

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM AND LOCAL ECONOMY COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2022** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chair: -

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Finch

Swanage Town Council

Councillor T Foster

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Moreton

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Ms L Bish

Grand Hotel (Swanage Chamber of Trade)

Mr K and Mrs L Egan

Rivendell Guest House (Swanage Chamber of Trade)

Mr E Fox

RNLI Lifeguard Supervisor

Mrs S Libicka

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Mr R Marsh

Swanage Fishermen's Association

Mr M Norris

Swanage Museum and Heritage Centre

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mrs E Evans

Democratic Services Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business

Development Manager

Mrs J Moulder

Business Development Support Officer

Mrs G Percival

Assets and Compliance Manager

(until 2.35 p.m.)

Public Participation Time

There was one member of the local press present at the meeting.

Councillor Tomes welcomed all attendees and introductions were provided.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Ms K Black (Durlston Country Park), Ms H Lagden (Tourism Manager, Visit Dorset), Mr J Mitchell (Project Officer, Dorset Coast Forum) and Mr K Sheppard (RNLI Lead Lifeguard Supervisor).

2) Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct.

Councillor Bonfield declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 14(c) by reason of being a user of Peveril Point boat park.

3) Matters arising from the notes of the informal Meeting of the Tourism Committee held on 29th March 2022

There were no matters raised.

4) Draft Terms of Reference and Representation of Outside Bodies

Consideration was given to draft Terms of Reference for the Tourism and Local Economy Committee, which set out representation from outside bodies, matters delegated to the committee and other functions. It was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the draft Terms of Reference for the Tourism & Local Economy Committee be brought forward to the Council for adoption, following a review by the Finance and Governance Committee of the draft Terms of Reference for all Council committees.

5) Beach Management Advisory Committee

a) Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2022

The chairman of the Beach Management Advisory Committee, Councillor Bonfield, summarised discussions at the most recent meeting. It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 8th February 2023, which would be attended by pupils from St Mark's and St Mary's Primary Schools. There were no other matters raised and it was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the content of the Minutes of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting, held on 19th October 2022 be noted.

b) Draft Terms of Reference

Further to Minute No. 4) of the Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting, held on 19th October 2022, consideration was given to its draft Terms of Reference. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Finch and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the draft Terms of Reference for the Beach Management Advisory Committee, dated November 2022, be approved.

6) Seafront Masterplan – Update from James Mitchell, Dorset Coast Forum

Further to apologies received from James Mitchell of DCF, the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) provided an update regarding progress in developing the Swanage Seafront Masterplan:

- The plan is currently in the engagement phase and DCF have received approximately 1,000 responses to the survey.
- Swanage Seafront – Past, Present and Future on 17th November 2022 @ The Mowlem, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. – an opportunity to find out more about the plans and to provide input into the ideas board.
- Creative event on 29th November 2022 5.30 p.m. – 7 p.m. @ Herston Village Hall - an opportunity for people with creative skills to take part in a workshop.
- Business Workshop on 1st December 2022 @ Emmanuel Baptist Church, 5.30 p.m. – 7 p.m. – an opportunity for business owners to comment and provide input into the seafront plans.
- In the new year the consultation responses will be collated and the Masterplan drafted.
- Further public consultation is anticipated to take place in April 2023.

7) **Seafront Murals on the Hardstanding**

Consideration was given to a briefing note, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, setting out a proposal submitted by Sunshine Ceramics to replace the existing dinosaur mural on the shelter site on Shore Road with a new mural based on the natural environment. As on previous occasions, it was envisaged that the design and development of the mural would be undertaken by local school children and would comprise paint, ceramics and mosaic. It was proposed that this would be installed in the summer of 2023 as part of the Purbeck Art Weeks Festival.

It was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That approval be given for the installation of a new seafront mural at the hardstanding in Shore Road, subject to consultation with, and approval of, the Assets and Compliance Manager regarding the method of removal of the existing mural and fixing of the new mural.

8) **Management of visitor numbers to Swanage and Purbeck**

It was reported that at a meeting of the chairs and clerks of parishes in South-East Purbeck, held on 5th October 2022, concerns had been raised regarding the negative impact of increasing visitor numbers on matters such as traffic management and the natural environment.

