

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** of the Parish of Swanage, held at The Centre, Swanage on **MONDAY, 11th MARCH 2019** at 7.00 p.m.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Mike Bonfield, assumed the Chair, and in addition to members of the Council and officials, approximately 43 persons were present.

Chairman – Councillor Mike Bonfield (Town Mayor)

In attendance:-

Councillor John Bishop
Councillor Caroline Finch
Councillor Gail Green
Councillor Alexandra Lejeune
Councillor Gloria Marsh
Councillor Tim Morris
Councillor Steve Poultney
Councillor Gary Suttle
Councillor Bill Trite
Councillor Mike Whitwam

Inspector Andy Keel	Dorset Police
Sergeant Paul Upshall	Dorset Police
Mrs Ginny Bellard	Purbeck View School
Mrs Maggie Hardy	Swanage and Purbeck Rotary
Mr Phil Burridge	Swanage Fire Station
Mr Bob Foster	Swanage Town & Community Partnership/ Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust
Mrs Kim Gallagher	Swanage Town & Community Partnership/ Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust

Before the commencement of the Meeting, the Chairman welcomed all attendees and was pleased to announce that this year would see the very first Swanage Town Council Community Awards Ceremony being undertaken at the Meeting, which would be a celebration of the town's wonderful volunteers and community.

It was reported that local organisations had also been invited to make a short presentation on local issues and/or matters relating to their organisation, and the Chairman introduced the representatives that were present.

The Town Clerk then outlined the procedure that would be followed during the Meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for her inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Avril Harris.

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 16th April 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed. (Copies of the Minutes were circulated to those present at the Meeting).

3. **SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY AWARDS 2019**

The Chairman reported that, at the Council Meeting held in October 2018, unanimous approval had been given to the introduction of a Swanage Town Council annual Community Awards Scheme. It had been noted that, in view of the impending local government reorganisation proposals, the District Council's Purbeck Town and Parish Volunteer of the Year Awards may not be continued after 2019.

Many of the town's volunteers worked quietly away in the background and Town Councillors had been in agreement that it would be important to continue to recognise local individuals and groups who undertook vital voluntary services in the town and contributed to the quality of community life.

An Awards Panel had therefore been established to take this initiative forward, consisting of the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Team Rector, Swanage & Studland Team Ministry, The Very Reverend John Mann, the President of Swanage and Purbeck Rotary, and the Council's Administration and Communications Manager, Niki Clark. A total of 65 nomination forms had been received, across 35 different groups/individuals.

Before presenting the awards and certificates to this year's deserving winners, the Chairman also reported that the following resolution had been passed unanimously at the Council Meeting held on 25th February 2019:

'Honoured Citizen of Swanage Award - it was reported that Councillor Gloria Marsh MBE would be standing down as a Town Councillor after 25 years in May 2019. In recognition of Councillor Marsh's distinguished and valuable service, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Finch, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That Councillor Gloria Marsh MBE be presented with The Style Rank and Title of Honoured Citizen of Swanage, to be inscribed in a formal writing and presented at the Annual Parish Assembly on 11th March 2019.'

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Marsh on this extraordinary length of service and gave thanks for all she had done for the town and local community.

Swanage Town Council Community Award winners 2020

Green Champion - Mr Mike Leach – nominated for exceptional voluntary work undertaken in Swanage for the benefit of the local community. Mike had been a Swanage Railway volunteer since 1976, turning up whatever the weather, and his varied role included recycling activities for the Railway.

Sporting Achievement - Mr Ricky King – nominated for progressing in the Swanage and Premier darts leagues, and for his achievements in a number of national competitions.

Creative Arts Achievement – Mrs Carlotta Barrow – nominated for the exceptional voluntary work undertaken in Swanage for the benefit of the local community, bringing the arts to Swanage for residents and visitors alike.

Service with a Smile – Mrs Sarah Tattersall – nominated for outstanding customer service skills, dedication, energy and enthusiasm.

Young Person of the Year – Miss Maisie Anderson – nominated for exceptional voluntary work undertaken in Swanage for the benefit of the local community and for being positive, cheerful and excellent customer service skills.

Group/Organisation of the Year – Swanage Disabled Club – nominated for exceptional services to the community for almost 40 years, including excursions, craft and game clubs, and transport services.

Volunteer of the Year – Mr Alan Houghton – nominated for exceptional voluntary work leading the campaign and fundraising of the Friends of Swanage Bandstand undertaken in Swanage for the benefit of the local community.

Volunteer of the Year – Mr Paul Thompson – nominated for exceptional voluntary work undertaken in Swanage for the benefit of the local community, running the Swanage Facebook Group, which currently had over 10,000 members, and promoting Swanage far and wide in a proactive way.

Lifetime Achievement – Mrs Pauline Werba – nominated for exceptional voluntary work undertaken in Swanage for various activities and for the benefit of the local community, including as Chair of the Swanage Food Bank, and as a volunteer for the Citizens Advice Bureau, working tirelessly for the good of others in a practical and caring way.

