

Minutes of the Meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 1<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2023** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chair: -

Councillor C Moreton

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor T Foster (Town Mayor)

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Harris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor B Trite

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Mr D Pratten

Beach Buddies and Planet Purbeck

Mrs S Spurling

Sustainable Swanage

Also in attendance: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Ms G Percival

Assets & Compliance Manager

Mr M Snowdon

Assets & Compliance Support Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business

Development Manager (VSBDM)

There was one member of the public at the meeting.

**Public Participation Time**

There were no matters raised.

**1) Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Rogers, Katie Black (Senior Ranger, Durlston Country Park) and Frank Roberts (Dorset Landers). Councillor Monkhouse attended the meeting remotely.

**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.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

**3) Matters arising from the Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 23rd November 2022**

There were no matters raised on this occasion.

**4) Environment Policy Action Plan – Update**

It was reported that the Environment Policy Action Plan has been reviewed by the Environmental Action Plan Working Party. It was noted that the plan is iterative and any developments would be brought before this committee. It was noted that where possible, each Agenda item within the Environment Committee meetings would refer to the relevant part of the Action Plan.

It was questioned whether the document would be made available to the public and it was confirmed that it is a public document, although due to the regular review the version currently on the website requires updating.

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

To agree the amended Environment Policy Action  
Plan as an iterative document.

**5) Herbicide use by Swanage Town Council**

Further to Section 3.1 of Environment Policy Action Plan, the Assets & Compliance Manager introduced a document prepared by Wessex Ground Services which set out an assessment of the current legislation, Swanage Town Council's use of herbicides, and any opportunities to reduce usage.

The report concluded that the Council had a balanced approach to the use of herbicides, however, the situation should be monitored to determine potential improvements in the future. A discussion ensued around alternatives to herbicide use, however, it was noted that a substitute was unlikely to be as effective, and the impact on labour intensity would need consideration. Members therefore noted that no changes to the Council's use of herbicides would be introduced at the present time.

The Committee recorded its thanks to Steve Harris of Wessex Ground Services for his work in producing this report.

**6) Sustainable Swanage**

**a) Sustainable Swanage Progress Update**

The Sustainable Swanage project officer presented a quarterly review of the 3-year Sustainable Swanage programme (2022-2024). It was noted that the officer had stepped back from the Community Pantry as there were now sufficient volunteers to lead the project. It was reported that:

- Community events continued to see a growth in support, which included the repair café and although governance would be needed, it was hoped that funding would be sought to assist with this.
- Energy leaflets had been prepared and distributed widely to residents.

Thanks were given to Sarah Spurling for all the vibrant activity she is helping to create and nurture within the town.

**b) Northbrook Copse & St Mark's Playing Fields: Future Plans**

Further to Section 3.4 of Environment Policy Action Plan, the VSBDM reported that Northbrook Copse and the former St Mark's School Playing Field had been identified as suitable sites to be enhanced by Sustainable Swanage, with the support of the Town Council. The work would focus on increasing awareness of the sites and putting in place a strategy to allow them to flourish.

It was proposed by Chairman, seconded by Councillor Harris and  
**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

To approve the selection of Northbrook Copse and  
the former St Mark's School Playing Field for future  
enhancement by Sustainable Swanage.

**c) The Peveril Point and Downs Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Launch**

It was reported that Peveril Point and the Downs had formally gained recognition as a Local Nature Reserve towards the end of 2022 and that an official launch event was being planned with Sustainable Swanage for 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023. It was currently envisaged that this would incorporate a range of walks and activities. It was noted that four panels would be erected at strategic unobtrusive locations on recycled plastic lecterns detailing the area's history, a map of the LNR, local wildlife and geology.

The proposals, as detailed in the briefing paper, were noted and the development of a Swanage Greenspace Logo was met with approval.

Thanks were recorded to all those involved in attaining the Local Nature Reserve designation and the development of the information panels.

7) **Bedding Plant Proposal 2023**

The Assets & Compliance Manager reported on the strategy for the summer bedding and perennial planting schedule for the 2023 season. The strategy was focused on moving towards a more environmentally beneficial approach with consideration given to the changing climate and an emphasis on increasing the amount of sustainable perennial plants, while reducing the amount of summer bedding.

It was proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Tomes and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To approve the proposals set out in the briefing paper in respect of summer bedding and perennial planting for the 2023 season and to review the new approach at the end of the season.

8) **Carbon Crisis Awareness Training for staff and councillors**

Further to section 1.5 of Environment Policy Action Plan, the VSBDM reported on the available options for Carbon Crisis Awareness Training for all Councillors and staff members, ranging from local resources providing face-to-face training to bespoke training packages with the potential to attend online. It was noted that the costs are comparable for the various options, in the region of £2,000, although further investigation would be required to ensure the most appropriate course is selected.

It was therefore AGREED:-

To delegate the decision to officers to identify a suitable course.

9) **Carbon Footprint and STC monitoring systems**

The VSBDM reported on the original Swanage Town Council carbon footprint assessment, which had been completed in 2019 and the requirement to start analysing this annually. The original assessment had been collated with the best information available at the time, although it was highlighted that the availability of data is now much improved.

It was noted that the ongoing task had now been assigned to the Assets & Compliance Support Officer who advised that the new report was unlikely to provide a fair assessment of how the Council's carbon footprint had changed since 2019 due to the quality of the data at that time, and some of the assumptions that were required. Attention was drawn to the fact that the monitoring system being put in place would provide straightforward analysis from this year forward.

The report for 2022 will be brought to the next Environment Committee meeting in June and will henceforward be monitored at regular intervals.

10) **Waste Management**

a) **Update on waste management arrangements for 2023**

Further to Minute No. 11 a) of the Environment Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, the Assets & Compliance Manager confirmed that there had been no update from Dorset Waste Services regarding seafront waste management arrangements for 2023, to date. It was anticipated that the arrangements would remain as in 2022.

b) **Update on activities by Beach Buddies**

Further to Minute No. 11 b) of the Environment Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, it was reported that the group continued to receive a high level of

support from volunteers on a weekly basis, with an average of 12-16 taking part out of season and up to 20-30 volunteers in the peak summer months. The average volume of litter removed per outing had remained stable at approximately 20kg of litter per weekend, although the nature of the waste had altered. The amount of single use PPE recovered had almost disappeared following the easing of the Covid-19 lockdown, although the packaging and cartridges from vape products had significantly increased, as had bagged dog waste.

Beach Buddies offered thanks to the Council for providing replacement litter pickers.

**11) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

**a) Carbon Neutral 2030 Plan**

Further to Minute No. 5) of the Environment Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, the VSBDM reported that in addition to the report commissioned from CO2 Target, the Council are seeking advice from Low Carbon Dorset who are providing two days of free advice. Further developments would be reported to a future meeting of the Environment Committee.

**b) EV Charging Strategy**

Further to Minute No. 6) of the Environment Committee meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, the VSBDM reported that via Dorset Council, contact had been made with a company to prepare a feasibility study. The study would assess how many EV chargers would be required in Swanage in the future. It was noted that further developments would be reported to a future meeting of the Environment Committee.

**c) Green Flag Application - Beach Gardens**

The Assets & Compliance Manager reported that an application for a Green Flag award in respect of Beach Gardens had been prepared and submitted, with the assistance of the VSBDM and his team, the Tennis Club and the Bowls Club. The closing date was noted as 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023. It was noted that the Council would be contacted shortly to determine if Swanage had been selected for the next stage of the judging, which would result in a site inspection in May 2023.

**12) Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would be held at 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The Meeting closed at 3.00 p.m.

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