

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM AND LOCAL ECONOMY COMMITTEE** held at The Grand Hotel, Burlington Road, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 22nd NOVEMBER 2023** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor T Foster

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Finch

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)

Ms K Black

Durlston Country Park

Ms T Churcher

National Trust

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mrs K Court

Administration Officer

Mrs E Evans

Democratic Services Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

Mrs J Moulder

Business Development Support Officer

Ms G Percival

Assets and Compliance Manager

Ms S Tattersall

Visitor Services Assistant Manager

There were four members of the public present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- In respect of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee held on 5th July 2023, it was highlighted that under agenda item No. 9) (Potential commercial opportunities on Town Council land – To consider process for inviting expressions of interest for 2024) - the date noted within the timescale column stated that the next committee meeting was being held on 15th November 2023, as opposed to 22nd November 2023.
- Regarding Agenda item No. 7), queries were raised about the £40.00 administration fee and £50.00 maintenance fee. Comments were also made that the Private Sites annual fee should not be increased to £495.00.
- In respect of Agenda item No. 8 (b), a question was asked about the type of contract assigned to the Seafront Advisors e.g. Variable hours/zero hours contracts.

The Chairman welcomed members of Accessible Swanage group to the meeting and noted that they would provide an update under Agenda item No.8.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor Bonfield, Mr R. Marsh (Swanage Fisherman's Association) and Mr M Norris (Swanage Museum). It was noted that Ms H Lagden, Visit Dorset, would no longer attend meetings of the committee but Visit Dorset representatives would maintain regular contact with the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM).

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.

Agenda Item No. 8 a) - Councillor Tomes declared a pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a private beach hut user.

3) **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 5th July 2023**

In response to a query raised during public participation time regarding Minute No.9, it was explained that, since the meeting held in July, the date of the next meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee had subsequently been rescheduled to 22nd November, which accounted for the different date in the Minutes. It was reported that additional time would be required to review the expressions of interest received and that the Property Panel would meet early December so that recommendations regarding these could be presented to the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council, being held on 18th December 2023.

4) **Matters arising from the Meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 1st November 2023**

An update had been circulated prior to the meeting and there were no matters raised.

5) **Tourism Marketing**

a) **Visit Swanage website – Update**

Further to Minute No. 5 (a) of the meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 5th July 2023, the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) reported that a soft launch of the website was expected within a few weeks, and it was anticipated that the website would go 'live' on 23rd January 2024. It was noted that businesses in Swanage would be offered a free listing, and existing Visit Dorset members an enhanced listing to encourage business engagement with the new website. An open evening for Town Councillors and business owners to view the new site would be organised and further information provided in due course.

6) **Accessibility Working Party – Update**

Further to Minute No. 8) of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting held on 5th July 2023, it was noted that the Accessible Swanage Group would be supported by the Town Council in its first year. It was acknowledged that the group had already provided invaluable input into projects such as the Green Seafront and Station Approach improvements.

A representative from the group explained that the group were working positively with businesses across Swanage to raise awareness, and had suggested improvements to ensure businesses were as accessible as possible. A suggestion had been made for the provision of quiet spaces and calm areas throughout the town, or in business premises, which could be of benefit to those sensitive to crowds and noise. It was noted that Accessible Swanage had established a Facebook page, which had attracted more interest in the aims and objectives of the group.

The Chairman thanked the group for its input and looked forward to working closely with the group to address accessibility issues.

7) Beach Huts – To consider an allocation procedure for charity beach huts

Further to Minute No. 11) of the meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee held on 22nd March 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM, which set out the procedures, and the financial implications to the Town Council, associated with the free use of beach huts by charities. It was noted that for the 2024-25 season two beach huts had been reserved for charity use, one on the upper level, and one on the lower level. The commercial cost of the beach huts for 2024-25 would be £1,769 (upper level) and £2,809 (lower level), a total of £4,578 (exc. VAT).

A query was raised around the accessibility of the beach huts, and in response it was confirmed that beach huts on the lower level had doors able to accommodate the width of wheelchairs. A further question was asked as to whether ‘not for profit’ organisations would be able to apply for the use of a hut.

A discussion ensued around the inclusion of ‘not for profit’ organisations within the application process. It was acknowledged that the community benefited from these organisations and Members were therefore minded to authorise this type of organisation to be included for the use of a charity beach hut.

Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by the Chairman and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That authority be provided to the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager to release the charity beach hut application form, to include ‘not for profit’ organisations, and allocate charity beach huts as set out in the briefing paper, subject to further deliberation at a meeting of the Beach Hut Working Party.

