

# Lyme Regis Cobb Stabilisation Scheme Engagement Event Summary



**Organisations working together with communities to protect, enhance and promote our coast and surrounding seas.**

# Lyme Regis Cobb Stabilisation Scheme

Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) have been commissioned by Dorset Council to lead on stakeholder and public engagement for the Lyme Regis Cobb Stabilisation Scheme, which itself is part of Phase V of the Lyme Regis Environmental Improvements Scheme.

While DCF lead the engagement activities, Dorset Council and its project partners are supporting marketing efforts and are providing technical and official information.

## Aims of engagement

- To deliver clear communication and engagement for the scheme.
- To inform residents, businesses and visitors about why the scheme is necessary.
- To explain how the scheme will be delivered and what impacts it may have.

Please visit the project webpage on DCFs Have Your Say site,

<https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/lyme-regis-cobb-stabilisation-scheme> to find out more about previous public engagement.

In November 2025 on behalf of Dorset Council, Dorset Coast Forum held a public drop-in event that gave an update on the progress of the scheme and shared details of a current proposed option. The event also allowed the public to voice their views on the option presented as well as their thoughts on funding options to improve the Cobb infrastructure and public realm.

This document will summarise the findings of the event, as well as the promotion of the event itself.

The event coincided with emergency repair works on a large void at the toe of the outer wall, providing the project team with an opportunity to explain the necessity of the repairs and highlight the work that had been completed.





# Drop In Event - 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025

The drop in event took place between 12-6pm on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at the Jubilee Pavilion on Lyme Regis Marine Parade.

The drop in was attended by representatives of Dorset Council's Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) and Harbours Team, Lyme Regis Harbour Consultative Committee and members of Dorset Coast Forum. The local MP Edward Morello and Dorset Cllrs also visited the event to hear more about the scheme.



The event saw a strong turnout, with 202 attendees across the afternoon—over 140 of whom arrived within the first two hours. While most visitors were aware of the event through prior publicity, the Jubilee Pavilion's prominent position along Marine Parade also helped draw in significant passing footfall. Its location overlooking the Cobb provided an ideal setting for explaining the scheme's objectives and challenges.

The aims of the event were twofold: to raise awareness among those previously unfamiliar with the scheme, and to provide updates to those who had been following its progress. The project team also sought insights into how people currently use the Cobb and what improvements they might like to see funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid being developed.

Contact details were collected from attendees wishing to join the project mailing list, and visitors were encouraged to sign up to the Dorset Coast Forum mailing list for updates on this and other local coastal projects.

The information provided to event attendees included:

- the design and visualisations of the current possible option
- what previous options have been assessed by the project team and the reasoning as to why they had been rejected, thus highlighting the complexity of the scheme
- viewpoints and considerations from various heritage and environmental bodies, notably Historic England and Natural England
- the current funding status for the stabilisation scheme

All of the information and posters presented at the event can be found on the project webpage: <https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/lyme-regis-cobb-stabilisation-scheme>



As well as the information posters, videos showing the void repairs taking place and drone footage of the Cobb in a storm were playing on a screen and these were often referred to by the public and project team in discussions. A timeline was produced referring to the Cobbs origins and historical stabilisation that had taken place, with special mention to the Great Gale of 1824.

Event Images

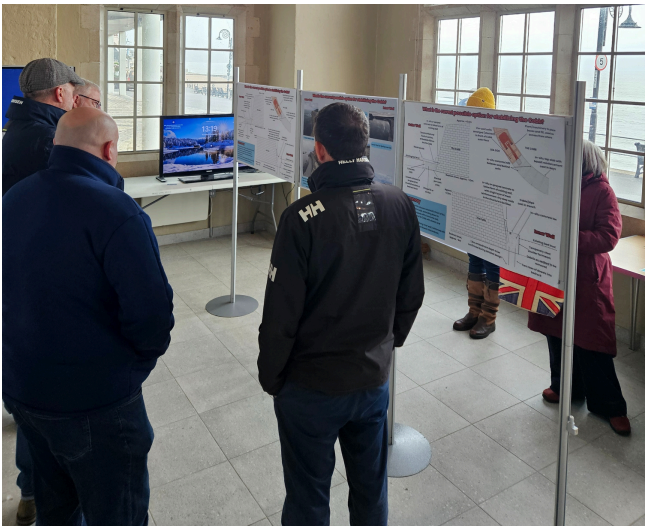


Photo credits: Lyme Regis Town Council, This is Lyme Regis Facebook page and Dorset Coast Forum.



# Survey

For the engagement event a survey was created so that attendees had a chance to provide feedback and share their thoughts with the project team currently developing options for improving and stabilising the Cobb. Dorset Coast Forum are also preparing an application for Heritage Lottery Funding. This aims to improve the infrastructure of the Cobb, whilst telling the story of the Cobb's importance, its contribution to Lyme Regis as a fishing village and how it has featured throughout history. The survey asked questions to hear the communities views on how to support this application.

Originally, the project team intended to run both an online and paper version of the survey. However, it was decided that those who had not attended the engagement event might not have enough information to complete the survey appropriately. As a result, the survey was only made available on the day of the event, with attendees able to take copies away, complete them, and return them to the Harbour Office.

This decision understandably caused some disappointment, and going forward the aim will be to provide both in-person and online engagement opportunities so that people do not miss out on receiving the necessary information. All materials displayed at the event were later uploaded to the project webpage for wider access.

