

Notes of an Informal meeting of the General Operations Committee held via Zoom video conference platform on Wednesday 10th November 2021 at 4.30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Councillor C Moreton - Chair

Councillor M Bonfield

Councillor T Foster

Councillor A Harris

Councillor D Monkhouse

Councillor C Tomes

Councillor M Whitwam

Mr A Bennett - Prospect Allotment Association (until 4.45 p.m.)

Mr M Green - James Smith Funeral Directors (until 4.50 p.m.)

Mr M Jones - Prospect Allotment Association (until 4.45 p.m.)

Dr M Ayres - Town Clerk

Miss G Percival - Operations Manager

Miss C Johnston - Operations Administration Officer

Mr C Milmer - Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer

Mr F Roberts - Swanage Landers

Mr C Wallis - Swanage Rotary Club (from 4.55 p.m. until 5.10 p.m.)

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor Bishop, Mr R Marsh (Swanage Fishermen's Association) and the Swanage Beach Buddies representative.

2) Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with paragraphs 9 – 13 of the Council's Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Bonfield declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda item 7)a) by reason of being a user of the Boat Park.

3) To approve the Minutes of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee Meetings held on 22nd September and 3rd November 2021

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield, and AGREED: -
That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee held on 22nd September & 3rd November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

4) Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 14th July 2021

No matters were raised.

5) Allotment Matters

a) Update on Allotment Inspections

The Operations Manager reported that the new inspection regime works well and is a positive improvement. It was confirmed that all vacant plots are offered to residents on the waiting list.

b) Anti-social behaviour at the Allotments

A representative of the Prospect Allotment Association enquired if there had been any further reports of theft and incidents of anti-social behaviour at Prospect Allotments. It was reported a new tenant had advised that they had been the victim of theft this week.

c) Allotment Car Park repair and strimming

It was noted that the erosion of the surface at the first allotment car park has been attended to and the condition will be monitored going forward.

d) Provision of an Allotment Skip

The Prospect Allotment Association made a request for a skip as one had been provided in previous years. It was agreed this would be arranged.

e) Matters raised by Prospect Allotment Association

A representative of the Prospect Allotment Association made reference to this year's water charges and questioned why the charge had increased so significantly. The question was raised whether the price of water had gone up or the amount of water used was more. It was agreed this information would be ascertained and provided to the Allotment Association.

Mr A Bennett and Mr M Jones left the meeting at 4.45 p.m.

6. Cemetery Matters

a) Godlingston Cemetery extension – progress report

The Operations Manager reported that the extension has reached the practical completion stage however there is a requirement for the contractor to return in spring to complete grounds maintenance works. The Operations Manager noted it was discussed at the recent Capital Projects Sub Committee that a working party be set up to discuss the cemetery regulations and future management of the extension. Recommendations arising from this will be presented to the March Operations Committee. In addition to councillors, Malcolm Green from James Smith Funeral Directors will attend the working party meetings. It was noted there would be two meetings, an initial one with Officers and a further one with Councillors in December. Councillors Moreton, Harris & Bonfield volunteered to serve on the working party.

b) Matters raised by James Smith Funeral Directors

There were no matters raised.

Mr M Green left the meeting at 4.50 p.m.

7. Fishermen's Huts and Jetties

a) Car Parking arrangements for Fishermen

It was reported that concerns had been raised by the Fishermen's Association with regard to inconsiderate parking in the fishermen's parking area. It was advised that the car park does not have sufficient spaces to satisfy the number of cars wanting to park at the boat park. Possible measures to alleviate this issue will be discussed internally in the first instance.

8. Capital Projects Sub Committee

a) Matters arising from minutes of meetings of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee

Further to Minute No. 9 of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee meeting held on the 22nd September, it was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and AGREED:

TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:

That a budget of £10,000 be allocated for the removal of the former Arts Club hut at North Beach Car Park

b) Draft Capital Programme 2022/23

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Bonfield, and AGREED:-

That the draft capital programme for 2022/23 be taken forward to the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee for further consideration as part of the budget setting process.

9. Request for a memorial tree and plaque at Prince Albert Gardens

Consideration was given to a request for a memorial tree and plaque to be planted and installed at Prince Albert Gardens. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes, and AGREED: -

To approve the request and to grant delegated authority to officers with regard to the location and planting of the memorial tree.

10. Waste

a) Dorset Waste Services – recap on Summer 2021 and service and plans for Summer 2022

Members reported that the contents of Dorset Council's current recycling and disposal arrangements circulated prior to the meeting were of great interest and the Chairman suggested that this should be posted on the Town Council's website. It was reported that Dorset Waste Services are facing challenges with recruitment and have made some revisions to employee contracts in this regard.