8) Budget Setting 2024-25

a) One-off budgets

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the VSBDM, which set out the one-off revenue expenditure items as shown in the table below:

	Budget Proposal	£	Notes
1.	Storage facility for market equipment in Main Beach Car Park	£2,000	As detailed in Market report.
2.	TIC garden improvements including provision of ‘sail’ shade	£5,000	This will enhance the offer to customers and help mitigate the risks associated with putting up the gazebo outside the TIC each day.
3.	TIC replacement noticeboard	£2,500	The current TIC noticeboards, which are guaranteed for 5 years are now at least 7 years old. The marine environment is challenging, and they now let quite a bit of moisture in which damages the posters inside. The budget is for two replacement boards.
4.	Beach Safety Noticeboards	£3,000	There are three sets of boards along the seafront. While these were replaced in 2019 the refurbishment of the posts has not proven to be as effective as hoped and the posts have deteriorated significantly. Therefore, a budget is requested to replace the bottom of the three sets of posts.
5.	Laptop for TIC admin	£900	Laptop for TIC staff to use to work from home as required in support of administration duties.
6.	New Parasols for beach huts	£1,500	The parasols are rented out each year to beach hut customers and generally have a two-year payback period. The ones procured in 2018 are starting to reach the end of their life.

7.	RNLI Lifeguards	£3,378	See below
----	-----------------	--------	-----------

It was noted that item No. 4) had subsequently been removed from the list, as the Beach Safety Noticeboards had not deteriorated as anticipated, and the Town Council's in-house maintenance team had rectified the posts.

Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Foster and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the one-off budget items, as outlined in the table above, No's 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, only be approved.

Members considered No.7), the increase in costs of £3,378, to the provision of RNLI Lifeguards on Swanage Beach. An option had been considered to reduce the service with the cost differences outlined in the table below:

Service	Description	2023-24	2024-25	Diff to 2023-24
Current Lifeguard Service	Everyday from 25 th May to 8 th September	£29,064	£32,422	£3,378
Reduced Lifeguard Service	Weekends and holidays from 25 th May to 1 st September	-	£25,530	-£3,534

A discussion ensued around the potential risk to life should the service be reduced and it was therefore proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Town Council approves the budget for the RNLI Lifeguard service for 2024-25.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 2) Councillor Tomes left the room during consideration of the following item. In the absence of the Committee Chairman, it was agreed that Councillor Foster would assume the Chair during consideration of the item.

Consideration was given to section 2.1 of the briefing paper, which outlined the contributions to the seafront made by the Private Site beach huts, and the suggested increase was set out in the table below:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
No. of huts	56	56	56
Fee	£405.00	£425.00	£495.00
Less VAT	£68	£71	£83
Less Rates	£129	£149	£174
Net Fee	£208	£206	£238
Less Maintenance	£50	£166	£50
Less Administration	£40	£40	£40
Contribution per hut	£118	-£1	£148
Total Contribution	£6,616	-£35	£8,281
Change in Contribution on 2022-23		-6,651	1,666
% diff - fee		4.94%	16.47%
RPI		13.40%	8.90%

It was noted that the 56 private site beach hut charges supported the Council's costs in the running and maintenance of the beach. A contribution of around £6,616 in 2022-23 was made after VAT, business rates, maintenance of the staging and administration.

It was noted that due to the November storm damage to the staging, the forecast for 2023-24 would see a loss to the Council, and consideration of future storm damage needed to be considered.

It was noted that the huts were liable for business rates and the Council has been advised that an increase from £7,235.50 in 2022-23 to £11,850 in 2026-27, with proportionate increases each year. It was advised that the rates bill was currently being challenged, however a significant reduction was not anticipated. It was noted that the administration charge of £40.00 covered the administration of 56 agreements and postage costs.

Consideration was given to the retention of the same contribution to the seafront for 2024-25 as received in 2022-23, £460 for each hut, or the inclusion of the inflationary impact (over 20%), a fee of £495 was suggested (16.5% increase).

It was proposed by Councillor Foster and seconded by Councillor Moreton:

That the Town Council includes the inflationary impact in the fees for the Private Beach Huts and approves the fee of £495.00 in the budget for 2024-25.

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

It was noted that licensees would be communicated with prior to the final agreement of fees.

