

# Beach Huts

## 2018



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## 1. Introduction

The aim is to update beach hut owners on the various issues that have evolved over the past few years. It only applies to beach huts on council land at:

Herne Bay - Spa Esplanade – on the shingle beach  
Marine Crescent – Whitstable – on the grass slopes  
Long Rock – Whitstable – on the grass slopes  
Tankerton West and East – Whitstable

The council's contact for beach hut owners is Foreshore Services, their contact details are:

Matthew Young  
Foreshore Services Manager  
Whitstable Harbour Offices  
Whitstable  
Kent CT5 1AB  
01227 266 719  
beachhuts@canterbury.gov.uk

## 2. Definition of a beach hut

A beach hut means the beach hut (including any wooden base and approved adaptations) owned by the Tenant and constructed on the site on or adjacent to the beach to be used for leisure purposes only.

## 3. Ownership

There are 650 privately owned beach huts on council land, the council owns the land and acts as a landlord. The relationship between the council and the individual beach hut owner is a Tenancy agreement that can be rolled over year to year or assigned (transferred) to a new beach hut owner if the beach hut is sold.

## 4. Partnership working – Beach Hut Owners' Association

The council's Foreshore staff meets with the Tankerton and Herne Bay Beach Hut Owners' Associations representatives at regular intervals to deal with operational beach hut issues that arise. It is very much a partnership approach.

For instance, the Beach Hut Owners' Association representatives help with the beach hut condition survey, undertake 'Adopt a Beach project' and organise community events in their specific areas.

The Beach Hut Owners' Association contact details are:

- [Link to Herne Bay Beach Hut Owners' Association](#)
- [Link to Tankerton Bay Beach Hut Owners' Association](#)

## 5. Status of the land

The council owns the land that the beach huts are located on. The land is amenity public open space listed in the Open Space Strategy and is proposed to continue as such in the revised Open Space Strategy 2014 to 2019.

The land is considered to be protected existing open space – Local Plan Policy C24.

In the new Local Plan, currently being drafted, the areas are proposed to remain as protected existing open space.

## 6. Benefits of beach huts

Beach huts are a traditional English seaside leisure amenity. They help to bring vibrancy to the seaside towns, are colourful, with a cultural community and help to develop a sense of place and community in the area. They have local economic benefits by attracting footfall to the coastal towns. In addition many beach hut owners play an active part in local clubs and groups.



## 7. Beach hut specifications

There are approved beach hut design specifications: one in Herne Bay.

- [Link Herne Bay beach hut specification](#)

and two designs in Whitstable

- [Link Whitstable veranda specification](#)
- [Link Whitstable – non veranda specification](#)

## 8. Adaptations

Adaptations to beach huts are allowed. However, they need to be applied for, approved in writing and are charged on a fee per square metre rate each year.

The square metre rate is based on the standard beach hut rate for that area, divided by the approved beach hut size; Herne Bay beach huts are 5.39m<sup>2</sup> whilst both the approved Tankerton beach huts are 9m<sup>2</sup>.

- [Link beach hut adaptations form](#)

## 9. Access to a beach hut

However, some adaptations may be required for access purposes. Access into a beach hut is generally from steps at Tankerton, Long Rock and Marine Crescent whilst at Herne Bay direct from the shingle beach.

### **Mobility Access**

Temporary access improvements due to mobility problems can be applied for, free of charge and subject to proof of need: either personal access issues for the owner or a close relative.

The council have created guidance on suitable adaptations that improve access to the beach huts.

Once the temporary access is approved in writing by the council it can be installed.

Once the temporary access is no longer required it has to be removed.

There are no administration or adaptation fee metre<sup>2</sup> charged for mobility access which has been approved in writing.

- [Link to access guidance form](#)

### **Access due to landform**

As mentioned Tankerton, Long Rock and Marine Crescent beach huts are on slopes and the landform may require adaptations to access the beach hut rather than the traditional steps. These need to be applied for in writing and are dealt with on a one to one basis.