It was reported that the sample housing for the green barrel bins is awaited and that it has been confirmed by Dorset Waste Services that the Jurassic Raider will not be available next summer, and therefore resources allocated to Swanage for next year will be at 2019 levels. It was further reported that there is currently no road sweeper resource available for Swanage. The Operations Manager presented a paper regarding an additional temporary seafront waste operative during the months of June to August between the hours of Noon and 5.00 p.m. It had been identified that during the summer, litter picking and waste collection after lunchtime was critical. It was found that during this time lots of waste was produced which had led to overflowing bins and this additional resource will assist in managing this. It was noted that the October half term was busy and Town Council staff worked far beyond what was expected moving bins around and keeping areas clean. Thanks and appreciation were expressed for this work. After further discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Bonfield, and AGREED: -

That the recruitment of a temporary seafront waste operative be taken forward to the Personnel Committee for further consideration.

b) Update on activities from Swanage Landers and Swanage Beach Buddies

A paper providing an update on the recent work of Beach Buddies and Swanage Landers had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Frank Roberts of Swanage Landers further reported that several clear ups have been completed to the streets, side streets and the Square. He also reported that a pick-up point on Horsecliffe Lane had been agreed with Dorset Waste Services for the waste collected. The winter programme for more sweeping will commence once the leaves are all down. Frank gave thanks to the Operations Manager for drafting a Memorandum of Understanding. The Committee expressed appreciation to Frank Roberts for his sterling efforts.

11. Rotary Garden at Sandpit Field – Memorandum of Understanding

It was reported that to facilitate the future maintenance of the Rotary Garden a Memorandum of Understanding and a risk assessment had been developed in partnership with Swanage and Purbeck Rotary. The Operations team had completed the pruning and the Rotary Club will do the landscaping and tidying up. The Rotary Club representative gave thanks for the support provided by the operations team, as it had been a while since the garden had received a lot of attention.

12. Tree planting 2021/22

It was advised by the Operations Manager that 25 new trees and additional perennial shrubs will be purchased and installed in the next 2-3 months. A suggestion was made to publicise the planting on social media and it was agreed that this could be promoted on the Council's Facebook page.

13. Rights of way survey – progress report

Further to Minute No. 9)c) of the meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 11th November 2020, the Town Clerk reported that he had met with Ian Fleming, who is nearing completion of the parish rights of way survey. The resulting report will include suggestions for improvements, for example routes with fantastic views that have become obscured by overgrowth. The survey will be a positive and useful resource to draw on. The Town Clerk agreed to forward a finalised version to Councillors. The Chairman gave thanks to Councillor Foster for her assistance in the project.

14. Budget setting -

a) Draft Significant One-off Revenue budget 2022/23

Consideration was given to a schedule of significant one-off expenditure for the 2022/23 financial year. Following consideration by the Committee it was AGREED:

That the draft schedule of one-off expenditure for 2022/23 be taken forward to the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee for further consideration as part of the budget setting process.

b) Scale of Charges 2022/23

It was reported that the draft fees had been increased within the boundary of 2-4% due to rounding, although the fees for youth football teams had been maintained at a nil charge. Following consideration of the draft scale of charges by the Committee it was AGREED:

That the draft scale of charges for 2022/23 be taken forward to the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee for further consideration as part of the budget setting process

15. Health & Safety

a) Dog Waste

It was reported that since the end of July there had been 18 occasions when a Town Council operative had had to return to the Depot and change their personal protective equipment after encountering dog mess while strimming. This not only poses a threat to their health, but also increases operational costs. With so many on-going incidents a record book has been set up to record each episode.

A recommendation was made for more signage to be displayed around the town and the benefits of pedestrian flails rather than hand held strimming were highlighted. The Town Council is liaising with Litter Free Purbeck for movable A frame style signs to be placed in hot spot areas.

It was discussed how dog waste has been a continual problem and a suggestion was made to advertise the problem more and make people think twice about disposing of their dog waste. Also, to make the public aware that if they see any incidents they should report them, although it was noted that there is a limited number of dog wardens within Dorset. A further suggestion was made to write a letter to the Gazette, publicising the effects on volunteers and Town Council staff, and calling on residents to make 2022 a dog mess free year.

b) Report since July 2021

It was reported that there had been no reportable RIDDOR incidents and three accidents including a cut to the skin and a foreign object in the eye. Training undertaken by members of the Operations Department in the past few months included cable avoidance, cemetery memorial inspection and strimming and brushcutting. Six tool box talks on a range of subjects had also been completed.

16. Operation Manager's Update

It was noted that key matters had been raised earlier in the meeting.

17. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee had been scheduled for Wednesday 30th March 2022. A request was made to change the start time of future committee meetings to 2.15 p.m. in uniformity with other committees.

The meeting closed at 5.30 p.m.