Councillor Tomes re-entered the meeting.

b) Staffing for the Visitor Services Team

Further to Minute No. 3) of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 13th October 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the VSBDM, which outlined the staffing options for the Swanage Information Centre as shown in the table below:

	Option	Increase on 23-24	% Change	Change in FTE
1.	Optimal service delivery, improved frontline service and website support	£20,920	10.5%	0.16
2.	Middle option, additional winter staffing for website support	£17,540	8.8%	0.06
3.	Scaled back option, no extension to winter opening and less website support	£14,880	7.5%	-0.04

A discussion ensued around the benefit to residents and visitors should option 1 be agreed and it was therefore proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That Option 1, for the staffing of the Swanage Information Centre, as set out in the briefing paper, be included in the draft budgets for further consideration by the Finance & Governance Committee as part of budget setting process for 2024/25.

A brief discussion ensued around the staffing requirements in other areas such as Seafront Advisors, Market staff, Boat Park and Beach Gardens, and the increased use of Beach Gardens during October, was noted.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the proposed amendments to staff budgets, set out in section 3 of the briefing note, be included in the draft budgets for further consideration by the Finance & Governance Committee as part of budget setting for 2024/25 and that approval for Beach Gardens Sports Park to open during October, subject to an increase in income to cover any additional staff costs, be approved.

c) Fees and Charges

Consideration was given to the proposed Scale of Fees and charges for 2024-25. It was noted that the Car Parks working had met to discuss changes to the car parks section which included a change to the free overnight parking hours, a 5% increase and a change in the length of bays attracting a higher rate. The Accessible Swanage representatives noted that the vehicles adapted to take wheelchairs were often over 4.8 metres in length and therefore it was noted that further discussion with the group would be undertaken prior to adoption.

Further to discussion it was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Scale of Fees and charges be included in the draft budgets for further consideration by the Finance & Governance Committee as part of budget setting for 2024/25.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:

That a review of campervan usage in Town Council car parks be reviewed by the Car Parks working party during 2024.

9) **D-Day commemorative weekend 2024 – Update**

The VSBDM reported that the Royal Signals Regiment would perform the Liberty of Swanage on 8th June 2024 and this would coincide with a 40 year army link to Swanage. Further information would be provided to the next meeting of this committee in March 2024.

10) **Swanage Friday Market – Update and proposed changes to terms and conditions and fees and charges for 2024-25**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM, which reviewed the progress of the Friday Market over 2023 and contained proposals for 2024-25. It was noted that the current pricing structure often caused confusion and therefore it was proposed that a simpler fee structure be developed.

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

That the proposed changes in the terms and conditions for the Friday Market as found in Appendix 1, and the revised fees for the Friday Market as found in Appendix 2 be approved. Furthermore, that delegated authority be provided to the Visitor Services and Business Development

Manager to discount fees, where appropriate, for catering facilities at the market to maximise the potential of obtaining such traders.

11) Events – 2024 event calendar and proposed changes to event parking allocation

Further to Minute No. 122 (d) of the Council Meeting held on 30th October 2023, the new events for 2024, as approved at that meeting were noted as follows: Coastal Barbarians Rowing Regatta, Swanage Army Link and D-Day Parade, Studland Swim Run, Swanaloolu Festival, Wareham Town Band and Jurassic Coast Macmillan Mighty Hike.

Members considered the parking arrangements for events held at Prince Albert Gardens, as outlined in the briefing paper, noting that currently permits for the use of the small parking area in Broad Road had caused some issues as the area was primarily designated as disabled parking. It was therefore proposed that six permits be issued for use within Broad Road car park and should the disabled area be required by an event organiser delegated authority be provided to the VSBDM, in consultation with the Events working party to consider the request.

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

That the proposed parking arrangements, with regards events using Prince Albert Gardens, be considered by the Finance and Governance Committee.

12) Visitor Services & Business Development Manager Report

The VSBDM provided an update which included:

- Beach Hut bookings during October had been the busiest yet.
- The Boat Park had been quieter than usual due to the weather with launches down 10% on the previous year.
- The Boat Park had seen an increase in storage bookings and was currently full.

13) Parish and Town Council Tourism Meeting on 15th March 2023 – Update

It was reported that the meeting held in March 2023, with neighbouring parishes and local organisations with an interest in tourism had been successful and a meeting would be arranged for March 2024.

14) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas including updates from outside representatives

Outside representatives provided the following updates:

- **Durlston Country Park** – Visitor numbers had remained reasonable despite the wet weather with lots of events held at the Castle. The new car park machines had suffered some teething issues but were up and running now. The Seventh Wave café had been granted a long term lease and would be open over winter.
Sheps Hollow - The steps at Sheps Hollow were no longer attached to the cliffside and would be closed for 6 months whilst the longer term future of this area was considered by Dorset Council and other agencies.
- **Swanage Railway** – It was noted that the £2.00 bus fare had impacted the Swanage to Wareham trial and the financial viability of running the trial next year was being investigated. ‘Save our Railway’ campaign was being launched and the Railway were encouraged to share the page to enable other organisations to share the link.
- **National Trust** – Climate change was having an impact on Corfe castle, and a three year conservation programme was planned, at a cost of £2 million. The third year would see full scaffolding on the castle.

