



# Portland West

OS Grid Ref: SY 685 728 (OS Map 194)

GPS: N50:33:18 W2:26:43

What3Words: [///elated.salmon.trail](https://www.what3words.com/#!/en/related.salmon.trail)

Nearest Phone: Portland Heights Hotel

Wind Direction W - NW (270° to 315°)  
Best: W (295°)

Casualty Units: County Hospital, Dorchester

Height AMSL 420ft (131m)

Top to Bottom 420ft (131m)

Pilot Grades HG not recommended  
PG Pilot **MANDATORY**  
**Site briefing strongly advisable**

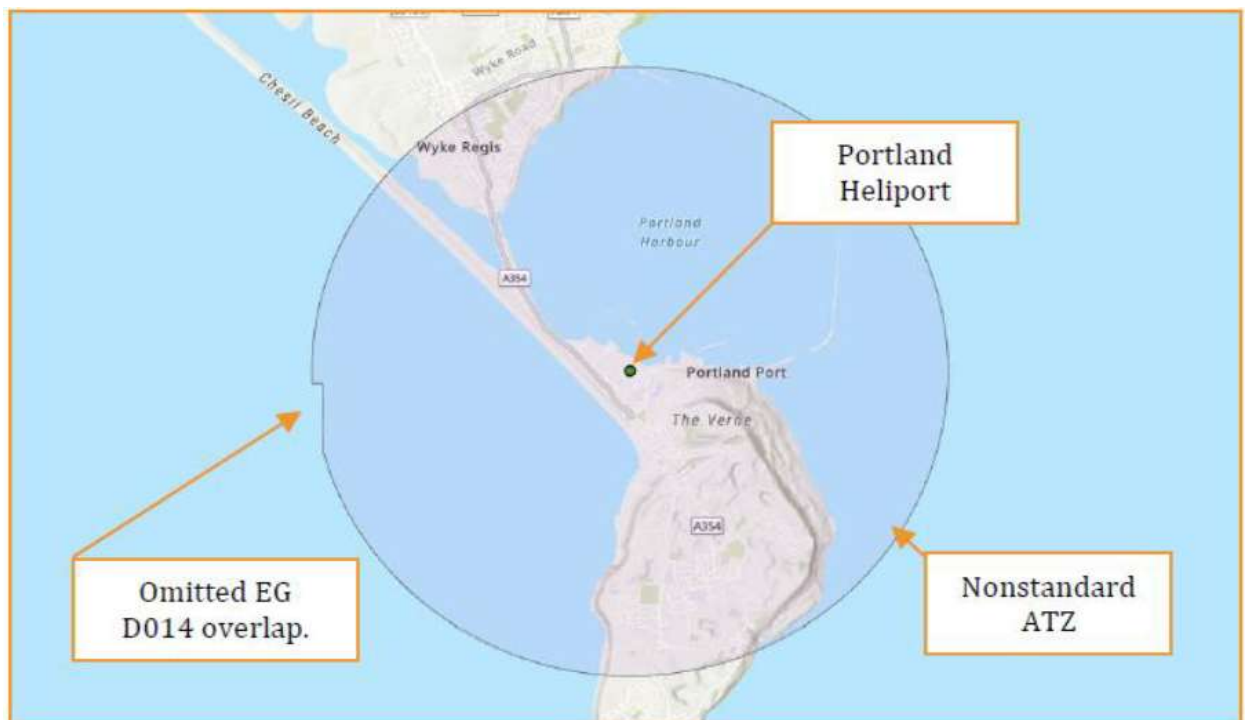
## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

As with all sites it is advisable to submit a CANP if planning to fly here.

### Portland ATZ

A nonstandard 2nm ATZ (Aerodrome Traffic Zone), and collocated FRZ (Flight Restricted Zone) based on the Portland Heliport Aerodrome Reference Point (ARP) has been established, effective from 1 May 2024.

