



# Community Engagement Officer Report and Recommendations - Extension of the Beach Walk:

**In 2023 the Town Council helped fund TDC's project to install an accessible board walk on Viking Bay that spanned from the Harbour Street Car Park up to the bottom of the lift on the Main Sands.**

**This was agreed by Community Assets Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Minute 53. VIKING BAY ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT**

**iii) That the £25k Southern Water/TDC contribution be allocated to the TDC capital project budget.**

**iv) That TDC invoice BSPTC for the additional £16k contribution which will be allocated to TDC capital project budget.**

The costing for this at the time was around £250 per metre due to the hard wood used and the footings required on the sand. The Town Council Donated £16,000 towards this project.

## **Historic issues since 2024:**

It had previously been discussed at the Environmental meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024 minute 29. TAPS PROJECT WITH TDC that there had been some complaints regarding the water tap being used for other activities other than water bottle refill. It was discussed that the current shower on Viking Bay is not in the best place, so residents were opting to use the water tap to wash their feet instead.

It was agreed that "the Council is to make a recommendation to TDC to move the shower or install a boardwalk around the current shower to avoid feet washing in the new drinking water tap. The Civic and Support Officer is to contact Lisa Collingwood of Thanet District Council to discuss this matter"

At the next meeting of the Environmental Committee meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 this matter was then discussed again under minute 41. TAPS PROJECTS WITH TDC, where members received an update from the Civic & Support Officer that "TDC have responded to the C & S Officers query, that there are costs for a board walk extension, however they will add the boardwalk to their end of year review to investigate for next season."

Members than agreed the following "Members noted that the Town Council is not to give further funds to the board walk extension as this is an issue TDC have caused and will need to rectify."

Since this, the Community Engagement Officer and the Town Clerk have had several meetings with TDC regarding various projects, where TDC had stated there is little to no

budget for the board walk.

As we are now approaching summer 2026 with the shower still not accessible for wheelchair and buggy users, the Community Engagement Officer requested a further meeting with TDC Coastal and Public Realm Team to discuss making this space accessible for all beach users. It was discussed that due to the shower area not being attached to the beach walk, users would then have to walk across the sand again to reach the pathway. So, many beach goers were opting to use the water bottle fountain to wash off their bodies. This had caused issues for the fountain, with TDC having to close the tap to replace the buttons due to sand breaking the tap components. As this area is hidden behind beach huts, it had created unhygienic conditions, and we had received reports of antisocial behaviour. (Please refer to Appendix 1 and 2 for pictures)

**Solution:**

The Community Engagement Officer met with the Coastal Engineers on 30th January 2026 to discuss extending the board walk and potentially reducing closed off areas to decrease antisocial behaviour.

At this meeting the following was discussed:

The shortest distance would require moving some of the beach huts or business huts to gain access via the water fountain area, under the chalets. This would also open that area to make it easier for beach goers to access the bins and fountain and minimise some of the cleanliness issues under the stairs too. This is around 12M of board walk. It was also discussed that huts may be moved at the same time as other works TDC have on the beach to reduce costings.

**Officer Recommendation:**

That Council consider the proposal from TDC to extend the beach walk, move beach huts and business huts to reduce the hygiene and antisocial behaviour issues.

The Council still have £3400 left in Environmental Initiatives budget this year, that could be ringfenced and transferred to next year's budget to pay for the works (when TDC bill). There is also further unused budget of £2000 in Street Furniture that could be used if agreed by Full Council.

TDC have stated they have no budget for these works and so the issues will not get resolved without the input of the Town Council. By making this area accessible, reducing antisocial behaviour and hygiene issues, this project would sit well within the Town Council Clean, Safer and Kinder action plan initiatives.

**Proposal by TDC:**

TDC have now responded with the following for Council to consider:



**The cost for this will be -**

- To install 15 linear meters of boardwalk from the concourse to the concrete shower slab - £ 2500 + vat

