribute 85%.

BARI applies for project funding via proforma and matrix scoring that is then evaluated by the steering group. Final approval is secured through the BCP infrastructure improvement board and Dorset Council senior management via infrastructure and delivery planning manager. Stakeholders are encouraged to make applications for funding through BARI for their own projects. Both go through a rigorous process to ensure that they prove good value and achieve high standards of mitigation.

### 4.1. Eligibility

Internal and external applications must meet the criteria set out in the pre-application form. This ensures that:

- Projects are within the Recreation Zone as stated in the SPD
- Manages impacts on waders and wildfowl from recreational disturbance

- Contributes towards improving our understanding of the impacts of this adverse effect either directly (monitoring and surveying) or indirectly (monitoring the success of the project outcomes).
- Meets one or more of the strategic objectives as laid out in the Natural England Site Improvement Plan.

#### 4.2. Budget

Core costs	Amount
Coastal Engagement Warden	£22,819
Dorset Dogs Engagement Warden	£6052
Co-ordinator role plus associated core costs	£56,044
Small resources budget	£3954
<b>Projects</b>	-
Engagement kit revamp	£258
Van and wrap	£24,748
UCP dog fencing	£7000
Lake Pier launch site improvement project	£35,641
DD partnership sign on Studland ferry was redesigned and secured for another year.	£1006
Website and illustrations	£5,468.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£162,990</b>

## 5. Engagement and Awareness Raising

### 5.1 Coastal Engagement Warden (CEW):

(For full report see Engagement annual delivery report appendix 8.2)

A total of 1462 people were engaged with and 82.3% of these engagements were positive.

24 events, 17 pop-ups, 102 patrols and 9 Wildlife Friendly Watersports sessions were delivered by the CEW.

Site visits are weighted based on footfall, birdlife present, and disturbance. The focus sites over the last year are Upton Country Park, Baiter Park, Turlin Moor, and Sandbanks Whitley Lake. Most notable of these is Turlin Moor which was patrolled more frequently over winter in the hopes of engaging with residents who are disturbing the area of saltmarsh planned to be zoned. Unfortunately, no engagements were recorded but a chance meeting with the Pioneer Minister has opened up community-based engagement opportunities. Moving forward this will include joining litter picks, bird walks, and meeting with weekly groups. This will be a positive step in building rapport with the community and increasing awareness of the birds.

Individual account reach across Facebook, Instagram, and X was 107,538. Switching focus from Instagram to Facebook as our main platform for online engagement has been a positive step in more targeted delivery as we have joined local groups for each recreation type.

A placement student was recruited during summer to help with patrols and events, input data into Survey123, and assist with resource development. The main outcome of this was the Hungry Bird Buffet game which has been a very successful engagement tool.

A highlight has been the continued development of our relationship with National Trust Studland. The Visitor team are very keen to have us host or support events on site and request a range of leaflets which they display at Knoll Beach.



(Hungry bird buffet game)

## 5.2 Engagement Kit revamp

The engagement kit was improved to keep the visuals fresh and improve how we can engage the public. Brighter colours are used such as an orange tablecloth which replaces the black for a more fun and friendly feel. Bar stools continue this as they offer a more friendly and open way of sitting compared to low chairs, making the warden more approachable. A Paddle Power Map display board has been created to show off the map, and BARI illustrations have been used to decorate. Miniature colouring pencils are handed out to children alongside the activity pack as a fun incentive.

A new engagement tool was developed, the Hungry Birds Buffet game. This is a plastic container filled with play sand, and silicone versions of bird food sources such as ragworm, shrimp, and crabs. Different shaped tongs represent the beaks of curlew, black-tailed godwit, and spoonbill. The game can be engaged with in multiple ways. It shows beak adaptations, feeding styles, and how food competition is reduced. Teenagers and young adults have been encouraged to have a go because it's a satisfying experience. As they play the game, users are engaged in appropriate messaging.



Pop-ups have been improved with a beach trolley which is used to move equipment on site, increasing accessibility when working alone. During pop-ups, it houses engagement materials, and has a sign attached to invite people to engage. This, coupled with the feather flag, scope, and a-frame, is designed to make pop-up's look like more of an official event whilst still being portable and encourage people's curiosity so they are more likely to engage.