It was recognised that the challenges faced by neighbouring parishes may not have the same impact in Swanage. However, it was acknowledged that benefit would be gained by inviting representatives of neighbouring parishes and other organisations (such as the National Trust, Purbeck Transport Action Group, RSPB, Dorset Council and Swanage Chamber of Trade) to a meeting to discuss how best to manage visitor numbers. Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Finch and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a workshop be arranged with interested parties, including representatives from neighbouring parishes and other organisations, to discuss ways of managing increasing visitor numbers to south-east Purbeck.

9) **Tourism marketing plan**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the VSBDM, which detailed potential options for the improvement of marketing Swanage and the development of a tourism website.

A discussion ensued around the benefits and disadvantages of the website options offered by Visit Dorset and the alternative option of the development of a stand-alone tourism website. It was acknowledged that a separate website would involve in-house management of the site and an increase in staff time should be costed into any comparison of the options. It was noted that the success of a website would be dependent on its accessibility and ease of navigation. A suggestion was made that further discussion between business owners and the Council would prove beneficial in the development of an effective website.

It was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a workshop be arranged with key stakeholders to discuss the aspirations for improved marketing material including an effective tourism-focused website.

Following discussion, it was further proposed by Councillor Finch and seconded by Councillor Foster:-

That, as part of budget setting for 2023/24, the Finance and Governance Committee be asked to consider allocating a budget of £12,000 for improved marketing, including the development of a tourism website or microsite and a range of promotional activities to replace the £8,000 budget previously allocated to Visit Dorset.

Upon being put to the Meeting, FIVE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and there was ONE ABSENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

10) Review of Swanage Friday Market and consideration of scale of fees 2023-24

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the VSBDM, which provided a review of the market during 2022 and detailed the proposed scale of fees and charges for 2023/24.

A discussion ensued around the proposed alteration to the wording regarding the type of stalls permitted at the market, which currently stated “Produce, crafts or items you can’t easily find in Swanage.” It was noted that this was restrictive in the development of the market and in securing additional stall holders. Attention was drawn to a customer survey undertaken to assist management decisions to improve the market experience. It was noted that 584 customers had taken part in the survey which showed a majority of respondents wanted to see an increase in the range of products offered and additional stalls. A discussion was held around the impact of additional market stalls on businesses in the town and the avoidance of too many ‘overlapping’ products available at the market was noted.

Subsequently, it was suggested that the wording be altered as follows: “Any stall types to be permitted except those that might affect businesses negatively, cause offence, be inappropriate for Swanage or do not meet the Council’s commitment to reduce single use plastic”. It was proposed that officers have delegated authority to interpret this description, any disagreement being dealt with through the Council’s established Complaints Procedure. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Finch and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the definition regarding permitted stalls in the market terms and conditions be amended as follows:
“Any stall types to be permitted except those that might affect businesses negatively, cause offence, be inappropriate for Swanage or do not meet the Council’s commitment to reduce single use plastic”
and that officers have delegated authority to interpret this description, any disagreement being dealt with through the Council’s established Complaints Procedure.

It was further proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the draft Scale of Fees and Charges for the market, as set out in the briefing paper, be taken forward to the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee for further consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

11) Events Programme and proposed delegation of authority

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the VSBDM dated November 2022, which outlined the events programme for 2023 and included a revised Event Risk Matrix (Appendix 1). It was stated that the Risk Matrix would not be a replacement for individual event risk assessments but would better inform the Events Working Party when assessing event suitability.

Further to a discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the revised 'Event Risk Matrix' be approved and delegated authority be provided to officers, in consultation with the Events Working Party, to approve events as defined within the Matrix.

Furthermore, it was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To provisionally approve the use of Council owned land for the requested events for 2023, as set out in Appendix 2 of the briefing paper, prepared by the VSBDM.

12) Future of local banking and ATM provision – Update

Further to Minute No. 103 (d) of the Council Meeting held on 17th October 2022, at which concerns had been raised over the reduction of local banks and cash withdrawal facilities, it was stated that a report was being compiled to ascertain the feasibility of a 'banking hub' and further information would be provided in due course. It was noted that the Post Office had the ability to accept cheques or cash deposits for most major banks.