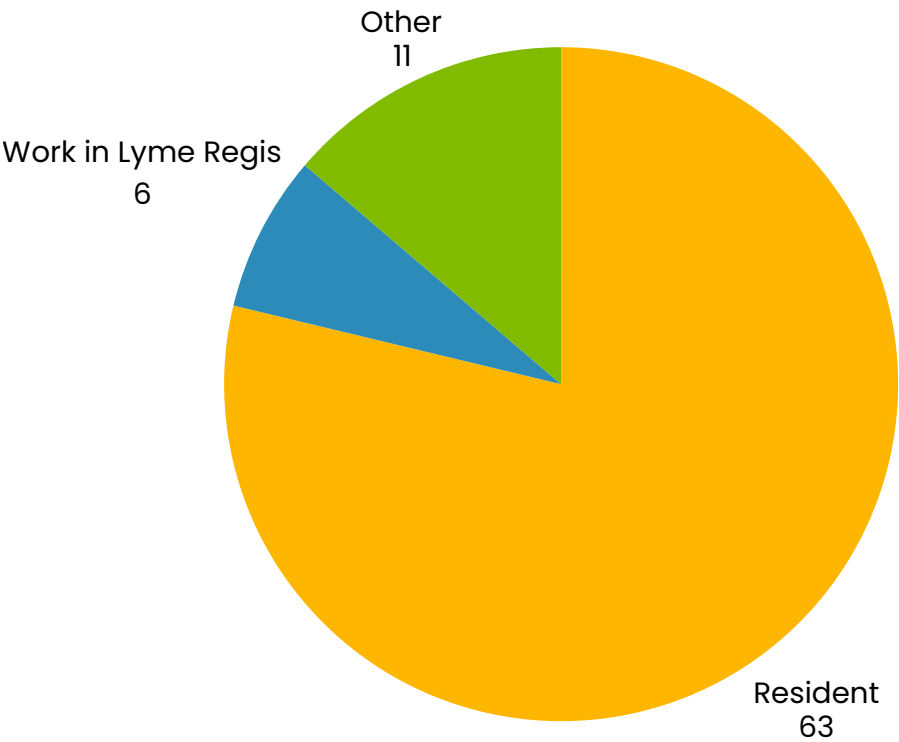
The survey was filled in by 81 separate people, with the vast majority of these being filled out at the event itself and a few being returned at a later point to the Harbour Office.

## Survey Results

### 1.) Are you a resident, visitor or do you work in Lyme Regis?

There were 76 responses to this question. The majority of the responses to the Cobb survey came from residents. With a small number of people responding who worked in Lyme Regis.

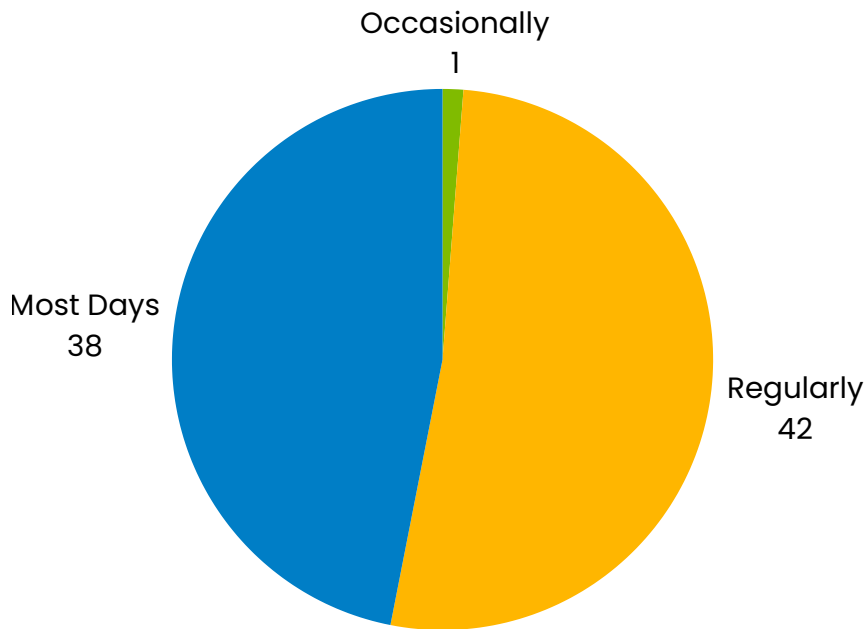
There were no responses from anyone who considered themselves a visitor to Lyme Regis. There were responses from people who identified themselves as second home owners, members of the sailing club or Harbour users.