### 5.3 Dorset Dogs Warden

*Full warden report October 2023 - March 2024 see appendix 8.3*

The role promotes the Coastwise Canines campaign and delivers on site engagement to champion positive behaviour for people with dogs on the coast and promote responsible dog ownership. The warden works across Poole Harbour engaging site visitors, dog owners, local communities and land managers. The DD project officer also provides consultation to guide our resources and engagement.



Recruitment started in July 2023 to secure a warden from September to ensure that full training was in place before the season start in October. We successfully recruited and trained the warden only for them to leave in October due to health issues. This left us with no time to recruit, no warden and already in October.

The Dorset Dogs team were able to offer a 1 day a week post using the part time Hengistbury Head warden. As this warden was already trained, knew the BARI team and our aims they were able to immediately get on site and engage with local dog walkers alongside the BARI warden covering the non heathland sites: Studland (inner harbour), Turlin Moor, Whitecliff Baiter park, Sandbanks (inner and outer harbour) Lake pier and Hamworthy park.

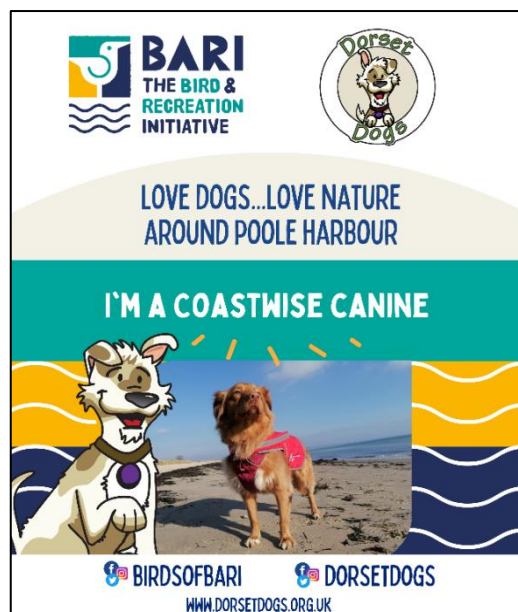
The DD team also offered heathland staff time on joint heath and coastal locations ensuring that these were also covered: Ham Common, Studland (outer harbour), Upton County Park, Frenches Farm, Lytchett heath.

- A total of 546 people were engaged with (382 dogs)
- 11 Pitstops
- 30 Park and Patrols
- Over 12000 interactions on social media





## 5.4 Studland ferry signage update



## 5.5 Wildlife Friendly Watersports sessions

After the success with running Wildlife Friendly Watersports (WFW) sessions that targeted watersports professionals offering to grow their 'green credentials' and offer their customers wildlife knowledge about the harbour, we redesigned the session pack to start targeting the public. A total of 5 sessions were delivered to 40 attendees. There has been further interest through the BARI inbox and a waiting list for future sessions.



(WFW watersports sessions with the public)

## 5.6 Paddle Power Map

The paddle power map continued to be a success into 2023/24. At the time of writing, the social media launch has reached 15,610 individual accounts. Maps are currently available at 21 sites and businesses and over 700 maps have been distributed including those given to members of the public.



### 5.7 Website

The website [www.birdsofbari.org.uk](http://www.birdsofbari.org.uk) launched in January 2024. The site focuses on land and water based disturbance, features a bird id guide and a funding page to signpost that funding for mitigation is available and what the criteria is. This has already proven successful with one new application being developed directly as a result of reading this page (see future projects DWT Brownsea causeway screen replacement).

Alongside the development of the website we commissioned illustrated assets by Vonik Design [Vonik Design | Illustration | Handlettering | Murals.](#)

The illustrations celebrate SPA bird species and their habitats as well as targeted recreational user groups (SUP, Dog walkers and nature watchers) and will enhance our promotional and engagement resources in line with our branding guidelines.



### 5.8. BBC Countryfile

November 2023 we were contacted by BBC Countryfile to participate in an episode about Poole Harbour. They focused on RSPB Arne who had told them of the work at Lake Pier and the Paddle power map that BARI had undertaken. They also contacted a member of Dorset Dogs about another feature who directed them to our work at Lake pier. This is a testament to our relationship building across organisations.

They chose to invite Land and Wave who featured in our 'about us' video on the website as a wildlife friendly watersports provider and we filmed at Lake pier talking about partnership working to mitigate waterbased disturbance to bird species and it ended with Land and Wave using the launch site to take the presenter paddleboarding.