Purbeck Town and Parish Volunteer of the Year – Mr Alan Dominy – nominated for exceptional voluntary work undertaken in Swanage for the benefit of the local community, dedicating his time and energy to many community and charitable activities, including ‘Churches Together’, volunteering for the local Citizens Advice Bureau, and more recently in his role of lead person for ‘Link Visiting’ where he has developed a strong team.

On behalf of the Town Council, the Chairman gave thanks to all of the town’s volunteers for their dedication, energy and enthusiasm. It was noted that volunteers were at the heart of our communities and, with ever decreasing government funding for local councils, were crucial to our local towns and villages, and truly made a positive difference from which the whole community benefitted.

4. **PRESENTATIONS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

Swanage Town Council

The Town Mayor, Councillor Mike Bonfield thanked all Town Councillors, Council officers and staff members for all their hard work and dedication during the year. There had been a number of staffing changes at the Council, and it was noted that Niki Clark had been appointed as Administration and Communications Manager at the Town Hall, and Mr Karl Stokes had been appointed as the new Operations Manager, due to the impending retirement of Mr Geoff Brookes. Mr Brookes had been a stalwart of the Council for many years and thanks and appreciation were extended to him for all that he had done for Swanage. The Town Council wished him well for the future.

Councillor Bonfield then gave a brief summary of matters affecting the Town Council during the past year.

Swanage Information Centre

Councillor Bonfield was pleased to announce that the Information Centre had once again been recognised for its outstanding customer service by winning bronze awards at

both a county and regional level, and that the town's Central Beach had been the recipient of the prestigious Blue Flag (for the 18th consecutive year) and Seaside Award. Thanks were given to Mr Culvin Milmer, Visitor Services Manager and his team at the Centre for the considerable work undertaken by them to achieve these awards. Well done all.

Swanage Bandstand

It was reported that the restoration of the Bandstand and the surrounding area had not yet been progressed. However, at the next Council Meeting being held on 25th March 2019 the Town Council would be considering a proposal to authorise works which would hopefully commence later in the Spring.

NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group - Clinical Services Review

Further to the report given at the 2018 Parish Meeting, the reorganisation of health services in Dorset had again been a recurring item at Council meetings. The Town Council had supported the local group which had been opposing some of the proposed changes in the area by raising concerns with the relevant authorities and lobbying the local MP.

Sandbanks Ferry Toll Application

Together with the District Council, neighbouring parishes, and many local residents the Town Council lodged a strong objection to the Sandbanks Ferry's proposal to raise ferry tolls. After a two-day Public Inquiry held in Studland Village Hall in November 2018 the Council was very pleased to learn that the inspector had found in favour of the objectors and turned down the proposed increases, which would have had a detrimental impact on those members of the community who relied on the service.

Eleven Days of Remembrance in Swanage

In November 2019 the town had organised eleven days of remembrance for those that had fallen in war, and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. There were many people who had played a part in arranging the superb and fitting commemoration events, and Councillor Bonfield passed on thanks to all involved. A special mention was then given to:

Mr Will Spicer of the Veterans Forge who not only managed to make the beacon that stood on Nine Barrow Down, but also 99 steel poppies (one for each person listed on the Swanage War Memorial). The poppies had been made by veterans, members of the local community, and also Councillor Bonfield himself.

Mr Frank Roberts who had been the 'backbone' of this event. Councillor Bonfield commented that he could talk for hours about Mr Roberts and what he did for Swanage and the surrounding area, and wished to pass on a very big thank you to him accordingly.

New Council Depot, Prospect Business Park

The Town Council had finally taken over the new works depot at Prospect Business Park in August 2018, and the team was now working from the modern depot that they deserved. This investment would ensure that the Council was able to continue to carry out its important role in managing the town's parks, gardens, play areas, sports pitches and cemeteries which meant so much to local residents. It was noted that this was a role that was likely to grow as the Council took on additional areas of green space at Herston and Benlease as a result of the current changes being made to local government.

Swanage Boat Park

Winter 2018/19 had seen the refurbishment of the fishermen's huts, and a new slipway and jetty were under construction at the boat park. This had been mainly funded by a grant from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, and Councillor Bonfield passed on thanks to the Dorset Coast Forum and the Fisheries Local Action Group for leading on this project and securing the monies for the Council accordingly. Unfortunately, the works had yet to be completed due to adverse weather conditions, however, it was anticipated that these would be finished in the near future.

Looking to the Future

The Council was looking forward to the year ahead, and progressing planned projects. It was felt that this would be an interesting time with the creation of the new Dorset Council arising from the merger of the existing District and County Councils on 1st April 2019.

The Council continued to work with the Swanage & Herston Football Club and Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust to secure the redevelopment of the facilities at Day's Park to provide a community sports/leisure facility. The Council was supporting this project by granting a 100-year lease for the football ground to ensure that the Trust could unlock grant monies to progress these proposals.