13) Peveril Point Boat Park

a) Update on year to date and future actions

The VSBDM provided an update, as set out in a briefing paper, which commented on increased income and the positive impact made by the employment of a dedicated boat park attendant during 2022.

b) Management of Fishermen's Slipway

It was reported that a review of the Fishermen's Slipway and huts had been undertaken and it was noted that officers would soon commence work to ensure that the agreed terms and conditions, set out in the fishermen's huts agreements, were being adhered to.

14) Budget Setting 2023/24

a) Draft List of One-Off Items of Revenue Expenditure

The draft list of significant one-off expenditure items for 2023/24 was considered and it was noted that this would be discussed more fully by the Finance and Governance Committee as part of the budget setting process.

b) Draft Capital Programme

The draft list of capital expenditure for the next three financial years was considered and projects relevant to the committee were noted. It was again acknowledged that this would be discussed more fully by the Finance and Governance Committee as part of the budget setting process.

c) Draft Scale of Fees and Charges

Further to his declaration of interest under Minute No. 2, Councillor Bonfield left the Meeting at 3.50p.m. prior to consideration of the boat park fees and charges.

Consideration was given to the draft Scale of Fees and Charges for the boat park, which took into account the fact that it had been fully occupied over the summer and that significant spending was planned on repairs and maintenance. The draft scale of charges incorporated an increase of between 10-13% for the hire of grid spaces for small to medium boats and a 16% increase for those up to 29 feet in length. Due to demand, an increase of one-third in prices for kayak storage was also put forward. The proposal also included a freeze in launch fees and that a discount be offered for Emergency Services and RNLI crews of 25% on boat and jet ski launch fees.

It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Foster and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the draft boat park Scale of Fees and Charges be taken forward to the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

Councillor Bonfield re-entered the Meeting at 3.55 p.m.

Consideration was then given to other relevant sections of the Council's Scale of Fees and Charges, taking into account recommendations from a working party meeting held further to Minute No. 6(a) of the Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 9th November 2022. It was noted that the majority of parking charges had not been increased since 2014 and that in light of increased costs of operating the Council's car parks, an increase in parking charges of approximately 5% had been included in the draft schedule of fees and charges.

A query was raised around the possibility of offering free parking throughout December and during the time that the ferry was not in operation. Members noted that the car park charges in winter were £1.00 all day and would remain at this price until 31st March 2023 and therefore the current charges and time scale would be retained. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Finch and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the draft car park Scale of Fees and Charges be taken forward to the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

Members of the Chamber of Trade enquired whether the Council would provide businesses with the opportunity to bulk purchase car park permits for North Beach car park. Further to a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the bulk purchase of up to 20 car park permits for North Beach car park be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

After further deliberation, it was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Finch and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the draft Scale of Fees and Charges for the Tourist Information Centre, Peveril Point, Stone Quay and Monkey Beach, be taken forward to the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24.

15) Tourism Reports

a) Visitor Services & Business Development Manager

A verbal update was provided which included:

- **Switch on Swanage** – the festive lights switch on would take place on 26th November at the Mowlem @ 4.30 p.m. The Chamber of Trade would hold events from 12 noon.
- **Santa Sleigh** – the Rotary Club Santa Sleigh would soon begin visiting streets of Swanage.
- **Endurance Runners** – a running event of various distances would be held on 26th November.
- **Artisans on the Beach** – artisans would be situated at the beach huts on Shore Road over weekends from 26th November to 1st January 2023.

b) Tourism Manager, Visit Dorset

The information provided by the Dorset Council Tourism Manager, prior to the meeting, was noted. This included an update on the Visit Dorset website performance and feedback regarding recent business surveys. It was noted that Dorset Council's Sustainable Tourism plan, currently being reviewed, would be circulated in due course.

16) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

a) Shore Road Christmas painting

An artist anticipated creating a Christmas painting in Shore Road to coincide with the Swanage Christmas Market, however, would be weather dependant.

b) Updates from outside representatives

The Pier, Durlston Country Park, Swanage Railway and the Swanage Museum had all circulated updates prior to the meeting.

The Chamber of Trade requested that consideration of Christmas light funding should commence earlier for 2023.

17) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 2.15 p.m.

The Chair thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 4.15 p.m.