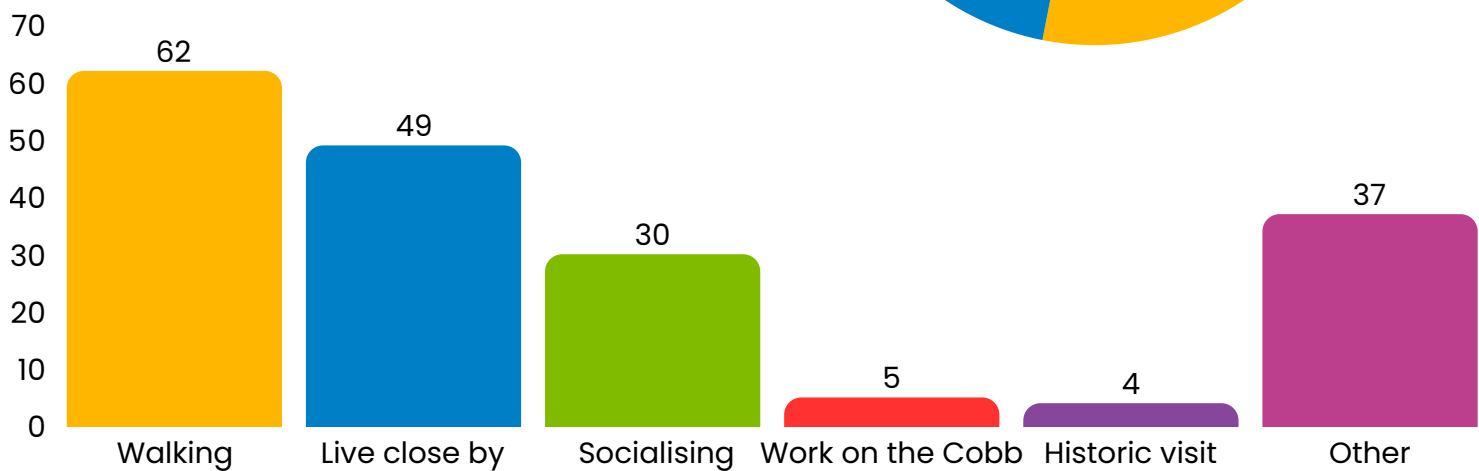


**2.) Do you visit the Lyme Regis Cobb? If so, how often do you visit the Cobb?**

The majority of people who responded to the survey frequently visited the Cobb, with just one reply saying they occasionally visited. There were no responses for the “Never” or “Rarely” categories.

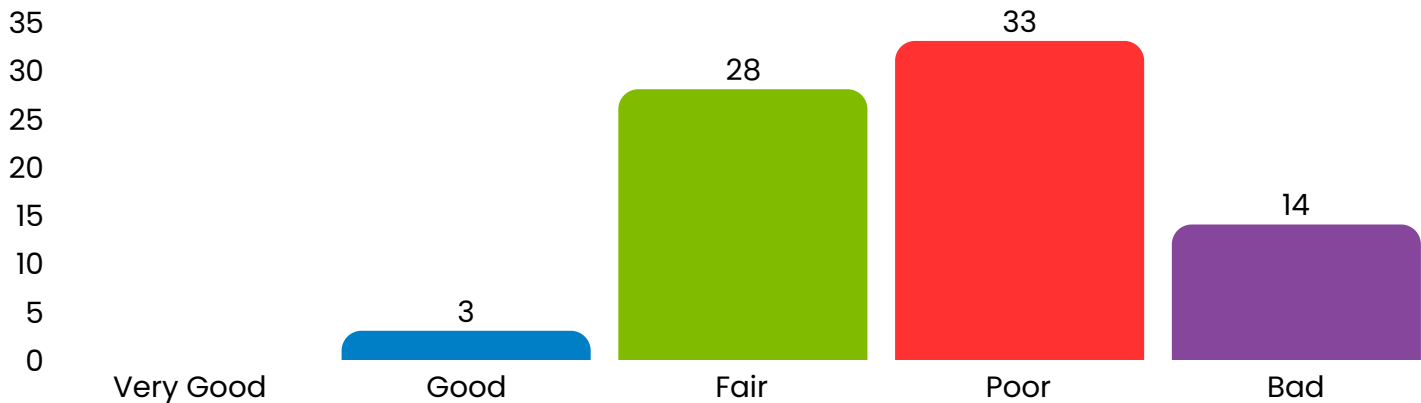


**3.) Why do you go to the site?**



Respondents were able to choose more than one option to this question. Most respondents to the survey visited the Cobb for walking or socialising or because they lived close by, with less people visiting the Cobb for historic visits or work purposes. In the Other category, people responded that they visited the Cobb for their personal well being, to access their boats or pontoons or for a variety of recreational activities; including bird watching, fishing, surfing and other water sports.

**4.) What do you think of the current condition of the Cobb?**



There were 78 responses to this question. Most respondents thought the Cobb was in either a fair or poor condition, with few respondents rating the condition as good and nobody rating the condition as very good. This indicates significant concerns about the Cobb’s current state.



5.) Tell us your thoughts on the potential option being put forward by Dorset Council presented at todays engagement event. Please write your comments below.

There were 69 responses to this question. The responses to this question were “tagged” using a text analysis tool to create common themes. These have then been collated and are displayed in the word cloud below. The larger the words the more that theme was mentioned.



The main headlines from the responses to this question were:

**Strong support for the proposed option**

Nearly half of the respondents explicitly mentioned backing for the current possible option.

**Urgency is critical**

Many comments stressed wording such as “just get on with it” and warned that delays will only increase the cost of the scheme and lead to greater risk of damage.

**Protecting the Cobb is non-negotiable**

The Cobb is seen as being vital for its heritage, economic and tourism benefits as well as its function as a coastal defence.

**Funding concerns**

There is worry about the current shortfall in funding and the risk of delays causing costs to rise.

