



## Item 13(a) - Paper K

# Motion with Written Notice Sandown Boating Lake as an Asset of Community Value

**Date** 28 July 2025

**Proposed by** Cllr Ian Boyd

### 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1. That Sandown Town Council submits an official nomination of Asset of Community Value to cover the boating lake and its margins.

### 2. LEGISLATION

- 2.1. **The Localism Act 2011 (c.20 Part 5 Chpt 3)**<sup>1</sup> introduces a right for local groups to nominate land and buildings (assets) for listing by the Council as an asset of community value. Once an asset is listed as being of community value there is an obligation on the owner of the asset to allow the community the opportunity to acquire the asset for its use should the owner choose to dispose of it.
- 2.2. **The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012** are the statutory instrument (delegated legislation) governing the rights<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Sandown Boating Lake, although privately owned, is an open-access community landmark, allowing anyone to enjoy it, whether by feeding the ducks, birdwatching, or simply appreciating its spectacle. Completed in 1930, the lake has been a prominent amenity and much-loved local destination for almost a century, woven into the cultural and social life of the town.
- 3.2. In recent years, episodes of critically low summer water levels (notably 2020 and 2025) have caused widespread alarm and concern across not only the local community but the entire Isle of Wight. In response, significant crowdfunding campaigns and hands-on emergency site management effort has been initiated and sustained by local volunteers and businesses, motivated and mobilised by the threats to animal welfare. The most recent community effort is documented on this Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/656901148252213>
- 3.3. These campaigns have been highly visible, attracting widespread social media attention and press coverage. As a direct result, visitors have travelled to Sandown from London, Portsmouth, and Southampton to support the cause and witness the lake firsthand, with many planning their first-ever visits to the Isle of Wight after being inspired by the social media group.

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<sup>1</sup> [Localism Act 2011](#)

<sup>2</sup> [The Assets of Community Value \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

- 3.4. Sandown faces significant challenges to its social and economic conditions. The prominence of derelict hotels and boarded-up or burnt-out properties along the seafront has given the impression that little could be done to revitalise the area. From the moment the campaigns to protect and restore the lake began, this perception changed. The initiative has visibly restored pride among local residents and businesses, with many expressing renewed confidence in Sandown and commenting on how proud they are to be part of the town. The health and condition of the lake is a perennial issue of public and community concern as evidenced by social media coverage and continuing questions over the long-term management and care of the site under conditions of accelerating climate stress.
- 3.5. Local action and campaigns have attracted enormous support and affection and provide the clearest evidence that the lake is an important asset that consistently furthers social wellbeing, social interest and social engagement in the life of the community. The lake's reach and emotional significance continue to grow; recently, a supporter shared that she will be visiting the Isle of Wight for the first time after her wedding specifically to have her wedding photographs taken at the lake. This story highlights the deep, personal connection people feel to the site.
- 3.6. Situated between the popular public spaces of Sandham Gardens and Browns, Sandown Boating Lake serves as a focal point for recreation, nature appreciation, and social interaction. It is visited year-round by a broad demographic, from families and school groups to tourists seeking an authentic connection with Sandown's history and natural beauty.
- 3.7. A free wildlife walk guide featuring the lake was published in 2023 and is available from the local library.
- 3.8. Sandown Boating Lake is not just a physical feature of the town; it is a living symbol of collective pride, care, and connection. Its history, environmental significance, and the exceptional levels of engagement it inspires-locally and further afield, make it a clear and deserving candidate for designation as an Asset of Community Value.



**Proposed boundary of Sandown Boating Lake Asset of Community Value.**

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no immediate Financial Implications to Sandown Boating Lake as an Asset of Community Value.
- 4.2. This may need to be considered should the asset become available to purchase, but insufficient information is available at this time.

#### **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY, CRIME AND DISORDER**

- 5.1. There are no specific implications. Council will still be required to adhere to its duties under this legislation.

#### **6. BIODIVERSITY**

- 6.1. The Town Council has a duty to consider biodiversity.
- 6.2. Local volunteers also undertake annual winter and summer bird surveys of the lake (as it is a wetland habitat of county significance) and regularly use the lake and its surrounding public spaces for other community-led biodiversity recording projects. There is also work underway to extend the existing Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) 262, which runs up to the edge of the lake from the floodplain wetlands just inland.
- 6.3. A Records of rare and protected species within 500m of Sandown Canoe Lake can be found in APPENDIX 1

#### **7. RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1. THAT Sandown Town Council submits an official nomination of Asset of Community Value to cover the boating lake and its margins.

#### **8. APPENDIX**

- 8.1. Appendix 1 - A Records of rare and protected species within 500m of Sandown Canoe Lake