### 5.9. Warrior agency PR campaign

Land and Wave invited us to be included in their PR campaign leading up to Christmas 2023. Off the back of this press release which was sent to national, regional and local press we were included

in an article by [Dorset Biz News](#) and a second on [SUP International](#). This has been a great alliance between BARI and Land and wave.

**5.10 Resort magazine article:** [Resort Dorset Magazine | Read Online](#)

We contributed to an article on Resort magazine with Dorset Coast Forum, Dorset Heath partnership and Chesil and Fleet Partnership.

## **6 Infrastructure Projects**

### **6.1 Paddlers map fixed signage**

*(This was submitted and approved by the Steering group in January 24, The project has not yet been funded due to BCP process issues which are being worked out.)*

The second phase of the Paddle Power map project is to install fixed signage at each launch point on the map. We have secured landowner permission from BCP and National Trust for 7 launch points and 2 landing sites so far. One sign is already on site at lake Pier as part of the improvement project there.

The aim is to submit an application for the signage costs by February 2024 and to have landowners contribute by having them manufactured within their design specifications and installing them.

We are also in discussion with Brownsea Island to have 2 installed at the launch sites.

[BARI paddleboard signs V4.pdf](#)

### **6.2 Studland Footpath Improvement and zoning**

*(Application was submitted and approved by the steering group in December 2023.*

*The project has not been funded due to BCP process issues which are being worked out.)*

The aim of this project is to upgrade the Northern boundary track to enable a circular walk route that avoids Brand's Bay. To install signage and interpretation to raise awareness of bird sensitive zones, discourage people from walking with dogs south of Jerry's Point, and to promote and interpret the new route. Plus we will work together to deliver visitor engagement and wardening staff and volunteers from National Trust, BARI and Dorset Dogs during the seasonal zoning.

With growing concerns about the impacts of recreational disturbance on wetland birds in the extremely sensitive intertidal zones on the Western edge of the peninsula and the Footprint Ecology Poole Harbour Disturbance Study 2019-20 identifying a significant increase in recreational dog walking as a principal threat to bird populations within the harbour, particularly overwintering birds, the National Trust have been attempting to influence the behaviour of dogwalkers visiting the site, to reduce this disturbance impact.

In 2019 a pilot 'heathland ambassadors' programme was established, with several local dogwalkers trained as volunteers to engage with other dogwalkers and explain the importance of keeping dogs on leads, and separate engagement days were run by National Trust staff from Brand's Bay hide. Although the work was curtailed with the Covid pandemic, the programme gave valuable insight into the issue and identified some key priorities to address for significant changes in dogwalker

behaviour to occur:

- Information and signage were needed to inform visitors of the importance of Brand's Bay for birds and the impacts of dogs, suggesting alternative routes and encouraging owners to keep dogs on leads.
- An attractive alternative route was needed, ideally one that allowed walkers to still enjoy at least some of the Poole Harbour shoreline, but which diverted walkers away from the more sensitive southern end of the bay.
- Ongoing face-to-face engagement was needed to continue to raise awareness and promote behavioural change and more responsible dog-management.

this will be our largest infrastructure project to date, delivering mitigation in an extremely sensitive part of the harbour where large numbers of birds feed and roost. The total project budget is £156,000 and they will be requesting £76,000 from the Poole Harbour mitigation fund to enable them to deliver this improvement

### 6.3 Electric Van purchase

In September 2023 the steering group approved the purchase of an electric van for the BARI project. A vehicle is an essential resource for the warden to deliver effective engagement as it is used for the extensive travel requirements for patrols and storing and transporting equipment required for pop-ups and events.

The van was procured and wrapped to match the website, so we could raise awareness of the project whilst driving around. The electric vehicle was seen as an important asset to promote both councils ambitions for carbon neutrality.

[https://www.instagram.com/reel/C5F5d4oo26L/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==](https://www.instagram.com/reel/C5F5d4oo26L/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==)



The warden receives regular positive feedback from people about the van, and it has encouraged people to come and talk to her as they are curious about what the project is. This has proven an effective engagement tool as well as its use getting the team to and from events, patrols, meetings and other events.

### 6.4 Lake Pier launch site improvement project.

Completed in November 2023.