**Preserve visual character**

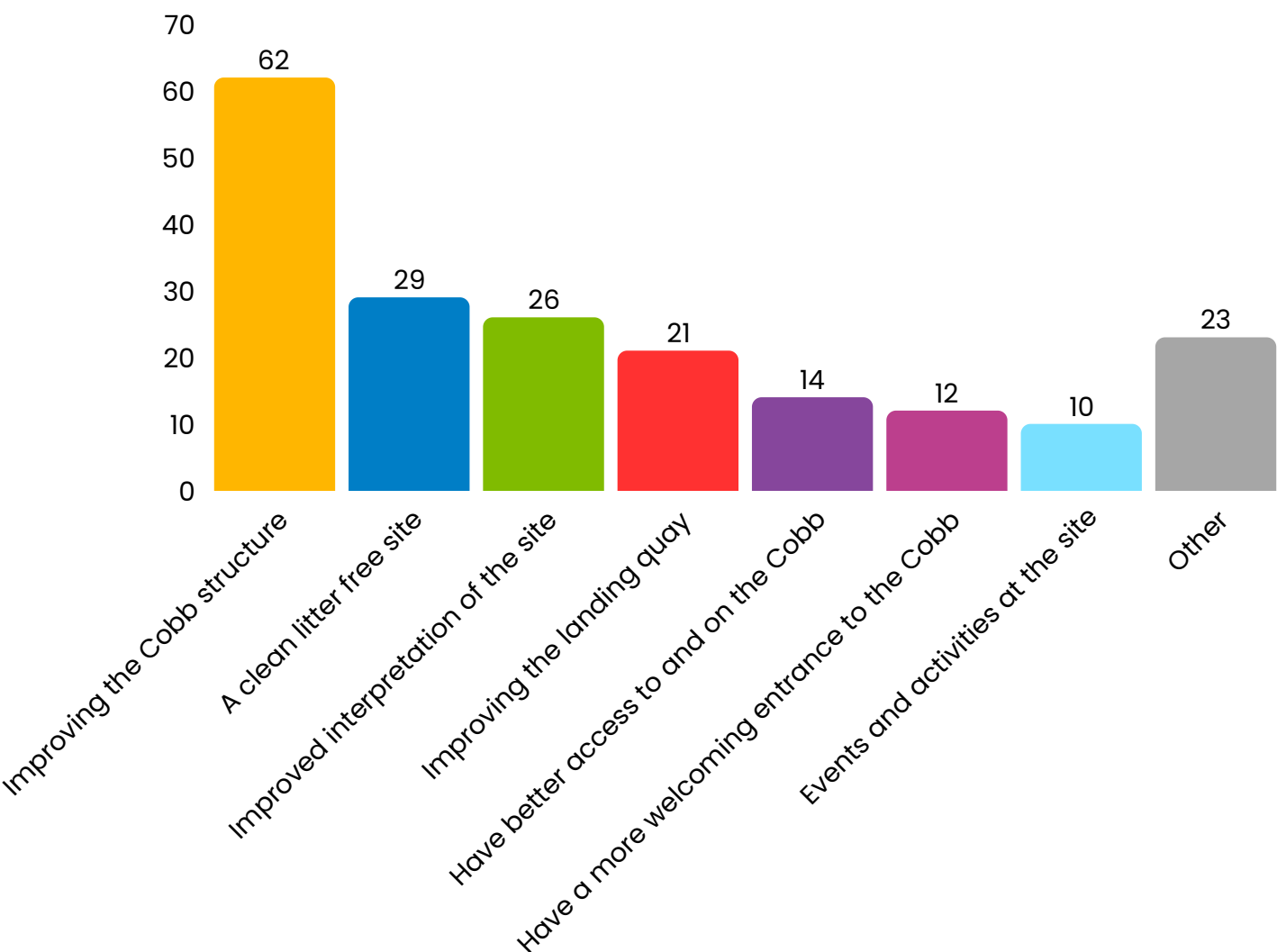
There is a desire for minimal visual change to maintain historic integrity. Mixed views on materials and design with support for concrete reinforcement with others calling for more sensitive conservation.

**Frustration with bureaucracy**

There was recognition that multiple organisations need to be involved in shaping the scheme design. However, respondents expressed frustration that the level of influence and associated processes appear to be causing delays, and called for clearer roles and faster decision-making. There were many calls for all key organisations to meet and work towards reaching a solution.



**6.) What do you think would improve the Cobb for users and visitors? If you wish to add further comment, please include in question 10.**



There were 77 responses to this question and respondents were able to choose more than one option.

The vast majority of responses believed improving the Cobb’s structure would improve the experience for users. The other categories had fairly similar number of responses with cleanliness, interpretation and improved access being the most heavily voted for.

Amongst the “Other” category responses were points about:

- improvements to the Cobb surface
- more control of pedestrians at the harbour slipway
- better lighting
- a water and fuel point for boat users
- information boards on the Cobb’s history and wildlife
- public safety, without the use of railings

7.) We would like to improve the interpretation at the site that tell the story of the Cobb, including written, visual and interactive digital content. Please tell us your ideas for how you would like to see the site interpreted.

There were 59 responses to this question. The responses to this question were “tagged” using a text analysis tool to create common themes. These have then been collated and are displayed in the word cloud below. The larger the words the more that theme was mentioned.



The main headlines from the responses to this question were:

### **Strong interest in heritage and history**

Most suggestions focussed on telling the Cobb’s story, including its construction, role as a major port and cultural significance.

### **Preference for low key, subtle interpretation**

Many propose discreet boards or panels, often located in nearby buildings, such as the Harbour office, Pavilion or RNLI building, rather than on the Cobb itself.

### **Digital and interactive option suggested**

QR codes, audio guides and online content and interactive displays were mentioned, although some respondents oppose digital screens on the Cobb itself.

### **Mixed views overall**

Whilst improved interpretation of the site was widely backed, a minority feel interpretation is unnecessary or secondary to the structural repairs themselves.





8.) Tell us your ideas on potential events and activities at the Cobb

There were 39 responses to this question. The responses to this question were “tagged” using a text analysis tool to create common themes. These have then been collated and are displayed in the word cloud below. The larger the words the more that theme was mentioned.



The main headlines from the responses to this question were:

**Support for existing events**

Popular events like *Candles on the Cobb* and firework displays should continue, but remain infrequent to preserve their special character.

**Interest in sailing and water based activities**

Suggestions included regattas, gig-rowing, water polo and other non-powered water sports.