Studland had seen several beach huts washed away during the recent storm and due to SSSI status it would be unlikely that additional space could be allocated for this purpose.

A Studland Masterplan, which would include cross boundary infrastructure such as transport was being planned for near future consultation.

- **Grand Hotel (Chamber of Trade)** – It was reported that further work had been undertaken in the area of signage and the data collected from Dorchester and Weymouth would be collated and an update brought to a future meeting. Thanks was provided to the Town Council for spreading the Christmas lights more evenly throughout the town.

a) Commercial Opportunities – Update

The VSBDM reported that the deadline for Expression of Interest had passed and the Town Council's Property Panel would review the applications next week.

b) Green Seafront Consultation – Update

The Green Seafront consultation had now closed and the Town Council would review the results prior to budget setting 2024-25.

15) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 20th March 2024 at 2.15p.m. at The Grand Hotel, Burlington Road, Swanage.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 4.15 p.m.

Minutes of a Meeting of the **COASTAL CHANGE & BEACH MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage, on **WEDNESDAY**
7th FEBRUARY 2024 at **2.15 p.m.**

In Attendance: Councillor M Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor C Finch – Swanage Town Council
Councillor C Tomes – Swanage Town Council
Mr I Brown – Swanage Coastguard
Mr R Eatwell – North Beach representative
Mr A Espana – FCERM Team, Dorset Council
Mr E Fox – RNLI
Mr P Loudoun – Seaweed concession representative
Mr R Marsh – Marsh Boats
Mr P Palmer – Pierhead Watersports and Bylaw Enforcement
Ms S Parker – Dorset Coast Forum, Dorset Council
Mr M Penny – FCERM Team, Dorset Council
Mr D Picksley – Environment Agency
Mr H Potter – Swanage Pier Trust/Swanage Sailing Club
Mr N Reed – Deputy Station Manager, Swanage NCI
Mr G Richardson – RNLI (until 2.35 p.m.)
Mr D Roper – Swanage Angling Club
Mr K Sheppard – RNLI
Ms E Steenkamp – FCERM Team, Dorset Council
Ms R Tanner – Land & Wave
Mr D Turnbull – RNLI
Mr M Turnbull - Founding Chairman, Swanage Coastal Change Forum

Also Present: Councillor C Moreton – Deputy Mayor
Councillor M Whitwam – Swanage Town Council
Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk
Mrs E Evans – Democratic Services Officer
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services & Business Development Manager
Ms G Percival – Assets and Compliance Manager
Mr G Roman – Grounds and Estates Manager

There were 16 members of the public and one member of the local press present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during public participation time:-

- A concern was raised regarding the instability of the cliff between Ocean Bay and Sheps Hollow and the impact on the properties situated above. A query was raised as to the ownership of the land and subsequent responsibilities. In response it was

noted that a presentation would be made by officers from the FCERM team under agenda item 3) which would cover the concerns raised.

- A query was raised around any assistance offered to property owners affected by cliff erosion. In response it was noted that a range of guidance is available including a householder's guide and the Shoreline Management Plan. It was reported that Dorset Council are also developing a Cliff Management Strategy.
- A question was asked regarding when replacement steps at Sheps Hollow would be installed. In response it was noted that a review of the steps would be commissioned as part of the Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme project.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor T Foster (Town Mayor), Mr T Flux (National Trust), Mr T Greasty (Designated Bathing Zone representative), Mr M Jones (Swanage NCI), Mr A Mears (Wessex Water), Mr R Waitt (Planet Purbeck), Mr C Wiggins (Beach concessionaire).

2) **To approve as a correct record Minutes of the Meeting of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 1st November 2023**

Proposed by Mr D Roper, seconded by Mr G Richardson and AGREED:-

That the Minutes of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 1st November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

3) **Dorset Council's Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Team update including the following projects:**

Further to Minute No. 4) of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 1st November 2023, an update was provided by the FCERM team which included the following:

a) **Swanage Town Centre Coastal Protection Scheme**

It was reported that the modelling update had been completed and internal meetings were being held to undertake the longlist appraisal process. A workshop in relation to this had been hosted by STC on 11th January 2024. It was noted that the project objectives and measurement criteria were in the process of being refined. It was reported that a Multi-Criteria Analysis workshop would be held on 19th February 2024.