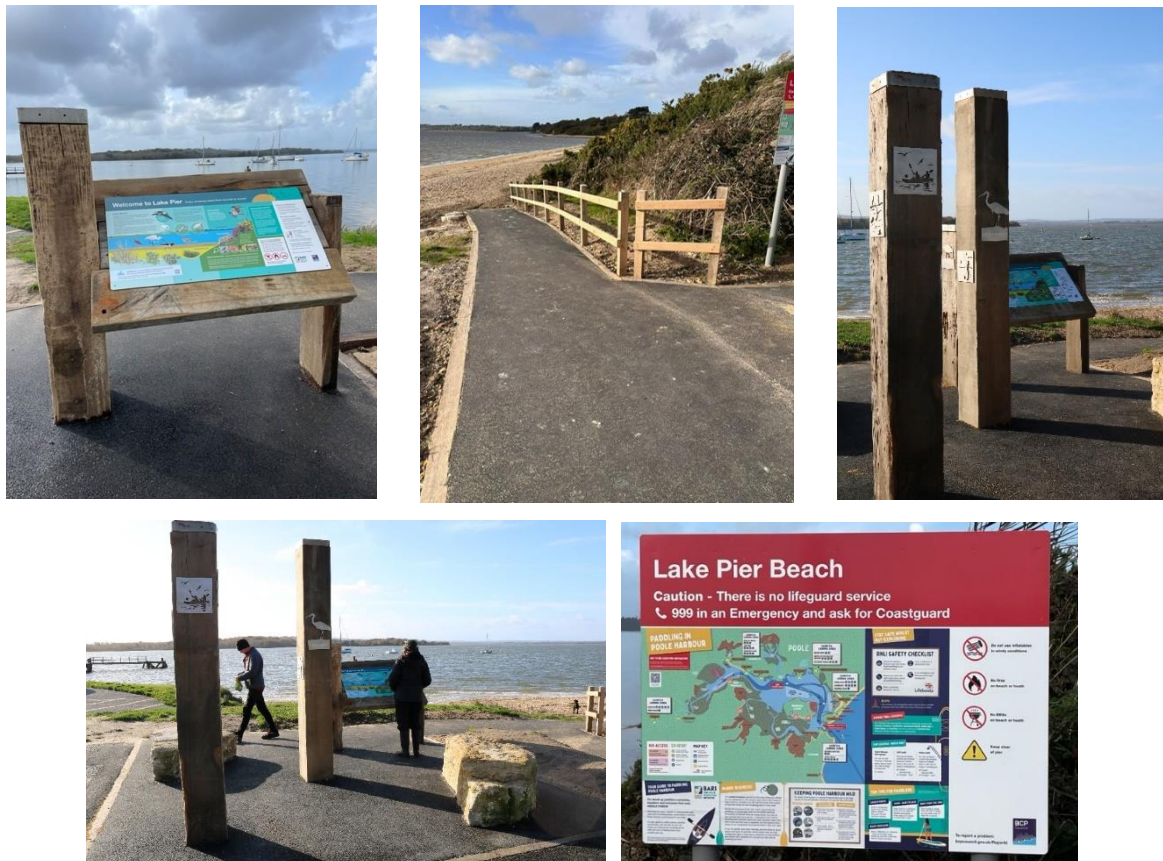


Improving and promoting this as a key launch area has consolidated access from the beach and taken traffic off more sensitive areas along this beachline, preventing disturbance at Arne and Lytchett Bay.

The signage on site was cluttered and outdated making this feel like an uncared for space and thus easy to dismiss as 'unimportant'. Working with BCP Council's Greenspace Development Team and Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management team we redeveloped the area using local and recycled materials, to make the space feel special for visitors. Communicating water safety, site information, the paddle power map and BARI messaging alongside beautiful bird and recreation metal sculptures fixed to recycled groyne timber structures and Purbeck stone seating area for people to appreciate the views.

By improving the launch area it will attract more people to launch from this site rather than the unofficial and more sensitive sites nearby such as Holes Bay and Lytchett bay. The Paddlers map installed at the launch area will give people direct information about where they can and can't paddle in the harbour as point of access and the interpretation will explain the reasons why recreation must be sensitive to nature. This will mitigate many unofficial landings on Arne and other bird sensitive areas particularly up the Wareham Channel.

The interpretation will educate visitors as to the high conservation value of the site and this could encourage a better appreciation of the site and code of conduct for on site behaviour.



(Top left: lake pier interpretation sign, top middle: improved footpath and launch site, Top right: recycled timber groynes with steel cut artwork depicting birds and recreation, Bottom left: the groynes, interpretation and stone seating area, bottom right: paddle power map installed on site)

## **6.5 Upton County Park Dog fencing.**

Approved in October 2023.