The Council was also working with the Bowls and Tennis Clubs at Beach Gardens to assist the Clubs with improvement proposals for the sporting facilities.

Over the coming months the Council would be working with the new Dorset Council and the Environment Agency to take forward proposals to improve sea defences in the Lower High Street. This project was the subject of a Coastal Communities Fund grant application.

Work had been ongoing with Dorset County Council to ensure that a scheme was delivered to improve pedestrian safety in Institute Road/the town centre. Business owners had been consulted and a preferred option for these improvement works had now been agreed. The work was programmed to take place in Spring 2020.

In closing, Councillor Bonfield reported that Town Councillors and the Council's staff members were proud to play their part in helping the local community thrive, and was very much looking forward to hearing the reports from the guest speakers about their work over the past year. Councillor Bonfield commented that he was also proud to live in a community that had so many groups and individuals who were willing to help maintain and improve the town, and wanted to thank them all.

The Chairman then welcomed representatives from various organisations, and invited them to make presentations on behalf of the following groups:-

Dorset Police

Inspector Andy Keel and Sgt. Paul Upshall introduced themselves to the meeting and gave an update on a number of matters, including the most common types of crime committed in the town. It was noted that there had been an increase of 17% in reported crimes across the region in the past year.

It was reported that the designated 'Police engagement stand' had been well received during Swanage Carnival Week in 2018, and details of Dorset Police's current areas of focus were provided, which included Cyber Crime, modern slavery and child exploitation.

The local police team was keen to attend local community events and meetings, and continued to raise awareness through regular workshops. However, it was reported that Swanage was considered to be a safe place to live, with very low crime rates. Attendees then had the opportunity to hold a 'Q&A' session with Inspector Keel and Sgt. Upshall on a variety of topics and concerns. Attendees were encouraged to regularly visit the Dorset Police's Swanage page on its website, its Facebook page, and to consider joining a local 'Home Watch' scheme.

Swanage Fire Station

Mr Phil Burridge introduced himself to the meeting and provided an update on the station's operations over the past year, which had included over 300 callouts. The good weather had unfortunately caused a number of fires during the hot, dry summer months, including the major fire in the Ballard cliffs area.

Attention was drawn to the Station's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages for up to date information on the service, and details were also provided about the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service's 'Safe and Well' and the 'Safe and Independent Living' Teams. It was noted that Mr Burridge had been the Fire Station Commander for 19 years, and had been a fireman for a total of 37 years. The Chairman congratulated Mr Burridge on his long service within/to the community.

Purbeck View School

Mrs Ginny Bellard, Principal reported on a range of projects that the school had been undertaking over the past year, and provided details of some exciting new projects which included a 'community café', an 'Enterprise Hub', horticultural area, development of the school's library and chapel, and a therapy suite. A 'grand opening' event would be held in due course.

Mrs Bellard was also pleased to announce that the school had achieved a 'Good' rating in January 2019 following a full inspection by Ofsted.

Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust

Mr Bob Foster provided an update on discussions and progress made to date regarding the redevelopment proposals for the Swanage & Herston Football Club. An architect's brief was being developed, and it was proposed that the new building would have a multi-functional use. Public consultation on these proposals would be held later in the year. It was reported that 14 projects had now become members of the Trust, and that a further 3 projects were currently in the process of joining.

Swanage Town & Community Partnership

Mrs Kim Gallagher reported that the Partnership continued to work closely with the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust and the Town Council, assisting in the co-ordination of priorities for the town, which included work on the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy Action Plan, and proposals for a community bus service.

Swanage and Purbeck Rotary Club

Mrs Maggie Hardy provided details of the Club's 'Fun in the Park' event which would be held on 28th April 2019 from 11.00am to 4.00pm, in partnership with the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust and the Town Council. Publicity for the event would follow in due course, and would provide local groups and organisations with an opportunity to take part and showcase the services they provided to the local community. This would not be a fundraising event.

5. **MATTERS RAISED BY LOCAL RESIDENTS**

(a) **Sea defences – Lower High Street**

Concerns had been raised regarding the increase in wave overtopping seen in recent years in the lower High Street. A brief update was provided on planned coastal defence improvements and attention was drawn to a forthcoming public event regarding these proposals which would be held at the Emmanuel Baptist Church Hall on Wednesday 13th March 2019 @ 7.00pm, representatives of the Environment Agency and Dorset Coast Forum would be in attendance at the event.

(b) **Open Forum**

The Town Mayor then opened the Meeting for general discussion, and invited questions and comments from the audience. There were no matters raised.

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was provisionally agreed that the next Parish Meeting would be held in April 2020, date to be confirmed in due course.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked those present for their attendance, gave thanks and appreciation to the presenters for the informative presentations, and closed the meeting at 8.30 p.m.

Following the meeting attendees then had the opportunity for networking and information sharing, and the Chairman invited everyone to join him for a light buffet and refreshments.