The ATZ resides within class G airspace and reverts to class G outside of notified times. The ATZ covers both Portland West and East sites as shown in the graphic below:



A Letter of Agreement (LoA) has been drawn up between Wessex HGP and HeliOperations (ATZ operator) and the following procedure must be adhered to when flying Portland West:

- Whenever possible, a CANP (Civil Aircraft Notification Procedure) should be submitted for flights taking place during the ATZ operating hours.
- Coastal soaring flights within the ATZ are only permitted to the south of the geographic limits shown by the lines below, in order to provide safe separation of activity.
- In the event of a forced landing onto Chesil beach then best effort must be made to remain East of the North/South line to maintain clear of 02 approach/20 departure centre line. As shown in the graphic below:



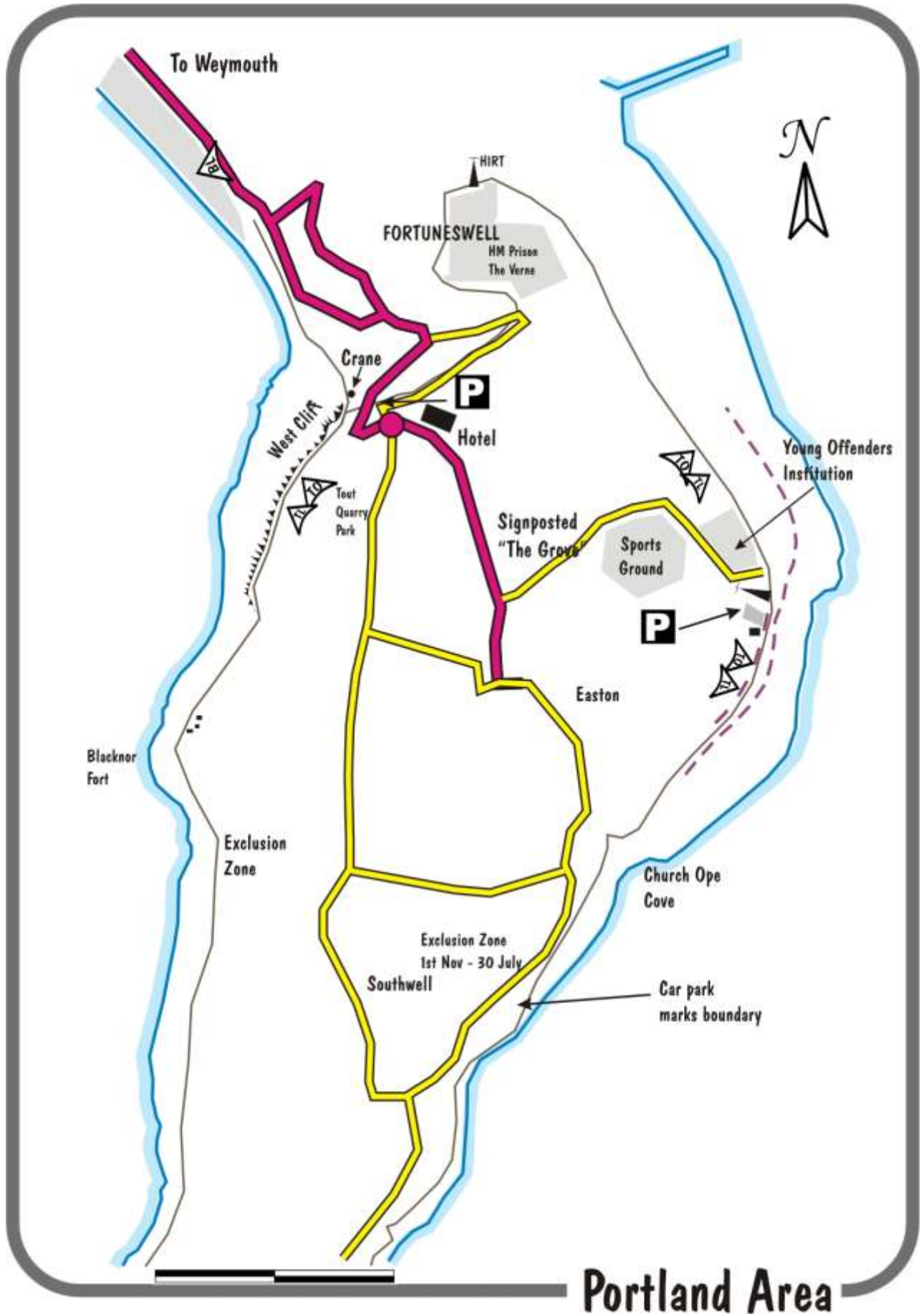
- The first pilot intending to fly must inform HeliOperations (Portland Heliport) on **01305 700001** or **01305 700002** before commencing, and when complete with flying activities. Should either number not be contactable, a backup email stating intentions should be sent to [bookings@helioperations.co.uk](mailto:bookings@helioperations.co.uk)
- HeliOperations may operate at short notice outside of notified times, therefore for any flying activity outside of ATZ activation published hours (as per the UK AIP), an email must be sent to [bookings@helioperations.co.uk](mailto:bookings@helioperations.co.uk) stating your flying intentions.