This is a small project with a big benefit! 350 metres of clipex fencing will be installed along the boundary between the Holes Bay and the park.

Upton Country Park is used by 650,000 people a year, including cyclists, dog walkers and families. As members of the public enjoy the views across Holes Bay, some feel that they want to go out and experience the Bay. This causes damage to the habitats and disturbance of the Shoreline bird populations. To prevent this damage and disturbance, it is proposed to install a fence along the shoreline from the Bird Hide to the existing Holes Bay bridge. The design will have a pedestrian gate at both ends to allow for maintenance as well as sections that will allow for mammal and bird trails. The fence will sit on the shoreward side of the shoreline vegetation reducing the visual impact on the Upton Country Park visitors. At some places where it is visible, the fence will have some interpretation.

This project was funded £7000 to install and maintain the zoning fence.

## **7 Current Project Planning and updates 2023/24**

### **7.1 Context and Aims**

Stakeholder mitigation projects are worked up in partnership, the aim is for the Initiative to support and match fund projects that applicants may not have been able to achieve without this extra financial support. The Coordinator works with these applicants to develop successful projects.

Some projects are led by BARI and developed in partnership with the land managers. This occurs when a priority and need has been identified and no existing plan is in place.

### **7.2 Engagement plan**

We will be reviewing the previous engagement plan and set new targets to engage more people and build relationships with partner organisations.

### **7.3 Turlin moor saltmarsh protection**

Working with BCP senior ranger and Lytchett Bay partnership we have been exploring ways to zone a particularly sensitive area of saltmarsh within Lytchett Bay on the Turlin moor boundary.

Previously a Redshank breeding site and currently a high tide roost for a small number of SPA species, this saltmarsh is infrequently accessed by dog walkers and anglers causing large amounts of

disturbance to species that use it. Quotes from contractors are being gathered, to zone it with a trench as well as exploring simpler alternatives as cordoning it off with simple interpretation.

Alongside this we have started to build links within the community working in partnership with Dorset Wildlife Trust's Wilder Communities Officer. We aim to deliver workshops and engagement activities within this community as part of the interpretation around the saltmarsh zoning.

This application will be submitted in January 2023.

#### **7.4 DWT Brownsea causeway screen replacement**

the Tern Hide on Brownsea island is one of the best places in the UK to get close-up views of breeding Sandwich and common terns (SPA Species).

Situated on The Lagoon, it brings visitors within a few feet of breeding sandwich and common terns and black-headed gulls and provides unrivalled access to nationally and internationally important wetland species, including: curlew sandpiper, little stint and little ringed plover; black-tailed godwit, shelduck, oystercatcher, avocet, redshank and dunlin; and overwintering merlin, peregrine and spoonbill. Access to the hide is now in desperate need of repair and upgrading as it is insufficient to support the number of visitors to Brownsea. While we have secured Access for All funding via National Landscapes, we are still seeking funds for further planned works, including the replacement of the dilapidated screening fence and improvements to the causeway.

Funding from BARI will enable people of all backgrounds and abilities to experience Britain's best bird hide without disturbing wildlife or damaging habitats. The project's completion will deliver a high-quality experience for visitors and enable the management of visitor flow to reduce impact on wildlife.

#### **7.5 Heath and Harbour Hullabaloo festival**

We will be working in partnership with Dorset Heath partnership and Dorset Dogs to deliver a family festival at Poole Park on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024. BARI will organise the 'Harbour' aspect of the festival.

#### **7.6 Winter bird sensitive area zoning bouys**

Written in the SPD, this winter zoning was the second phase to BARI strategy. 3 years in we are now known to land managers and many local residents so we will now be looking into which areas need zoning and how we can achieve this with bouys.

#### **7.7 Stakeholder engagement workshop**

We are 3 years on from our initial workshop and 2024/25 is time for gathering feedback from land managers and discussing potential future project. Eg Harbour wide trail discussed with NT and zoning bouys.

#### **7.8 Monitoring**

We will need to procure a consultant to do a recreational disturbance study for the winter 24/25 and update the visitor surveys to be updated from 2016.

## **8 Appendix**

### **8.1 [Terms of Reference](#)**

### **8.2 [Coastal Engagement warden report](#)**

### **8.3 [Dorset Dogs Warden report](#)**