- To relocate 2 x beach huts / deck chair will be £ 800 + vat

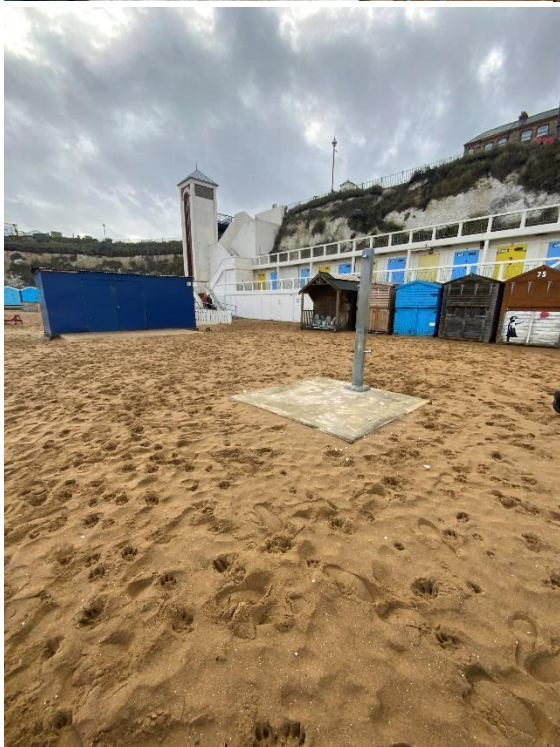
**Total:**

**£3300 +VAT**

**They have stated:**

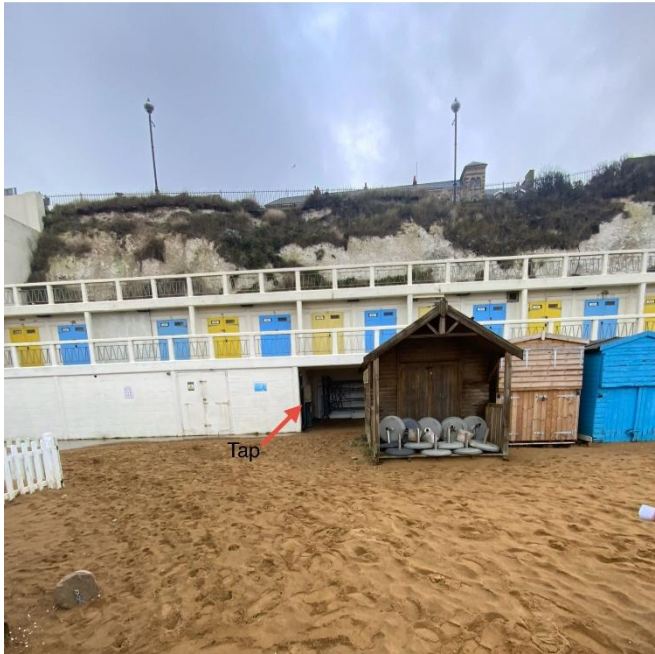
“We need to talk with both business owners to ensure they approve moving the deckchair hut and it's new location. If they are happy to do so then all is good. If they are not happy, we can leave the deckchairs hut where it is and move just the two beach huts to create space for the boardwalk. Either way, it is unlikely to impact cost as the main cost element of the move is in hiring the excavator/spreader bar which is priced at a day rate. Proposed construction time would be 2-3 working days and as it is a smaller job our contractor should be able to programme it in quite quickly.”

# Appendix 1

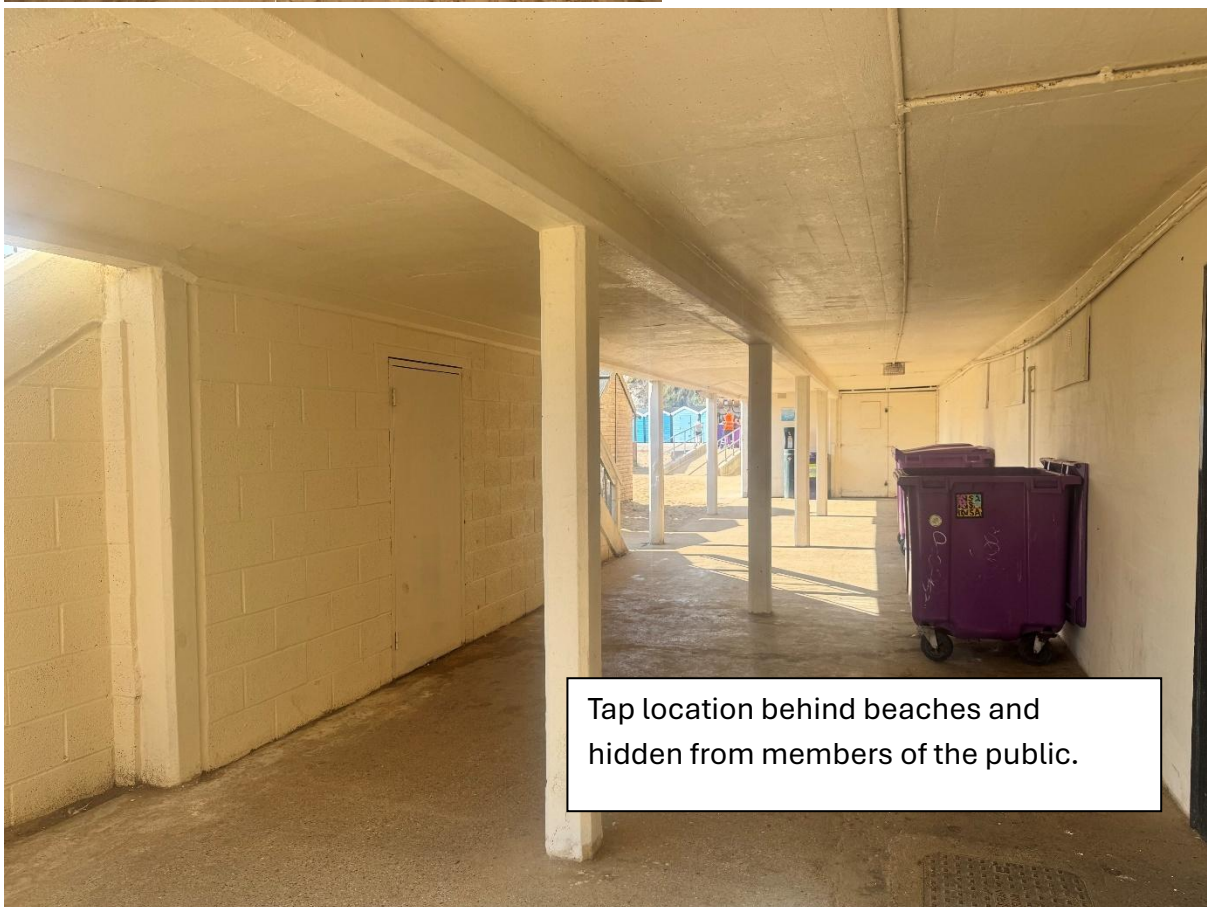


Shower location on sands.

## Appendix 2



Note: in the winter the huts are moved across making this area more visible. In the Summer this area is covered.



Tap location behind beaches and hidden from members of the public.

Sand covered Tap in summer 2025, before it was out of use due to damage.