b) **Beach Renourishment scheme**

It was stated that the Coastal Processes Assessment had determined that the rate of erosion had been overestimated in the Beach Management Plan (BMP). It was noted that a Partnership Funding calculator was currently being performed and the results would be reported to a future meeting. It was noted that as part of the agreement with Natural England, Bathymetric surveys were scheduled to take place in March and June 2024. The condition of the beach was noted as 'good' overall. The beach had recovered well from recent storm events, however, the north section of the beach had low areas in certain locations.

c) **Cliff Management Strategy**

It was reported that preliminary observations were taken on 28th November 2023. Durlston appeared to be retreating slowly, however, North Swanage had complex geology which led to different failure modes, mudslides (weak mudstones) or rock falls (strong sandstone). It was noted that further inspections would be undertaken in March 2024 via a LiDAR survey (light detection and ranging) and an update would be provided to a future meeting.

d) **Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP) project**

It was reported that the business case was underway, and it was anticipated that a Project Manager and a Consultant would be appointed by the end of February 2024. Discussions were continuing with the Environment Agency (national team) regarding the outline business case (OBC) delivery. It was noted that the OBC submission date had changed to late summer 2024 and engagement with key stakeholders would commence March 2024 and with the wider community in June 2024.

Further to questions raised, it was clarified that the surveys being undertaken in March 2024 would provide information regarding seabed and beach levels. It was noted that the beach level was not reducing as quickly as expected and therefore the date for recharge may be later than 2025/26, depending on the results of the modelling.

4) **Seaweed removal and beach raking – Presentation by the Assets and Compliance Manager**

A presentation was provided by the Assets and Compliance Manager, regarding seaweed removal and beach raking. It was noted that the current contract for beach raking and seaweed clearance would be coming to an end within the next two months, and the current contractor had indicated a desire to cease the provision of seaweed clearance, a service he had provided for the last 30 years.

The current operation to remove seaweed had been completed by the use of a tractor and trailer, the seaweed then being used as fertilizer on agricultural land. It was noted that changes in land management were being made on many local farms preventing nutrient enrichment to the land, thereby rendering the current operation impractical. It was noted that alternative measures and the associated challenges needed consideration and the following information was provided:

Seaweed removal

- Specific machinery is used for seaweed removal with additional challenges around the use of red or white diesel. Impact on machinery of operating on beach sand/salt etc.
- Requires constant monitoring to assess tides, access and the beach needs building up to gain access over groynes.
- The seaweed cannot remain for too long due to smell, integration with sand.

Where to take it

- Seaweed had previously been removed and used locally for agricultural purposes. Changes in policy mean that in many circumstances seaweed is no longer accepted onto agricultural land for nutrient enrichment. Initial discussions have not indicated a suitable location for deposit for agricultural purposes and previous locations cannot be used.
- If seaweed is treated as a waste product, rather than for agricultural purposes, the costs increase dramatically. At the moment the council cannot locate a location for tipping and if possible the council would need a mechanism to remove from the beach.
- The council do not own a suitable location for disposal.

What other authorities do

- Most places now do not collect seaweed e.g. Cornwall with only a very limited number collecting, such as Torbay.
- A number of other authorities push the seaweed back into sea and it is becoming part of the environmental agenda to leave it where it is.
- Blue Flag – desire to leave it in situ unless it constitutes a nuisance. In cases where it is removed the question is phrased - ‘how do you remove and dispose of it in an environmentally friendly way’.

Challenges of Swanage Beach relating to seaweed

- Swanage beach is relatively small and situated close to the town centre. The beach contains a number of groynes and has fairly unique tidal system.

Risks

- Large holes in beach.
- Seaweed on beach and impact on local economy.
- Resident and visitor expectations regarding the appearance of an un-raked beach.

Options

- Leave the seaweed on the beach.
- Push the seaweed back into the sea.
- Dispose of as waste.

Members acknowledged the difficulties arising from both the removal, or retention, of seaweed on Swanage Beach. It was reported that, having assessed the available options for the forthcoming the season, as a trial, the Town Council would most likely arrange for the seaweed to be pushed back into the sea. It was anticipated that this could provide challenges and in order to manage expectations of both residents and visitors the Town Council requested the support of attendees to communicate the current situation as necessary.

Thanks were given to the current seaweed and beach raking contractor for his invaluable service over the last 30 years.

5) Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation and Enhancement Scheme (Sandpit Field, Weather Station Field and Spa Beach Hut Area) – Report following public engagement

Further to Minute No. 145) of the Council meeting held on 11th December 2023, it was reported that the consultation had attracted 468 responses. It was noted that when presented with the question ‘Given all the considerations presented at this stage, which option would be your preferred scheme?’ 51.1% chose the enhanced scheme and 43.6% chose the essential scheme, 5.3% responding ‘don’t know’. The consultation results had also highlighted a strong desire for an improvement to pedestrian safety along the northern section of Shore Road (between the junction of Victoria Avenue and Ocean Bay) and an update would be provided to a future meeting.

6) Commercial Opportunities on Seafront – Update

The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) reported that Expressions of Interest had been received and had been reviewed by the Property Panel. It was anticipated that the successful businesses could be in operation from the hardstanding adjoining the Information Centre by the Easter break, subject to final negotiations.

7) RNLI Lifeguards – 2023 Review

A presentation was provided by representatives from the RNLI Lifeguards, which provided a review of service provision during 2023. It was suggested, as part of the 2024 recommendations, that the lifeguard unit be located further north to be positioned in the centre of the designated swimming zone and in between the red and yellow flags. The benefits were noted as being a more centralised position, between the Banjo Pier and Ocean Bay, providing an improved observation point towards the north, while still providing sufficient cover in the south. This matter would be given further consideration in due course.

8) **Proposal to form a Surf Life Saving Club**

It was noted that this item would be deferred to the next meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting being held in June 2024.

9) **Update from the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager**

The VSBDM provided an update which included:

- **Events** – It was reported that Coastal Barbarians Rowing Regatta would be held on 27th April 2024.
- **Private sites** – It was anticipated that the replacement staging for the private beach huts would be completed by the end of March.
- **Southern section of Shore Road** – It was reported that following the 18 month experimental traffic regulation order, the order had been made and the southern section of Shore Road (between the junction with Victoria Avenue and the Mowlem) would be permanently closed to vehicles.
- **Northern section of Shore Road** – It was noted that feasibility studies may be progressed in order to inform discussion regarding options for traffic flow for the northern section of Shore Road (between the junction with Victoria Avenue and Ocean Bay). It was noted that the road was currently closed to allow Dorset Highways to repair damage caused by Storm Ciaran.

10) **Updates from representatives/organisations**

- **Environment Agency** – It was reported that the concrete temporary wave barriers, which had been dislodged by Storm Ciaran, had been repositioned with the shorter end facing the sea. The barriers would be removed during the last week in March.
- **Swanage Pier** – The Strategic Plan for the future was being prepared and the café on the pier had a new operator.
- **Swanage Angling Club** – It was reported that the AGM was being held later today and a report would be provided to a future meeting.
- **Marsh Boats** – Comments were made regarding the uneven surface of the stone quay. In response it was noted that the quay was a Grade II listed asset and that conservation officers had advised the Town Council on the most suitable materials and methods to be used by the contractors to repair the quay.
- **Swanage NCI** – It was reported that the NCI currently had 60 watchkeepers. A tea and cake event would be held on Easter Sunday, 31st March 2024 and Easter Monday 1st April 2024. It was noted that there had been fresh ground movement at Peveril Point.
- **Bylaw enforcement** – It was noted that news regarding the implementation of a designated waterski zone was awaited.
- **RNLI Lifeboat** – It was noted that the RNLI had received a brand new inshore lifeboat and that 2023 had been a busy year.
The chairman explained the use of throw bags (used in a similar way to lifesaving rings) and noted that the RNLI anticipated placing the bags in locations around the bay such as the Pier and Ocean Bay. It was noted that training would be available in the appropriate use of the bags to save lives without endangering the lifesaver.
- **Coastguards** – It was reported there had been 102 incidents and ten fatalities during 2023. Praise was given for the assistance provided by all involved in the response to the incident in Swanage Bay in the summer.
- **North Beach representative** – It was noted that concerns regarding land slippage and its impact on the built environment had been addressed earlier in the meeting.
- **Founding chairman, Swanage Coastal Change Forum** – A visual interpretation of the anticipated sea level rises affecting Bude over the forthcoming years was

shared on screen. It was noted that the use of imagery was a powerful tool in communicating the effects of sea rise and the impact on coastal locations.
<https://www.budeclimate.org/shoreline>

11) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

- a) Swanage Beach Management Overview
The contents of a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM were noted.
- b) Motion for the Ocean [Motion for the Ocean – LGA Coastal SIG](#)
It was noted that further information would be provided to the Environment and Green Spaces Committee.
- c) Swan Brook Partnership Project
It was noted that an update regarding the project would be presented to the next Meeting of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee being held on 28th February 2024.
- d) Coastal Resilience Study – Update
Further to Minute No. 12 c) of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 1st November 2023, it was reported that as a newly elected council would begin its term in May 2024, this item would be revisited following elections, and that Dorset Council input would be essential.
- e) Town Council Beach Management Tour – 22nd May 2024
The date for the beach management tour was noted.
- f) Swanage Bay Byelaw Review
Further information would be provided to a future meeting.