**New event ideas**

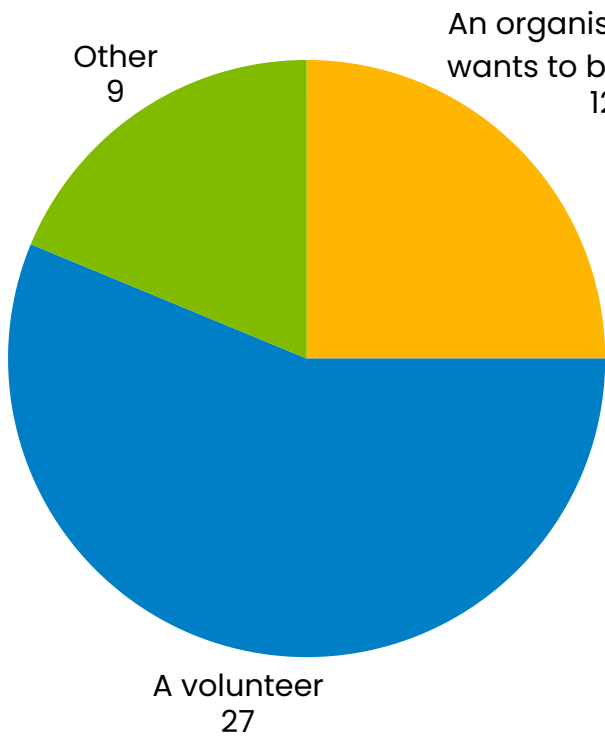
Suggestions included music and food festivals, light shows, re-enactments. it was suggested that these events should be minimal and infrequent, such as once a year.

**Focus on repairs first**

Several respondents stressed that events are secondary and should not distract from the urgent structural work that was needed. Others felt that the Cobb drew in enough visitors as it was and that no additional events were needed.



9.) If you would like to be involved in the project please let us know how you are able to be involved by ticking the relevant boxes below.



There were 40 responses to this question and respondents were able to choose more than one option. Nobody replied saying that they could be an event sponsor.

Nearly three quarters of the people that responded stated that they'd be willing to be a volunteer in some capacity, with a significant number of organisations wanting to be involved as well.

Anyone who responded to say they'd be willing to be involved in some way, were then asked to leave their contact details so the project team could then be in touch in the future.

10.) Do you have any other comments? If so please write these here.

There were 26 responses to this question. The responses to this question were "tagged" using a text analysis tool to create common themes. These have then been collated and are displayed in the word cloud below. The larger the words the more that theme was mentioned.



Respondents used this question to re-emphasise previous viewpoints on repairs being the main priority, the urgency of the scheme and the concerns with funding.

There was appreciation shown for the engagement event and communication of the project team, but calls for clearer timelines and decisions.



## Extracts from comments on the condition of the Cobb and stabilisation works

The Cobb is vital to the economy and history of Lyme Regis. Given the advised condition and potential 'life expectancy' it is therefore essential corrective works are undertaken to ensure longevity of the structure and in turn maintain the historic relevance to the area.

In short, No Cobb, No Lyme Regis.

The iconic aerial view from Lyme is always recognisable by the Cobb. A change to the structure will change the iconic view

In parallel to scoping temporary and permanent repair options, analysis of economic, social and environmental impact of NOT undertaking repair, will help strengthen business case and public engagement.

Long overdue that the Cobb gets the stabilisation that's needed. Objections to the proposed plans are wasting time and causing additional costs. The Cobb and its surrounds have been adapted and altered since its first building. Modern construction techniques are the only sensible option

## Extracts from comments on interpretation and other improvements

Improve facilities for visiting leisure craft. Better visitor pontoons and showers like a marina

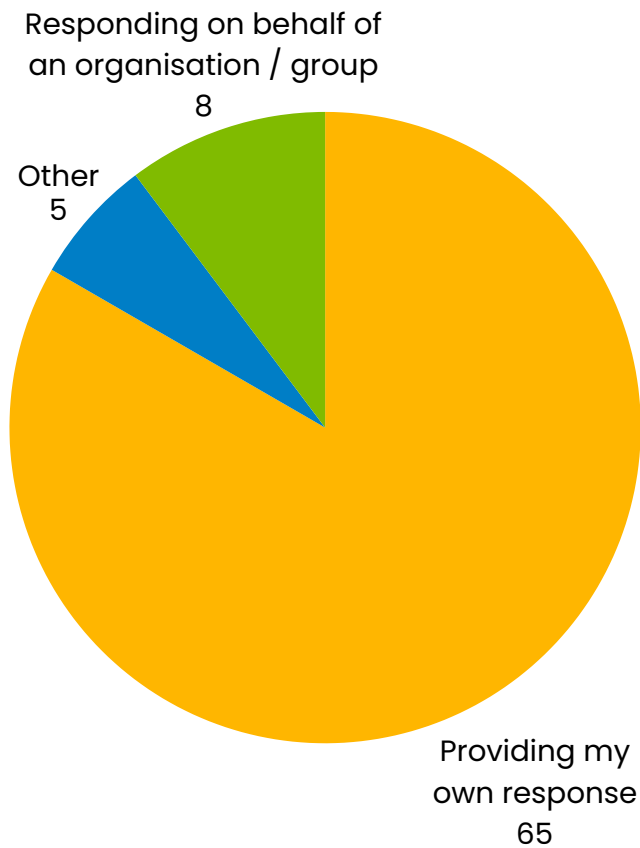
Regular events to both celebrate the history and the current need and use of the Cobb involving local groups RNLI, boat building academy, Make visitors feel part of the history

Interpretation ideas:

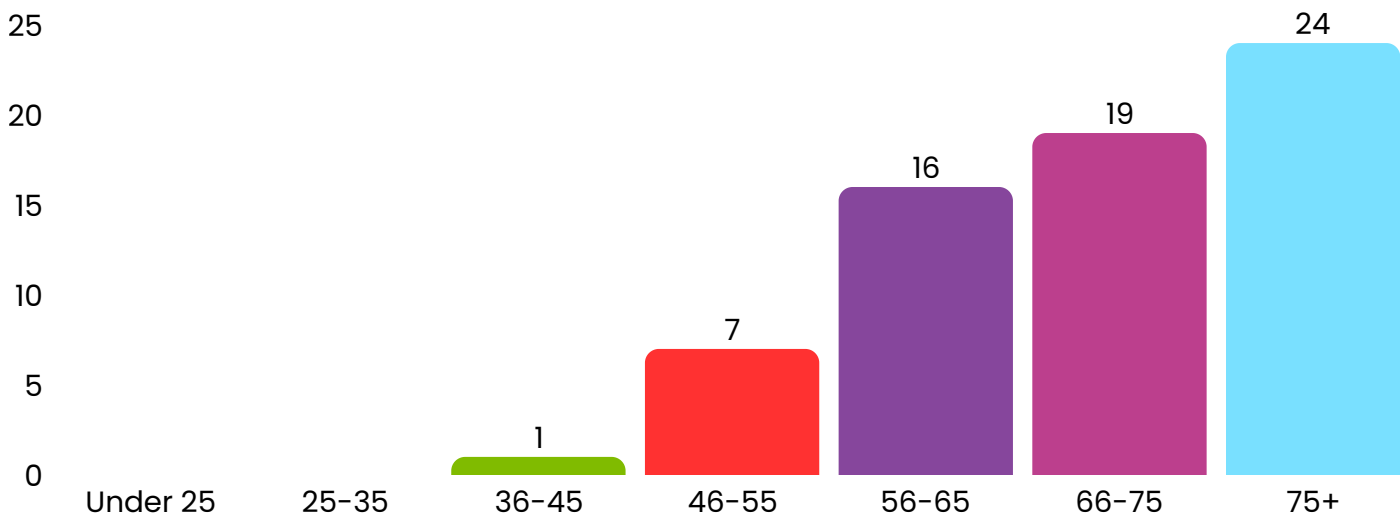
- \* history and changes of the Cobb and the importance of the harbour and the town.
  - \* force of the sea and the coastal processes over time eg famous storms
- \* importance to the community over time and attractiveness to visitors, writers, film makers eg Jane Austen, Jon Fowles, Candles on the Cobb, fireworks, fishing, sailing, water polo, gigs, kellyaks etc
- \* future coastal / climate risks to be mitigated / adapted

**11.) Are you providing your own response or responding on behalf of an organisation / group?**

Of the 66 responses to this question, the vast majority were providing their own individual response. Some people adding their response on behalf of their organisation as well



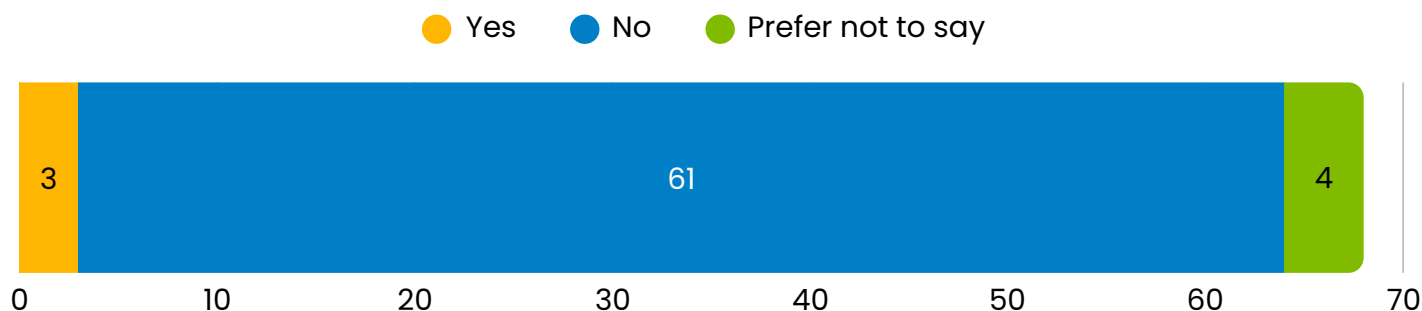
**12.) Please indicate your age group if you are happy to do so.**



There were 67 responses to this question. The majority of the responses were from people aged in their mid-50s or over. There were no responses from anyone aged under 36. This is fairly consistent with the age profile for the local area seen in the 2021 Census where over 58% of the population were over the age of 55. Timings of the event, and only having one event, may have impacted on reaching other age groups. It is disappointing not to see more responses from a younger demographic and is something that will need to be addressed as part of future engagement.



### 13.) Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



## Emails following the engagement event

Following the engagement event at the Jubilee Pavilion, the project team received many emails from people who had not been able to make the event itself and from seeing various newspaper and media reports.

The emails covered a range of topics, with the majority wanting to know where the event information could be found, putting forward their support for the option being put forward or thanking the project team for continuing to look at stabilisation options.

Other emails included:

- concerns about delays in repairing The Cobb after hearing it may be at risk of collapse on BBC Spotlight South West.
- discussions on research that suggests wave-impacts can delay or worsen damage and increase repair costs on breakwaters, such as the Cobb.
- the main surf spots around the Cobb that could be affected by future coastal protection works and the benefits that water sport users, such as surfers bring to Lyme Regis.
- concerns about the plan to install a concrete toe at the base of the inner Cobb wall as this may become a safety hazard for people falling into the harbour at low tide and a navigational hazard for boats.
- discussions on how repairs alone are not a long-term solution given increasing storm severity linked to climate change. There were proposals to explore wave-energy-capture technology offshore to reduce wave force on the Cobb, and suggestions of collaboration with universities, start-ups and potential funding from major energy companies.

