



## **Report of the Gower AONB Team Leader**

### **Gower AONB Partnership Steering Group – 21 September 2020**

## **Port Eynon and Horton – Update**

Port Eynon and Horton share a popular Blue Flag beach, though it is accessed by separate roads. Port Eynon retains its character as a traditional coastal village with a strong maritime heritage and contains cafes, a restaurant, beach shop and a public house. Horton is much smaller and quieter. There are extensive caravan and camping sites at both locations, as well as large numbers of holiday lets. During the summer both sites are very popular and occasionally at capacity. However, the tourist season is short and there is far less activity outside the school holiday period.

Swansea Council owns considerable property in the area, including the car parks and toilet blocks at both sites, and the slipway at Port Eynon. Borfa House Outdoor Activity Centre is owned and managed by the Council. Swansea Council also owns the foreshore beach and the dune system that extends from Port Eynon to Horton.

A feasibility study in 2018 by Swansea Council (with funding from the Swansea Rural Development Partnership) started a comprehensive assessment of the foreshore and the management of the area for visitors.

The feasibility study was commissioned by Swansea Council following a recognition that there was a need to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the foreshore and the management of the area for visitors. The study involved a mixture of: community events; meetings with organisations and stakeholders; a survey of visitors; liaison with officers in Swansea Council and the local Councillor. The work also included a photographic and observational survey to understand how the resort operated during peak periods. Several issues emerged from these data gathering exercises; these were grouped into 20 recommendations for Port Eynon and 7 for Horton.

In summary, Port Eynon appears neglected and under-resourced. The village is under considerable pressure during the height of the season and the main issues relate to:

- the management of the carpark;
- the poor quality of the toilets;
- traffic congestion and interaction with pedestrians;
- boat launching;
- the prolific number of signs on the seafront
- the road layout near the disabled car parking bays; and
- the quality of the litter bins.

The report also recommended further work to develop proposals to replace the existing toilet block with a modern multi-functional centre which would cater for visitors and provide facilities for residents. The proposed new centre could solve many of the main issues identified at Port Eynon, notably those relating to the management of the car park, the condition of the toilet and boat launching procedures on the slipway.

The recommendations for Horton relate to:

- car parking;
- the condition of the toilet block;
- pedestrian access to the beach; and
- the condition of boardwalks and the interpretation of the dunes.

The key issues and opportunities for development work are presented in **Figure 1**.

Going forward, the Gower AONB Partnership and Swansea Council are developing the report recommendations. The Sustainable Development Fund Panel has awarded a grant that enables Swansea Council to commission the design of a scheme of detailed, costed improvements to visitor facilities and public realm infrastructure in the short term; the commission would also develop the medium-term capital investment recommendation for a new beach/community centre building.

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