12) Date of next meeting

The date of the next two meetings were noted as Wednesday 12th June 2024 @ 2.15 p.m. and Wednesday 2nd October 2024 @ 2.15 p.m.

The meeting closed at 3.55 p.m.

Charity Beach Hut Allocations

During February 2024 the Town Council released an application form for charities and community groups to submit requests to use the Swanage Shore Road beach huts during the year, at no charge.

18 applications were received from a variety of organisations. The Beach Hut Working Party met on Friday 15th March 2024 to review the applications and their recommendations are set out in the table below.

Delegation has previously been provided to the Visitor Services Manager to permit local charity and community groups to make beach hut bookings of up to seven days outside school holidays at no charge. It is proposed that this delegation will continue. However, it is noted that many of the applications received did not provide a great deal of information about how the beach huts would be utilised and, therefore, to be fair to all, many of the recommendations are for a single day. Further requests for charity/community beach huts are likely to be received during the year and the Visitor Services Team will support these as per the current policy.

The only long-hire period recommended is for the Purbeck Youth and Community Foundation, who have used the beach hut for emotional support for young children for many years. The recommendation is that officers agree this but ask that local schools work in partnership to provide a similar service, where possible, from a single beach hut, outside school holidays.

While two beach huts were provisionally set aside for all-year charity/community use, these will now be put back out for general bookings, less any dates indicated below.

Decision required

That the recommended charity beach hut bookings, set out in the table below, are approved.

Culvin Milmer
Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

March 2024

No.	Charity/Community Group name	Organisation Type	Requested dates	How will you use the beach hut?	Recommendation
1	Jurassic Care	Business (care)	April/May 2024	Bring clients for lunch and enjoy the sea views	1 day trial - subject to availability, outside school holidays
2	H & H Care	Business (care)	Any day Monday to Thursday	To enjoy the day at the seaside and use it as a base	1 day trial - subject to availability, outside school holidays
3	Little Birds Preschool	Business (preschool)	Monday the 8th July - Friday 12th July	A safe secure space/base to enable extended periods of time on the beach with our children	1 day trial - subject to availability, outside school holidays
4	Allsorted	Not for profit organisation	Open to any opportunities/dates available	To develop access to seaside leisure activities in Swanage and for some clients with autism provide a safe space when in sensory overload; To provide families of people with Learning disabilities respite/recharging time	1 day trial - subject to availability, outside school holidays
5	Swanage Linking Lives	Community Group	Fridays in June or early July - e.g. 21/6 & 28/6	To provide a place of welcome for lonely and isolated members of the community for a day or two by the beach. We will provide light refreshments, an opportunity to socialize and meet up for our existing and any new clients and befrienders.	1 day trial - subject to availability, outside school holidays
6	#Willdoes	Charity	Anytime	Provide a space for young people to meet up	1 day trial - subject to availability, outside school holidays
7	Swanage Women's Institute	Charity	Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 July 2024	Our annual fundraiser will take place on Sunday, 21 July 2024. We have booked the hard standing on the sea front. We would like to use the beach hut as a base for our members to meet, be able to use the hut during breaks and for providing refreshments to our volunteers.	1 day trial - subject to availability, outside school holidays
8	Volunteer Centre Dorset - Project - Community Credit Scheme	Charity	Two beach huts on 22nd May.	Invite Ferndown and Dorchester groups over and their carers. To meet and chat.	1 day trial - subject to availability, outside school holidays
9	Lewis Manning Hospice Care	Charity	5th and 12th July- 2nd and 9th August	For patients, families, carers and bereaved	5th and 12th July

10	Dementia Friendly Purbeck	Community group	Mon 13th May-Fri 17th May or Mon 24th June-Fri 28th June	To promote our charity by offering relaxation and social time for those living with dementia.	13th to 17th May
11	Swanage 999 Services	Informal Local Group	Swanage Carnival Week	For Swanage Ambulance staff and their families along with Police, Coastguard and other 999 responders to have access to a seafront lower level beach hut during carnival week, ensuring our local first responders can relax and unwind while still being available to assist locally if required.	Swanage Carnival Week
12	Mental Health Swims	Peer support community	One day a month	We will use the beach hut for getting changed in private. Making hot drinks to warm everyone and to gather socially before and after a swim.	Monthly but not school holidays, subject to availability
13	Swanage Disabled Club	Community Group	3 August to 9 August	Social purposes	3 August to 9 August
14	Purbeck Youth and Community Foundation	Charity	April 2024 - July 2024	During our 1 to 1 sessions with young people and walk and talk sessions	Approve - Officers to contact all Swanage schools to see if they are able to share a hut outside school holidays
15	Swanage Primary School	School	Any dates in school time	Children to go there who are going through or have been through problems deaths anxiety cancer etc a place to talk watch the sea and give them a break for a few hours with a teacher or a Elsa support person	Approve - Officers to contact all Swanage schools to see if they are able to share a hut outside school holidays