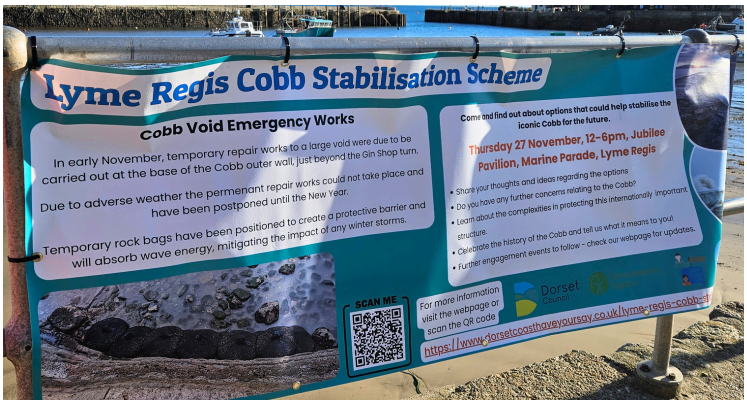


# Event Advertising

- **Social media:** The events were advertised widely on Social Media, originally being posted on the DCF pages and then reshared by other local groups, including Dorset Council, Lyme Regis Town Council, "Love Lyme Regis" and "This is Lyme Regis".
- **Local stakeholder groups:** The events and survey were shared with key local groups and stakeholders. Members of the Lyme Regis Harbours Consultative Committee were particularly active in sharing details of the event locally.
- **Contact list:** Updates and news of the events were sent to the project contact list and anyone who had registered interest with the area on the DCF site.
- **DCF E-News:** Shared with over 450 DCF members.
- **Banner:** a banner was placed at the entrance to the Cobb to publicise the event and to also provide information on the emergency void repairs.
- **Lyme Living magazine:** an article publicising the event was included in the November edition of Lyme Living, the Town Council magazine, released on the 7th November.
- **Bridport News and Dorset Echo:** Two articles promoting the event and providing information on the void repairs were published by the Bridport News on the 6th and 7th November respectively, with a further article on the 9th November in the Dorset Echo.



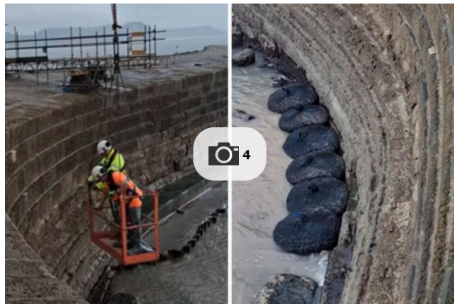
Poster used to advertise drop-in events



Banner at entrance to the Cobb

## Dorset Council make temporary repairs to Lyme Regis Cobb

9TH NOVEMBER 2025 ENVIRONMENT



By Alfie Lumb  
Reporter

Share   

0 comments

## Dorset Coast Forum hold Cobb Stabilisation Scheme

6TH NOVEMBER 2025 ENVIRONMENT LYME REGIS



By Alfie Lumb  
Reporter

Share   

1 comment

Newspaper articles from the  
Dorset Echo and Bridport  
News.



## Social Media

Whilst the emergency void repairs were ongoing, and on the lead up to the engagement event on the 27<sup>th</sup> November, social media was used to raise awareness of the scheme.

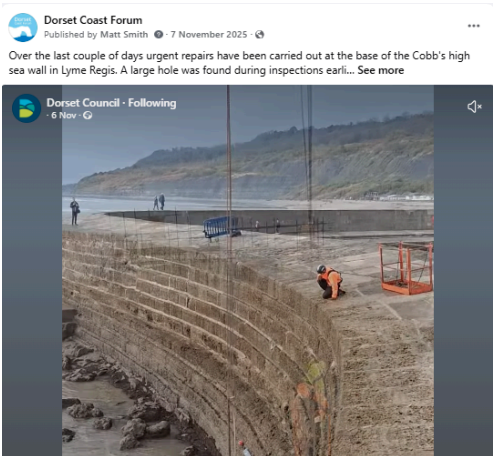
Several Facebook posts were created during November, many of which were shared to, and by other local pages, including Lyme Regis Town Council, “Love Lyme Regis” and “This is Lyme Regis”. Dorset Council also prepared some posts on the emergency void repairs that were shared by Dorset Coast Forum.

In total the posts reached over 570 different individuals.

Overview of total engagements	Number of people engaged
Number of people attending the engagement event	202
Have Your Say Webpage visits (between November 1st 2025 and January 9 <sup>th</sup> 2026).	517
Visits from social media links	132
Facebook post reach (number of unique individuals reached)	576
Facebook post engagements (e.g. likes, comments and shares)	13

Notably, a post from Dorset Council regarding the void repairs attracted over 1300 engagements. A post from Lyme Regis Town Council promoting the engagement event received over 270 interactions.

The large number of media reaches and interactions, along with the turnout at the engagement event, highlight the desire of the public to learn about and have their say on the future of the stabilisation scheme.



