# Weymouth loses Blue Flag status amid water quality and anti-social behaviour concerns



The picturesque coastal town of Weymouth, known for its striking Jurassic coastline and golden sandy beaches, faces a troubling turn of events as it has recently lost its prestigious Blue Flag status, a hallmark of cleanliness and quality for beach resorts. This renowned seaside destination, which attracts around two million visitors annually, has seen a series of challenges impacting its reputation and appeal.

Historically, Weymouth's main beach has enjoyed accolades, having been recognised for its excellent water quality, but recent assessments downgraded its status from "excellent" to "good." This change, noted in reports by the Environment Agency, has significant implications for Weymouth's allure, particularly as the Blue Flag certification is a key attractor for sun-seekers and swimmers. Various stakeholders have attributed this decline to an outdated sewage system, with Dorset Council leader Nick Ireland highlighting a staggering 33% year-on-year increase in sewage overflows from local sources such as Chaffey's Lake and Radipole. While Wessex Water disputes direct links between these overflows and the water quality decline, the community is left grappling with the repercussions of the deteriorating conditions.

Beyond water quality issues, the town is also contending with a noticeable rise in anti-social behaviour. Incidents of vandalism, substance abuse, and public disorder have negatively impacted both the local community and the experience of visitors. Long-term residents have expressed concern about the trend, with military veteran Lee Waugh noting a marked increase in disturbing group behaviour, including violent incidents leading to hospital visits. This environment of chaos, as highlighted by other commentators, threatens to tarnish the town’s long-standing reputation as a family-friendly holiday destination.

However, this summer, local authorities have taken steps to mitigate these concerns and restore a sense of safety and normalcy. The Dorset Police have relaunched their '100 Days of Summer' initiative, which involves intensified patrols in key areas known for such disturbances. Initial results from previous campaigns have shown a promising 22% reduction in reported episodes of anti-social behaviour. Increased visibility of police has reportedly reassured both residents and business owners, with some local establishments noting a revitalisation in customer sentiment due to heightened security measures.

Additionally, community efforts to engage with offenders through measures such as Community Protection Warnings illustrate a commitment to tackling the problem head-on. Local businesses have responded positively to these initiatives, acknowledging a beneficial impact on the overall atmosphere as visitors return to enjoy the beach once again.

Despite these efforts, concerns remain regarding the long-term sustainability of both the beach’s water quality and public safety. As Weymouth approaches the 2025 holiday season, there are apprehensions that the loss of its Blue Flag status could be compounded if water quality does not improve, further endangering its appeal as a coastal getaway. Local politicians, including Councillor Matt Bell, are calling for collaboration with relevant agencies to address these critical issues, underscoring that maintaining clean and safe environments is vital not only for tourism but also for the local economy.

As Weymouth navigates these multifaceted challenges, the outcome will be crucial in determining whether it can reclaim its status as a top beach resort destination or if it will continue to face setbacks that potentially deter future visitors.

### Reference Map

1: Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
2: Paragraphs 2
3: Paragraphs 2
4: Paragraphs 4
5: Paragraph 4
6: Paragraph 4
7: Paragraph 2

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2057703/weymouth-seaside-resort-beach-rating> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5yd1l2v7ypo> - Weymouth beach is at risk of losing its Blue Flag status due to a decline in water quality. Dorset Council leader Nick Ireland attributes this to an outdated sewage system, citing a 33% year-on-year increase in sewage overflows from Chaffey's Lake, Radipole. Wessex Water, however, denies a direct link between these overflows and the beach's water quality. The Environment Agency rated the water quality as 'good' instead of the required 'excellent' for Blue Flag status. Councillor Matt Bell expressed disappointment and plans to collaborate with agencies to improve the situation.
3. <https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2025-01-06/popular-dorset-beach-could-lose-blue-flag-status-after-drop-in-water-quality> - Weymouth's main beach faces the potential loss of its Blue Flag status for the 2025 holiday season due to a drop in water quality. The beach's rating has decreased from 'excellent' to 'good', making the loss of the Blue Flag status 'almost inevitable'. Councillor Matt Bell expressed disappointment and intends to work with the Environment Agency and Wessex Water to address the issue. Dorset Council leader Nick Ireland criticized Wessex Water for under-investment in the sewage system, which he believes contributed to the decline in water quality.
4. <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/24398236.weymouth-seafront-businesses-praise-police-yob-crackdown/> - Weymouth seafront businesses and residents have praised police efforts to tackle anti-social behaviour, including vandalism, graffiti, drinking, drug use, and late-night noise. Incidents such as a picnic bench being thrown onto the promenade have prompted increased police patrols as part of the '100 Days of Summer' initiative. Local businesses, including the Jurassic Rocks Café, have reported improvements in the area due to the heightened police presence, with some guest house owners noting a positive impact on their establishments.
5. <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/24307424.man-banned-weymouth-seafront-anti-social-behaviour/> - A man has been banned from Weymouth seafront following consistent anti-social behaviour. Officers from Weymouth and Portland Police issued a Community Protection Warning Letter, excluding him from the area to prevent future incidents. This action is part of a broader effort to address ongoing anti-social behaviour along the Esplanade and in the town centre, with collaboration from the Community Safety Accredited Scheme officers and Dorset Council.
6. <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/23574534.police-crackdown-anti-social-behaviour-weymouth/> - Dorset Police have relaunched their '100 Days of Summer' campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour in Weymouth. The initiative involves daily patrols in known hotspots, including the Victorian shelters on the seafront and the railway station. Previous iterations of the campaign have led to a 22% reduction in anti-social behaviour. The increased police presence aims to make residents and visitors feel safer during the summer months.
7. <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/8192248.weymouth-beach-rated-excellent-for-bathing-water/> - Weymouth Beach has been rated 'excellent' for bathing water quality for the third consecutive year. The beach has also been recommended as exceptional for consistently high results over the past decade. Councillor Brendan Webster emphasized the importance of maintaining clean bathing waters, stating that Weymouth's beaches are vital to the local economy and tourism. The Marine Conservation Society's Good Beach Guide highlighted Weymouth Central and Preston beaches among the top-rated sites.