	DECLINED				
16	Lewis Manning Hospice Care	Charity	24th June to 28th June	To allow staff to have some downtime	Declined
17	Swanage Jazz Festival	Business (event)	12-14 July 2024	We would like to hire the beach hut for the duration of this year's Jazz Festival (12-14 July), and we anticipate it could be used for various purposes such as an information point for festival goers, a quiet space for volunteers and committee members to have a break or place for musicians to stow their instruments whilst they wander around the Festival.	Declined
18	Isle of Purbeck Arts Club	Community group	4th June 2024 - 7th May 2024	As a base for our activities	Declined

Swanage Museum – To consider report in connection with application for an Arts Council England MEND grant to improve the Heritage Centre building, Town Square.

The Swanage Museum Heritage Centre building is leased to the Museum by the Town Council. The current lease commenced in 2018 and runs until April 2026. The Landlord was previously Purbeck District Council however this was transferred to Swanage Town Council following Local Government reorganisation in 2019. The Lease identifies repairing responsibilities to be for the attention of the Tenant.

Minute No. 10 of the Community Services Committee held on 8th November 2023 notes the contents of a briefing note which set out the results of a recent condition survey of the Museum premises. The report identified several areas for repair with budget costs of circa £60,000 over the next 5 years. A meeting had been held to discuss the report with Swanage Town Council's Museum Working Party, Swanage Museum representatives and the Museums Advisor for BCP and Dorset Councils. It was noted that the Council and the Museum will be working closely together to make an application to the Museum Estate and Development Fund which will be accompanied by a letter of support from the County Museums Advisor.

In late February 2024 the Council and the Museum were notified of the launch of Round 4 of the Museum Estate and Development Fund and on 14th March a meeting was held with Museum and Council representatives and a Relationship Manager from the Art's Council's Cultural Investment Fund. A detailed expression of interest is required to be submitted by the 18th April 2024. If this is successful, a full application for funding is to be submitted by 12th July 2024.

One matter that has been highlighted is that the terms of the MEND grant requires that the Museum holds a lease of at least 10 years from the date of the grant award. Currently, that is not the case as the existing 10-year lease expires in April 2026. The matter is not entirely straightforward as the current lease is excluded from the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act, 1954 and consent for anything more than a seven-year term is required from Dorset Council under the terms of the 2019 asset transfer. The Town Council will therefore need to consider how best to provide the security of tenure required to comply with the grant terms and conditions.

The Council and the Museum are working together, supported by the Museum Advisor for BCP and Dorset Councils, to prepare all information required to submit the expression of interest.

Decision Required

To confirm the Town Council's support for the submission of an expression of interest and, if successful, a full application to Round 4 of the Museum Estate and Development Fund.

To recommend that the Council seeks legal advice and, at its next meeting, gives consideration to how best to provide Swanage Museum with the security of tenure required to meet the grant requirements.

Gail Percival
Assets and Compliance Manager

March 2024

CITY CRUISES POOLE

Report for Swanage Town Council
Tourism and Local Economy Committee
20th March 2024

Despite adverse weather and sea state conditions at times last year, City Cruises Poole is continuing it's two-boat service to/from Swanage Pier for another year. The new season runs from 30th March for the summer season until 31st October.

Departures from Swanage Pier are at:

10:30, 11:45, 13:00 [1pm], 14:30 [2.30pm] or 16:45 [4.45pm].

Departures from Poole Quay are at:

9.15, 10:30, 11:45, 13:00 [1pm], 14:45 [2.45pm] and 15:45 [3.45pm].

As usual, there will also be evening Bird Watching cruises leaving Swanage Pier at 19:00 [7pm]. The scheduled dates are on Fridays 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st May plus 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th June with the final sailing on 5th July. Commentary will be provided by Durlston Park Rangers as normal.

The ever popular Sea Train Adventure [City Cruises/Swanage Railway joint ticketing] continues for another year.

There might well be another joint venture announced shortly.

Compiled by Peter Sykes
from information supplied by Carol Scott
Regional Director, City Experiences Poole
17th March 2024