Social media posts

## Following the event: BBC South West – Spotlight report

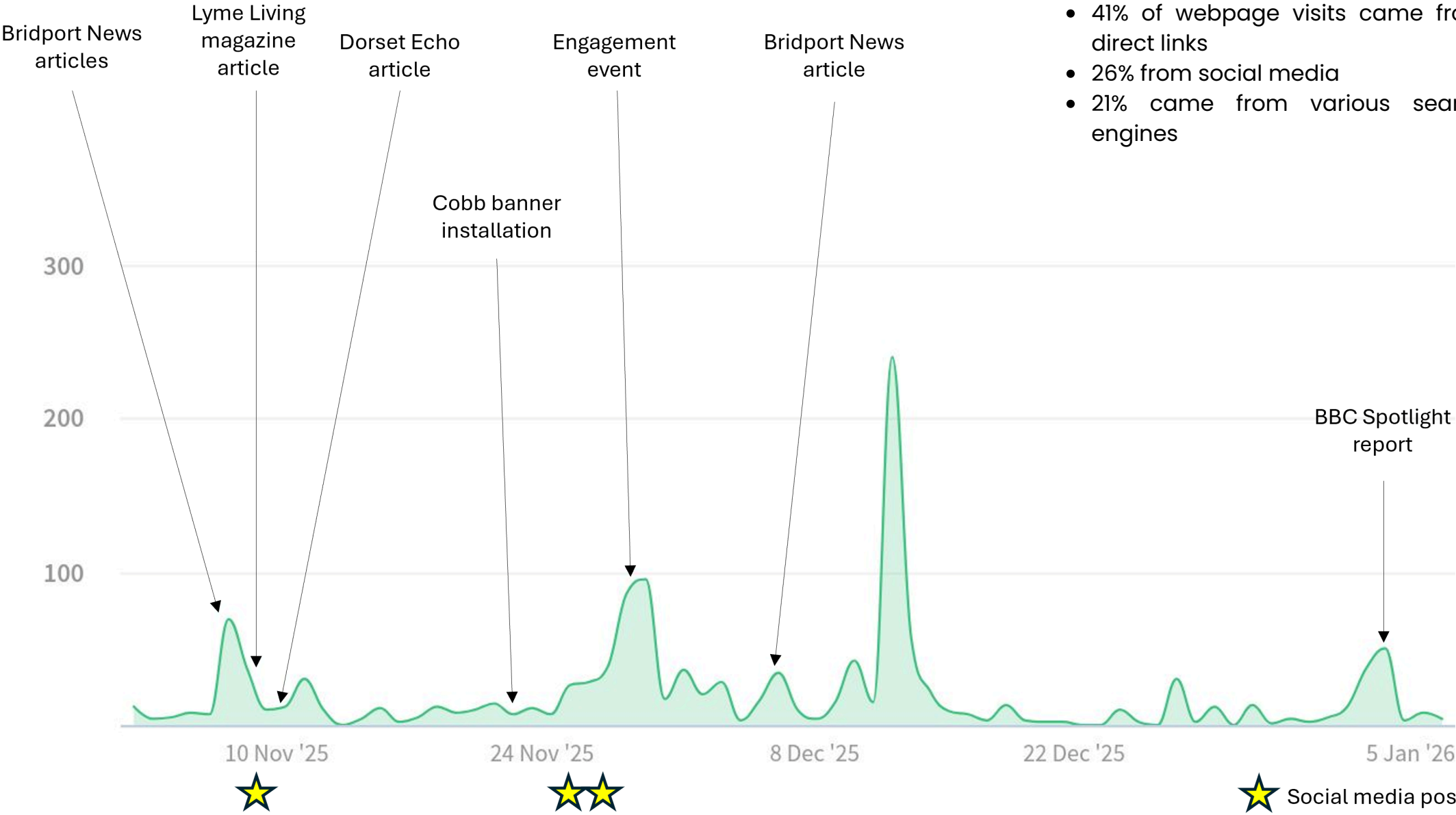
On the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026, BBC Spotlight South West aired a report covering both the recent void repairs at the Cobb and the recent engagement event. The piece included interviews with representatives from Lyme Regis Town Council and the Harbour Consultancy Committee, and a statement from Dorset Council and Dorset Coast Forum was also read out.

The overall message conveyed by the report was that a collaborative effort is underway, with a number of organisations and stakeholders actively pushing for a long-term solution. Following the broadcast, the project webpage experienced a significant increase in visits.

# Have Your Say webpage

The Dorset Coast Forum Have Your Say webpage is the engagement website for the project and is where the community and interested parties are directed to. The graph below illustrates the total number of webpage visits during the most recent engagement period (November 1st 2025 to January 9th 2026), along with the timing of major engagement events. It is clear that visits to the webpage increased around the drop-in event and news article and broadcasts. It is unclear, why there was so much interest in the webpage on the 11<sup>th</sup> December, as there was no DCF targeted engagement scheduled around this day. However this may have been a result of local groups sharing details of the website locally.

- During this time:
- 41% of webpage visits came from direct links
  - 26% from social media
  - 21% came from various search engines



## Lessons learnt for future engagement

- Any future surveys should include an online version as standard. This format is also preferable for efficient data analysis.
- Future engagement events should also be accompanied by an online presentation for those unable to attend in person. Evening sessions tend to attract higher attendance from people who work during the day.
- As seen with many Dorset Coast Forum events, turnout among younger demographics was low. Online presentations and digital surveys may help increase participation, and the project team aims to work closely with local schools in the future.
- Webpage analytics showed increased traffic when the scheme was featured in newspapers and reports. These channels will continue to be used. Social media posts from Dorset Coast Forum had lower uptake, but once they were shared by external pages they performed well. A broader mix of social media platforms may be needed to better reach younger audiences.
- Several attendees noted that because the Cobb is internationally recognised, engagement efforts could be expanded to reach a wider geographic audience.
- The Jubilee Pavilion was a good venue for an engagement event due to it overlooking the Cobb itself and it also being situated on the seafront and thus bringing in passing footfall. However, the lack of WiFi and poor lighting later in the day (at least in the Winter) did mean that some of the information on display could not be viewed well.
- The Harbour Office was a convenient location for people to drop off surveys, although perhaps an additional location is needed in the future, e.g. Lyme Regis Library.
- At future engagement events the project team will include information about the ongoing emergency repairs and other works that may be active at the time. A rough timeline of the scheme going forward was also requested.
- Future engagement events should include a plan view map of the whole Cobb with labels to make explanations to the public easier and for providing reference.
- Providing photos or examples of similar projects demonstrating proposed stabilisation methods would also be valuable. While feedback on the visualisations presented was positive, several attendees commented that they required interpretation to fully understand.
- To clearly outline the positions of different organisations, a visual “matrix” showing key influencers, their roles, and their stances on proposed options may be useful.

For more background information and project updates please visit:

<https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/lyme-regis-cobb-stabilisation-scheme>

For more details, contact DCF's Project Officer – Matt Smith:

matthew.smith@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk