

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council  
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on  
**MONDAY, 11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023** at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor C. Moreton

Councillor M. Bonfield

Councillor C. Finch

Councillor A. Harris

Councillor D. Monkhouse

Councillor N. Rogers

Councillor G. Suttle

Councillor W. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, 35 members of the public and one Member of the local press attended the Meeting.

**Public Participation Time**

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- In respect of agenda item 10, support was offered for the proposed development of affordable homes on the corner of Washpond Lane/Ulwell Road by Swanage Community Housing (SCH). Personal accounts of the difficulties faced by families unable to obtain secure housing were shared. Comments were made regarding the impact that a lack of affordable housing had on the community, which included the detrimental effect on the labour market and vibrancy of the town. In addition to the support offered, concern was raised over the limited amount of public consultation, to date, over the proposed housing development. It was stated that a meeting of local residents from the Ulwell Road area had highlighted the need for further information and particular concern was raised about the flood risk to the site. Some concern was also raised over the proposal to transfer the land directly from Dorset Council to Swanage Community Housing, without the involvement of the Town Council as had previously been envisaged.
- The Chairman of SCH provided an update on the progress of the group and explained that a full public consultation exercise would be held following the receipt of pre-application planning advice. It was stated that SCH was working in partnership with Hastoe Housing Association (HHA), which specialised in rural housing schemes. It was anticipated that a pre-planning application could be progressed by March 2024 and it was noted that the proposed development would be sympathetic to nature, allowing for wildlife corridors. It was noted that SCH membership now stood at over 60.
- In respect of agenda item 13, the Swanage Croquet Club representative offered thanks to the Town Council for considering its proposal to use Queen Elizabeth II (Forres) Field (QEII). With reference to the briefing note included in the agenda papers, it was argued that the Croquet Club's objectives were unlikely to require the specific consent of Fields in Trust. It was stated that the Club's preferred option would be sole use of the field, however, this would not be required until 2025, following a season of irrigation to monitor cracking of the soil.
- Others present drew attention to the use of the QEII field by dog walkers and concerns were raised that the use of the entire area by the Croquet Club would be

against the spirit of the Fields in Trust agreement, which was designed to protect public open space. It was further commented that such an agreement could set a precedent for similar change to be made to other green spaces, such as Day's Park. In response, a representative of the Croquet Club noted that the Public Spaces Protection Order prevented dogs being walked on lined playing pitches and therefore this area should not be used for that activity.

Reverend Ian Bird, Team Rector for Swanage and Studland Ministry, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.20 p.m.

131. **Apologies**

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Tomes.

132. **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.

No declarations were made on this occasion.

133. **Minutes**

(a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Moreton, and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on  
30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be approved as a correct record  
and signed.

In approving these minutes it was noted that the event named 'Swanalulu' had been incorrectly spelt as Swanaloolu.

134. **Finance and Governance Committee**

(a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance  
Committee Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 be  
approved as a correct record and signed.

Consideration was given to the following recommendation contained in  
the Minutes:-

5) **Peveril Point Road – Consideration of funding options**

Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Rogers and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves a budget of  
£200,000 for the Peveril Point Road highway and  
infrastructure improvement works, with £105,000 to  
be funded from the CIL reserve, in order to proceed  
to tender via Contracts Finder.

135. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Rogers and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

136. **Community Services Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Consideration was given to the following recommendations contained in the Minutes:-

3) **To review Committee membership**

Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a representative from the Swanage Museum, Swanage Community Housing Project and Swanage Community Skatepark Project be invited to sit on the Community Services Committee as outside representatives.

5 a) **To approve a Community Highways Policy and Traffic Management Request Form**

Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council adopts the Community Highways Request Policy and Traffic Management Request Form.

22) **To consider engaging a consultant to undertake survey, investigation and design works relating to a retaining wall at Victoria Terrace/Marsh Way**

Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That Stress UK be jointly engaged with the property owner of 1a Victoria Terrace to undertake survey, investigation and design works for the wall at 1a Victoria Terrace/Marsh Way on a party wall basis for the sum of £6,938 (exc. VAT), noting that direct costs to the Council would be £3,469.

137. **Tourism and Local Economy Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

138. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

It was noted that the Minutes from the Planning and Consultation Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 would be deferred to the next meeting of the Council.

139. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).
- (b) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

140. **Payment of Accounts**

In accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Council's Financial Regulations, the following Payment Schedule was submitted for information:-

- Payment Schedule 7, amounting to £1,412,694.95.
- Payment Schedule 8, amounting to £1,165,209.82.

141. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor wished to note how pleased she was with the number of attendees at the meeting and encouraged all to engage with the Council as much as possible, in order for the Council to best represent the needs of the community.

142. **Conclusion of Audit 2022/23 – To note receipt of Section 3, External Auditor Certificate**

It was reported that the Town Council had received the External Auditor Report and Certificate for the 2022/23 financial year, confirming that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return had been completed 'in accordance with Proper Practices' and no matters had been identified 'giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met'. It was noted that a letter had been issued by the external auditor, which clarified that the 'other matter' referred to at the end of the report, relating to whether the previous year's figures on the annual return had been noted as having been re-stated, had been included by the auditors in error. Thanks were extended to the Council's Finance Manager, Alison Spencer, for her hard work. It was AGREED:-

That the Town Council notes receipt of the external auditor report and certificate from PKF Littlejohn LLP for the year ended 31st March 2023 and that no further action is required.

143. **Committee Terms of Reference – To confirm minor amendments in respect of Community Services Committee and Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee**

Further to Minute No. 1 of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023, consideration was given to a minor amendment to the wording of the Terms of Reference to include a key item from the remit of the Swanage Coastal Change Forum, which had recently been incorporated within the advisory committee.

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

That the Town Council approves the minor amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee as follows:

**Main Objective/Remit:** To advise the Council on measures required to provide a safe, clean and well-maintained beach facility, compliant with the European Blue Flag criteria. Also to provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss matters relating more widely to the management

of the impacts of *climate induced* coastal change in Swanage and Durlston Bays and make recommendations to Council accordingly.

It was noted that a recommendation to expand membership of the Community Services Committee had been considered under Minute No. 136 (a) above.

144. **Swanage Community Housing – To consider confirming Town Council support for the allocation of land on the corner of Washpond Lane and Ulwell Road for the construction of community housing and the associated asset transfer from Dorset Council**

Further to Minute No. 101(d) of the Council Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk and a progress report provided by Swanage Community Housing (SCH).

Members acknowledged the comments raised during public participation time and were sympathetic to both the difficulties faced by families in need of affordable housing and also the concerns raised around the site in question and the limited amount of consultation undertaken to date. A brief overview and timeline of the project was provided and SCH was praised for the detailed and informative report provided. Nevertheless, it was noted that if the perception of local residents was such that adequate information had not been supplied, a delay in the decisions required by the Council should be considered to allow consultation to take place.

If the matter was to be deferred significant support was voiced for that deferral to be no longer than one month, in order that there was minimal delay to the housing project. It was noted that the next scheduled Council meeting was due to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Trite and  
RESOLVED:-

That the Town Council defers further consideration of the development of a community housing scheme on the land on the corner of Washpond Lane and Ulwell Road for one month, in order to allow SCH time to offer some initial public engagement and to report thereon to the next Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

145. **Green Seafront – To receive report from Dorset Coast Forum on outcome of public consultation, to note its content and to consider next steps.**

Further to Minute No. 107(d) of the Council Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk, and a report completed by Dorset Coast Forum, which set out the results of the public feedback on the two possible draft options presented. Of the 468 respondents to the survey who responded to 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’.

Members noted the quality of the report provided by Dorset Coast Forum and commented that it would prove extremely useful in helping the Council to evaluate next steps. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Suttle and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council notes the contents of the Green Seafront Stabilisation and Enhancement Scheme Public Consultation Report and convenes a Councillor workshop in early January 2024 to consider the next steps.

146.

**Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

(a) **Property Panel, 6<sup>th</sup> November and 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

It was reported that, at the recent meetings of the Property Panel, discussions had been held regarding the Expressions of Interest received in regard to opportunities for concessions on Town Council owned land, and an update would be provided to the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

(b) **Car Parks, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

It was reported that, at the meeting of the Car Parks working party, discussions had been held regarding the scale of fees and charges, which would be reviewed at the next Finance and Governance Committee meeting being held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023. Changes to the Council's Off-Street Parking Places Order had also been considered.

(c) **Environmental Policy and Action Plan, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

A brief report on progress in implementing the Environmental Action Plan was provided.

(d) **Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

It was noted that discussions held at the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing working party meeting would be considered under agenda item 14.

147.

**Queen Elizabeth II (Forres) Field – To consider recommendation from the Community Services Committee that the Croquet Club's request for permission to permanently relocate to Queen Elizabeth II (Forres) Field be approved, together with a potential review of green space at QEII and King George's Fields**

Further to Minute No. 13 of the meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper that outlined a request made by Swanage Croquet Club for use of the QEII field and concerns raised by Swanage Town & Herston Football Club regarding the potential loss of capacity for youth football games.

A discussion ensued as to whether the exclusive use of a significant part of the field by one club might impact on future options for the Town Council and other sports clubs/organisations. In light of this debate, the recommendation from the Community Services Committee 'That the Croquet Club's request for permission to permanently relocate to Queen Elizabeth II (Forres) Field be approved' was not moved.

Consideration was given to alternative ways forward and the benefits of pursuing a one-year trial use of part of the field by the Croquet Club, as agreed by the Community Services Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023, were highlighted. Attention was drawn to the possibility set out in the briefing note of commencing work on the Town Council's Greenspace Strategy (approved at the meeting of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023) with a focus on the future of the QEII field and the adjoining King George's Playing Field. It was acknowledged that this work would not get underway until the summer of 2024.

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

That the Town Council reaffirms its approval of the request made by Swanage Croquet Club for the use of part of the Queens Elizabeth II (Forres) Field for a trial period of one year, and that no fee should be charged for the duration of the one-year trial period.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That work on the Greenspace Strategy should commence with a focus on Queen Elizabeth II

(Forres) Field and King George's Field, including engagement with all local sports clubs to determine the strategic parameters for future uses of this area.

148. **Day's Park - To agree to work with Swanage Town & Herston Football Club to provide a community sports facility at Day's Park and carry out community engagement**

Further to Minute No. 122 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, and a meeting of the Sport, Leisure & Wellbeing Working Party held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk, which set out the background to recent discussions about the future of sports facilities at Day's Park. It was noted that three options had been identified, one a Sports and Social Centre (supported by Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust), a smaller community sports facility or a hybrid version of the two other options. The 'hybrid option' was considered to be the best balance between the range of community facilities provided and the cost. It was acknowledged that community engagement would be pivotal for the success of the project and it was anticipated that following a meeting with local sports clubs to gauge their potential use of the facilities, a wider community engagement phase would be undertaken to understand the broader community need. It was noted that Dorset Council's Leisure Services Manager and his team would continue to provide support and guidance.

It was proposed by Councillor Rogers, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council agrees to work with Swanage Town & Herston Football Club to provide a community sports facility at Day's Park, commencing with a two-phase engagement with local sports clubs and the wider community.

149. **Swanage Town Council (Off-Street) Parking Places Order 2024 – To consider proposed next steps**

Further to a meeting of the Car Parking Working Party on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023, Members considered the contents of a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk which detailed a number of proposed changes to parking arrangements in the Town Council's car parks. These included:

- Revised definition of overnight parking in long-stay car parks, 9 p.m. to 8 a.m.
- Consistency with Dorset Council car parks in preventing overnight parking of motorhomes.
- Introduce 'multi-use' spaces for longer vehicles.
- Clarify qualifying criteria for a resident's permit.
- Introduce no return periods in short stay car parks.
- Introduce free overnight parking in Council car parks.
- Introduce winter charging in North Beach car park.

The briefing note also set out an indicative timetable for making a new Off-Street Parking Places Order, as follows:

- Mid-January – Car Parking Working Party meets to consider final draft order and schedules. Undertake formal consultation with Dorset Council and Dorset Police.
- 29<sup>th</sup> January – Council confirms draft order (subject to any changes proposed by Dorset Council prior to publication) and provides authority to officers, in consultation with the Car Parking Working Party to consider any objections.

- 5<sup>th</sup> February – Publish notice of proposals in local press, write to those immediately affected and display in car parks. Make deposited documents available for consultation.
- 27<sup>th</sup> February – Expiry of deadline for objections to the proposals.
- 1<sup>st</sup> March – Meeting of Car Parking Working Party to review objections received and consider modifying the draft order. If modifications proposed, then inform those directly affected and allow a reasonable time for them to respond.
- 25<sup>th</sup> March – Council agrees to make final version of parking order, incorporating any modifications, and writes to all those whose objections were not addressed within 14 days. Order sealed. Make final order available for inspection and publish notice of making. Erect amended signage.
- 1<sup>st</sup> April – Swanage Town Council (Off Street) Parking Places Order 2024 comes into force (Easter Monday).