**General Site Info**

Portland West is a spectacularly rugged site with a technical take off and potentially difficult landing. The vertical cliff offers plenty of lift even in light winds. Stronger winds make launching dangerous and landing more difficult.

**Directions**

From Weymouth follow signs to Portland. Once on the island follow the only road to the top of the hill. At the roundabout with a garage to your right and Portland Heights Hotel straight ahead turn left and park in the view point car park ([///dares.height.giggled](http://dares.height.giggled)).



## Access

From the view-point car park walk back towards the roundabout and follow the road back towards Weymouth. Just below the first major bend in the road there is a crane. Behind this crane is the cliff and take off 30m south on the coast path.

## Hazards

The spur take-off area is small, and has obstacles around it. Also, vertical drops from the sides and in front. The Olympic rings take off can be slippery when wet, often members of public present, lamp post directly behind take off and a Main road just below take off.

This is a cliff site. Normal precautions apply with respect to rotor during launch.

There is a disused quarry directly behind the Spur take off, being blown back here would be highly hazardous.

Bottom landing directly beneath take off is very limited, if going down ensure you fly out before losing too much height to enable a landing on Chesil Beach or the promenade.

The weather can change rapidly here as with all coastal sites, any increase in wind speed can have a dramatic effect on flying conditions and landing options. Be aware of orographic cloud forming over the cliffs.

## Launching

There is a small flat grassy peninsula that protrudes from the coastal path. This is the old launch area ([elated.salmon.trail](http://elated.salmon.trail)). It is very small and being flat will almost certainly mean it is in rotor. Once you manage to inflate your wing it should be flying in clean air above you. Be careful not to stand too close to the cliff edge when inflating your wing. You will be stepping straight over a vertical drop to launch so ensure your wing is flying cleanly and you have no line twists etc as you will not get a second chance. This take off works better when the wind is due West.

The area directly in front of Portland Heights Hotel where the Olympic rings monument is sited provides a more regularly used take off now. This area works well with a North of West element in the wind. Be aware the clear area is small, can be slippery, has a lamp column directly behind which has been decorated with several wings in the past, then a road behind that, plus is popular with the public as a view point. As you launch you will fly directly over the main road just below, without lift immediately after launching you will be quite close to any high vehicles on the road.



# Portland West

**Top Landing** Top landings have been done on the steeply sloping grass to the right of take-off, and this seems to work. Landing on the spoil heaps above and to the left of take-off looks inviting but has proved to be quite exciting due to rotor from the cliff below is probably best avoided.

We are not permitted to land on the spoil heaps anymore as they are part of a sculpture park.

Back on either take-off is very difficult due to small space and surrounding hazards. It is possible to land behind the hotel or behind the car park on some days. There is a risk of severe rotor though depending on wind conditions, consult an experienced pilot before launching.

**Bottom Landing** On Chesil Beach (<http://lion.ideas.bloomers>). The beach is steeply sloping and is made of large pebbles. Land as far south as you can (near the cliff) to avoid the helicopter flight path. Not all bottom-landing areas apparent from the air are suitable as the pebbles become large boulders as you get closer.

If the promenade above the beach is clear of pedestrians this can provide an option.

The beach often has tar patches on it that can be highly damaging to glider fabric as well as very messy.

The Cove Inn provides convenient refreshment whilst waiting for a retrieve. Alternatively, a regular bus service runs back up the hill to the hotel.

**Other Rules** Do not obstruct the path. Don't ground handle whilst horses pass and be polite and courteous to everyone.

The areas used for take-off have not been negotiated with anyone! It is also a pathway and regularly used by horse riders.

The area South of Blacknor Fort (<http://nodded.dentures.research>) is permanently out of bounds because of nesting birds. The fort is obvious from above as it is the first building you see on the cliff-top.

If you see the search and rescue helicopter (red and white) take off we have been advised to land because it could be going in any direction, or even to the cliff we are flying. In practice it may well be gone before we can get down, but be aware of this advice and implement it if you can.

**XC** No, there's nowhere to go to.

**Flying Generally** A good site to head for if you expect a light W – NW wind. Sea thermals can give excellent height gains and on moderate wind days good height is provided purely from dynamic lift.

Avoid Portland if you expect the wind to be strong, there are too many hazards on this site to take chances.

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