Written approval from the council is required prior to the installation of the 'access due to land form.'

There are no administration or adaptation fees charged for access due to landform which has been approved in writing.

- [Link to access application form](#)

## 10. Beach hut tenancy agreement

The 650 privately owned beach huts on council land have a tenancy agreement with the council, the council acts as the landlord. The beach hut owner pays an annual rent to the council for the site on which their beach hut sits. The owner is required to maintain public liability insurance and keep their beach hut in good order.

The beach hut tenancy can be rolled over from year to year until ended by notice.

The beach hut owner can sell their beach hut or transfer their beach hut as they wish, they can also 'assign the tenancy' for an assignment administration fee. This means that the new owner has the same tenancy rights to be on the site.

## 11. Subletting

The standard tenancy document does not allow beach hut owners to 'sublet or advertise to sublet' their beach hut.

However if a beach hut owner wishes to sublet their beach hut they have the option of agreeing to do so. They need to apply in writing and pay an increase in the rent of 20%. They need to have written consent from the council by way of new tenancy that allows subletting prior to subletting or advertising the subletting of their beach hut.

If you are interested in subletting your beach hut please contact Foreshore Services.

## 12. Change of details

If the beach hut owner changes address they need to inform the council.

- [Links to change of details form](#)

There is an administration fee for the production of a new tenancy.

### 13. How to sell a beach hut

The process from the 1 April 2014 has been updated but is summarised below and guidance notes will be available.

There are three documents the council requires to be completed to complete an assignment of a beach hut site tenancy:

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Document 1 of</b> | <b><a href="#">Request for the Assignment of a Beach Hut Site Tenancy</a></b><br>This asks the council for permission to assign (transfer) the tenancy to the new tenant. |
| <b>Document 2 of</b> | <b>Licence to Assign the Beach Hut Site Tenancy</b><br>This gives permission to assign the tenancy and gives you two months to complete the assignment.                   |
| <b>Document 3 of</b> | <b>Notification of an Assignment</b><br>This tells the council that the assignment has been completed and that there is now a new tenant of the beach hut site.           |

There are also two payments required:

**Assignment administration fee** – payable by the outgoing tenant £121.

**Tenancy registration fee** – payable by the new tenant £52.

### 14. How to buy a beach hut

As previously mentioned, beach huts are privately owned. Most are advertised on national beach hut websites, via local agencies (including the local beach hut owners associations) or privately.

### 15. Fees and charges

In 2013 the council undertook a review of fees and charges that included benchmarking with similar areas, several valuations and decided to reset beach hut fees and charges at a market rent. The market rent was phased in over two years for 'resident and non-resident' category beach hut owners and over four years for 'long term discount' category beach hut owners. There is now one fee for each site.

<b>West Beach, Herne Bay</b>	<b>2018/19 Fee £</b>
West Beach site fee	469.00
Assignment administration fee	121.00
Adaptation fee (West Beach, Herne Bay per square metre)	88.00
Tenancy administration fee	52.00
<i>Option to sublet -20% of market rent</i>	95.00
<b>Tankerton</b>	
Tankerton site fee	662.00
Assignment administration fee	121.00
Adaptation fee (Tankerton) per square metre	74.00
Tenancy administration fee	52.00
<i>Option to sublet -20% of market rent</i>	133.00

To ensure that the market rent for beach huts is set fairly, the Council sought an independent external evaluation from DVS (Property Services arm of the Valuation Office Agency), who operate on behalf of HM Customs and Revenue. This process ensured that the Council had followed and refreshed a previous evaluation that was completed in 2013.

The Council also held formal consultation with representatives from both Beach Hut Associations in October 2017. It was agreed that the approach the Council was taking was fair and reasonable, continuing the agreed outcome from the previous 4 year framework of beach hut fees for the period 2014 – 2017. That agreement was the October RPI plus 1%.

Beach hut site fees and charges are reviewed annually within the council budget setting process, which involves consultation.

The fees and charges are approved in February each year for implementation from the following April, next financial year (April to March).



## 16. Payment options

The council invoices the beach hut owner each April, at the start of the period April to 31 March.

The beach hut owner can either pay in a one off instalment or agree a payment plan – up to ten payments to be completed by 31 January. To arrange a payment plan please contact Steve Haddock on 01227 862 000.

Failure to pay will put the beach hut tenancy at risk.

## 17. Non Domestic National Rates

The 2018 rateable value for Beach Hut sites has been set by the Valuation Office at £940 (Tankerton/Marine Crescent/Long Rock) and £790 (Herne Bay). The rates payable for beach huts 2018/19 are:

### Tankerton/Long Rock/Marine Crescent

Liability	£344.38
<b>Total amount payable without Small Business Rates Relief</b>	<b>£344.38</b>
Small Business Rates Relief 100% until 31 March 2018	-£344.38
<b>Total amount payable with Small Business Rates Relief</b>	<b>£0.</b>

### Herne Bay

Liability	£200.89
<b>Total amount payable without Small Business Rates Relief</b>	<b>£200.89</b>
Small Business Rates Relief 100% until 31 March 2018	-£200.89
<b>Total amount payable with Small Business Rates Relief</b>	<b>£0.</b>

If your bill does not show a 100% SBRR reduction, and you do not pay Business Rates anywhere else, then you should request a SBRR form. Once SBRR is applied you do not need reapply, but you would need to inform the council if your circumstances change.

To obtain the discount form you can apply online  
[canterbury.gov.uk/businessrates](http://canterbury.gov.uk/businessrates)

## 18. Insurance

Each beach hut owner is required within the tenancy agreement to maintain public liability insurance. The council can request a copy of the insurance once per year.

We advise you to contact your beach hut association who may be able to obtain group cover or your home insurance company as you may be able to add the beach hut to your home insurance policy.

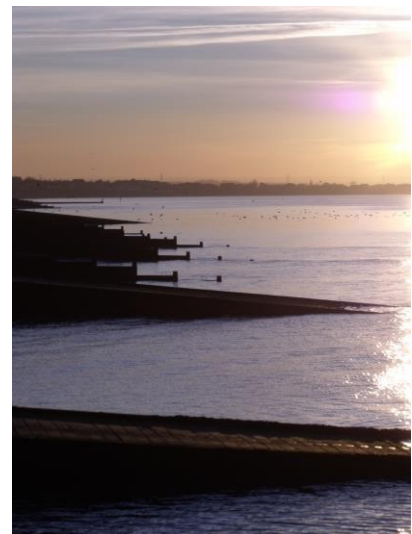
## 19. Management of beach hut areas

The Foreshore Service manages the beach huts for the council and they liaise closely with the Contracts Section of the council who manage the grounds maintenance and waste contracts for the public open space that surrounds the beach huts.

- Foreshore undertake a condition survey of beach huts twice per year – they can request repairs if required
- Invoices the annual rent and any adaptations fees
- Deals with a range of enquiries
- Lifeguard areas and water safety

Foreshore Services are the point of call for many issues on the seafront and sign post enquiries to the required department, police or other agencies and partners as required depending upon the nature of the enquiry.

Foreshore Services also manages the public amenities along the whole coastline such as water stand pipes, showers, lifeguarding etc.



## 20. Reporting incidents

If you have a problem it is best to report incidents to the Foreshore Office who can then forward onto the right organisation to deal with the issue.

Incidents could be damage or vandalism, anti-social behaviour or environmental issues etc. contact the Police on 101.

Alternatively if a crime is in progress please contact the Police on 999.

## 21. Vehicular access to the site

Your Tenancy does not give you permission to park on the promenade or grass slope. Vehicular access for erecting/moving or maintenance of huts can be gained from the Foreshore Office. Please contact the office prior to requiring access and be mindful that busy periods of the day are not the best times to complete this type of work.

**This document does not apply to beach hut owners in Whitstable on non-council owned land at Long Beach, West Beach and Island Beach plus in the Whitstable Harbour.**