Further to Minute No. 8 c) of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023, it was noted that further discussion would be held with the Accessible Swanage group to ensure changes to the order would not be discriminatory and that improvements to disabled parking would be identified prior to adoption of a new order.

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

That the Town Council approves the recommendations made by the Car Parking Working Party at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> November as the basis of further consideration and endorses the indicative timetable for making a new Off-Street Parking Places order.

150. **Public Transport – To consider request from Dorset Council for letter of support for ZEBRA 2 (Zero Emissions Bus Regional Area) funding bid for a fleet of electric buses to operate routes 40 (Swanage to Poole via Wareham) and 50 (Swanage to Bournemouth via Studland)**

Consideration was given to information provided by Dorset Council regarding a funding bid for a fleet of electric buses to operate bus routes 40 and 50. A draft letter of support had been included as a supporting paper and it was **AGREED:-**

That the Town Council endorses the letter of support in respect of Dorset Council’s funding bid for a fleet of buses to operate routes 40 (Swanage to Poole via Wareham) and 50 (Swanage to Bournemouth via Studland).

151. **Reports from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillors Suttle and Trite:

- It was reported that Dorset Council’s (DC) Eastern Area Planning Committee had reviewed two planning applications in Swanage, which STC had strongly opposed. One planning application had been refused by DC’s planning committee (3 Ballard Estate) with the other planning application approved (23 De Moulham Road).
- It was anticipated that the second home Council Tax premium would be discussed at the February Council meeting. It was noted that the additional charges would contribute an additional £10 million into the budget from the 2025/26 financial year.
- It was reported that Dorset Council’s budget would be finalised within the next six weeks.



- It was reported that Dorset Council would need to increase Council Tax by just under 5%, largely as a result of the costs associated with the increase in demand for adult social care and children’s services.
- Applications for round 6 of the Community Culture Fund would close on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The fund offered 80% of total project costs, from £1,000 up to £5,000 for ‘not for profit’ organisations to start new activities and events that benefit the local community.

152. **Reports from Council Representatives on Outside Organisations**

(a) **Swanage Pier Trust**

It was noted that the current Town Council representative would end their term as a trustee to the Swanage Pier Trust and therefore a position would be open. Interested parties were encouraged to contact the Town Clerk.

(b) **Emergency Health Services**

It was noted that a meeting of the Emergency Health Services working party would be held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 with Nick Reynolds, County Commander for South West Ambulance Foundation Trust, where clarification would be sought over information received about recent usage of the ambulance car.

(c) **Chamber of Trade**

It was reported that £1,000 worth of goods had recently been stolen from a local store, by a persistent shoplifter, and it was queried whether a representative from the Police force could be invited to a future meeting in order to discuss concerns.

153. **Reporting of delegated matters**

Further to Minute No. 22 of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and Minute No. 136 (a) above, it was reported that due to the urgency of repairs required to the wall an order had been placed for the survey and design work in order to expediate the process.

154. **Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas**

(a) **Mowlem Theatre – Draw down of grant due to successful fundraising for improvements to community room**

Further to Minute No. 49 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023, it was reported that the Mowlem Theatre had been successful in fundraising and would be in a position to draw down the funds from the Town Council grant of £5,000 towards the renovation of the Community Room.

(b) **Annual Report 2023**

It was noted that an Annual Report would be distributed to homes early in the new year and some paper copies would be available from the Town Hall, Visitor Information Centre and Swanage Library.

(c) **Extraordinary Meeting, 18th December - to consider report on expressions of interest in operating concessions on Town Council property and other legal, commercial and procurement matters, Monday 18th December**

It was noted that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council would be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to report on the expressions of interest in operating concessions on Town Council property and other legal matters. Members of the public would be welcome to attend and speak within public participation time, however, due to the confidential nature of the items to be discussed the remainder of the meeting would be held in private.

(d) **Environment Agency**

It was noted that, due to Storm Ciarán, the concrete blocks installed by the Environment Agency as a sea defence had been moved by the particularly strong waves. The Environment Agency planned to reposition the blocks with the shorter side facing the sea and install additional blocks to provide a stronger resilience

against the strong tide. This would result in an obstruction to the pathway in places but was deemed essential. It was anticipated that the Environment Agency would undertake these works in the lower High Street on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

The Chairman thanked all those for their attendance at the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.

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