

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council  
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on  
**MONDAY, 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2022** at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T Foster – Chair

Councillor C Moreton

Councillor J. Bishop

Councillor M.P. Bonfield

Councillor C Finch

Councillor A. Harris

Councillor N. Rogers

Councillor G.M. Suttle

Councillor W. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

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

Sue Sutton (NHS Dorset) and Nick Reynolds (SWASFT) attended Public Participation Time remotely.

**Public Participation Time**

The following matters were raised:-

- **Washpond Lane** – comments were made by the occupiers of a plot of land on the corner of Washpond Lane and Ulwell Road regarding the possible allocation of the field for a community affordable housing development. Disappointment was expressed at the suggested change of use, as the plot had been used to graze animals for many years and investment had been made accordingly. Concerns were raised regarding the suitability of the site for this purpose, including flood risk and traffic management (the plot being situated on the corner of two roads with no pavement). The need for affordable housing for local people was acknowledged, but it was argued that other more suitable sites existed, such as the Council Depot/Kings Court site on Kings Road West. In response, it was stated that the comments had been noted and that further discussion would be held under agenda item 9.
- **Sports Facilities** – it was brought to the attention of Members that a television programme had highlighted the success of a rugby club in Wales in obtaining lottery and government funding to retain a sports facility through its conversion to a multi-function community centre and rugby club.
- **Former St Mark's Playing Field, Herston** – a query was raised regarding the allocation of funds for future improvements. It was noted that this was being reviewed through the budget setting process.
- **NHS Dorset/SWASFT** – an update was provided regarding local ambulance services and current NHS pressures. It was acknowledged that the staffing of the ambulance car had been difficult over the last two years due to a number of factors, including Covid-19, long Covid and recruitment to vacant posts, which had proved particularly difficult in rural areas. The percentage of shifts fully staffed had risen from 49.3% to 73.3% between August and November 2022.

It was noted that during November Dorset ambulance response times to a Category 1 call averaged 8mins 43s (compared to the National Standard of 7mins) and to a Category 2 call 41 mins 31s (compared to the National Standard of 18mins). Handover delays at hospitals are a significant problem across the Trust and resulted in more than

11,000 hours of lost ambulance availability in the first week of December. It was noted that various factors contributed to the delays which included the reduced capacity in hospitals due to the inability of patients to leave hospital into an appropriate care setting. NHS Dorset were working with partners to increase capacity, including MIUs and urgent treatment centres, and explore alternative transport options to alleviate hospital pressures.

Further to a brief question and answer session the NHS/SWAFST representatives were thanked for their update and left the meeting.

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

The Chair opened the Council Meeting at 7.35 p.m.

106. **Apologies**

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Tomes. Councillor Monkhouse attended the meeting remotely.

107. **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. 17 (a)** - Councillor Suttle declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of having a family connection with the contractor.

108. **Minutes**

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

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

109. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

It was noted that the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 would be brought forward to the next Council Meeting for approval.

110. **Finance and Governance Committee**

Proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Harris and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

8 b) **Adoption of the draft Council Priority Plan winter/spring 2022/23**

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

That the draft Council Priority Plan winter/spring 2022/23 be adopted.

111. **Community Services Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Community Services  
Committee Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022 be  
approved as a correct record and signed.

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

4) **Support for the S&PDT Wellbeing Project**

It was noted that this would be discussed under agenda item 8 (a) – see Minute  
No. 118 (a), below.

5 b) **Adoption of the revised Godlingston Cemetery Regulations**

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

That the revised Godlingston Cemetery Regulations  
be adopted and implemented from January 2023,  
and the fee for the exclusive right of burial in all  
earthen graves within the extension area of  
Godlingston Cemetery be set at the ‘B grave’ rate.

112. **Tourism and Local Economy Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Tourism and Local  
Economy Committee Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup>  
November 2022 be approved as a correct record and  
signed.

113. **Environment Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Environment Committee  
Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 be approved  
as a correct record and signed.

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

7 a) and b)

**Adoption of the draft Tree Policy and Strategy**

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

That the Dorset Council Tree Policy be adapted for  
Swanage Town Council purposes and adopted together  
with the Swanage Town Council Tree Strategy.

114. **Personnel Committee**

Proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Harris and  
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed

115. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 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 2022 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

116. **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 £241,654.30
- Payment Schedule 8, amounting to £400,734.75

117. **Chairman's Announcements**

Councillor Foster gave thanks to Councillor Moreton for deputising during her illness and for his ongoing support. Councillor Foster reported that she was happy to have been able to return to her duties and had attended the following events as Town Mayor since the Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022:

- Switch on Swanage – thanks were given to Town Council staff for their hard work in the organisation of the event, which had been well attended despite the wet weather and to Councillor Finch for her time given to the raffle.
- Artisans on the beach – 37 beach huts had been utilised by local artists and craftspeople.
- Purbeck Coast Radio - the Town Clerk had accompanied the Mayor to Purbeck Coast Radio for an interview to discuss the draft Corporate Plan 2022-25.
- Old Grammar School weathervane – the Mayor had received the restored weathervane from Barratts Housing Development, on behalf of the town, earlier today. The location for installation would be discussed at a future meeting.

Upcoming events included:

- Carol Service – a traditional candlelit service at St Mary's Church on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022 @ 6.30 p.m.
- Linking Lives - Boxing Day 'Leftover Lunch' event to bring local people together.

118. **Funding requests**

(a) **Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust Wellbeing Project**

Further to Minute No. 4 of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022, and a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk, consideration was given to a proposal from Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust in respect of the Chapel Lane premises (Children's Centre and Day Centre). This included a request for the Town Council to provide a grant of £21,000 p.a. for three years, in order to underwrite 50% of the estimated cost of operating the premises. It was anticipated that a decision by Dorset Council in respect of the asset transfer was expected imminently, and it was noted that officers at the principal authority were supportive of the Trust's proposal to maximise community use of the premises.

During the debate, Members agreed that this project would benefit the wellbeing of the townspeople and that the transfer of the property to the Development Trust would ensure that the property would be retained for future community use. It

was also acknowledged that the Council would be making a significant financial commitment to the project, and therefore measures should be put in place to ensure that public funds were adequately protected.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Harris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council provide grant funding to Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust in support of the proposed Chapel Lane wellbeing project and that a sum of £21,000 be included in the draft budgets for 2023/24 and the two following financial years.

(b) **Mowlem Trustees**

Further to a recent meeting between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and officers with trustees of The Mowlem, consideration was given to a letter that had been received regarding a request for funding to support the future development of the theatre and its offer to local residents. It was noted that the proposal would benefit from further discussion between the trustees and the Sports, Leisure and Wellbeing Working Party and that a report should be brought to a future meeting.

119. **Swanage Community Housing**

Further to Minute No. 187(a) of the Council Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022, consideration was given to a letter received from Swanage Community Housing CLT (SCH), dated 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022, requesting the Town Council to change its policy in respect of the grazing field on the corner of Washpond Lane and Ulwell Road. It was reported that this land had previously been discounted as a site for housing due to a significant part of it laying within a flood zone, and the Town Council had resolved that it should be protected as a green open space. However, the letter from Swanage Community Housing explained that there were currently no other viable sites available and that despite it being partly in the flood zone it was anticipated that the site could have capacity to accommodate approximately seven dwellings, subject to planning consent.

A discussion ensued around the high level of affordable housing need in Swanage and the difficulties that would need to be overcome to develop the previously suggested brownfield site at the Depot/Kings Court, Kings Road West. Further to representations in public participation time, Members empathised with the current tenants of the land and some support for retaining the land for this purpose was also expressed. It was stressed that at this stage the Council was being asked to take an in principle decision to commit to an allocation of part of the land for the construction of community housing for local people. This would enable SCH to spend some of their funds on exploring this possibility further. It was noted that a final decision would only be taken once the asset transfer from Dorset Council had been completed and the outcome of SCH's research was known. Ultimately, any development would also be the subject of a planning application.

The Chair invoked Standing Order No.1 p. to briefly suspend the meeting so as to allow the occupier of the land to answer a question regarding their current grazing agreement.

Councillor Rogers declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by reason of being a member of Swanage Community Housing and left the Meeting prior to the vote being taken.

Having carefully considered the content of the letter from Swanage Community Housing it was proposed by Councillor Bishop and seconded by Councillor Suttle:-

That, subject to the outcome of further studies regarding the suitability of the land on the corner of Washpond Lane and Ulwell Road, the Town

Council agrees to support the Swanage Community Housing group taking forward the site as an affordable housing delivery opportunity for local people.

Upon being put to the Meeting, FIVE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and there were FOUR ABSENTIONS, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

Councillor Rogers re-entered the Meeting.

120. **Working Party Matters**

(a) **Environmental Policy and Action Plan– Update**

Further to Minute No. 80 of the Council Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022, it was reported that officers had been working with the Council's appointed consultant and SALIX over recent weeks regarding an application for a grant to support the Council's ambitions around delivering carbon neutrality. During the process a number of issues had been identified, including the fact that SALIX will now only fund approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total project cost of around £550k, which must all be spent by the end of the next financial year. Therefore, having consulted with the Environmental Policy and Action Plan working party, officers no longer felt it appropriate to continue the grant application for this round of funding. It was agreed that the working party should consider next steps and develop a way forward in advance of the next meeting of the Environment Committee in the new year.

121. **Budget Setting arrangements for 2023/24**

It was reported that a second budget workshop for councillors would be held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023, prior to a Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee, currently scheduled for Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

122. **Donation of children's ride for installation at Day's Park Play Area**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager which detailed a request from a local family for permission to donate a piece of play equipment to be installed at Day's Park play area in memory of their young child. It was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council accepts the donation of a new piece of play equipment in Day's Park play area to be privately funded by a local family in memory of their child, the procurement, location and installation of the equipment to be overseen by the Assets and Compliance Manager.

123. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

Councillors Suttle and Trite provided updates on matters that included the following:

- Dorset Council budget - in October 2022 Dorset Council faced a £29 million deficit and by December 2022 this had been reduced to a £13.2 million deficit.
- Policing - reports of antisocial behaviour in town were noted. Police had urged people to report crime in order for adequate police resources to be provided to the town.
- Herston Yards walked route to schools – Dorset Council had organised the provision of hi-viz jackets and torches to assist the pupils on the route to and

from school in the darker months. It was reported that the need for suitable transport would again be raised with the leader of Dorset Council.

- Library Consultation – the closing date was noted as 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022.
- Landlords – attention was again drawn to the fact that Dorset Council were in need of social landlords for the provision of accommodation for care leavers.
- Planning – frustration was expressed at the lack of planning officer site visits and concern was raised that the views of stakeholders and residents often appeared to be disregarded during the application process.

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

(a) **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership**

It was noted that the 90-day trial service from Swanage to Wareham would commence in spring 2023, operating four days per week.

(b) **Pubwatch**

It was reported that Pubwatch meetings would recommence on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022, at the Town Hall, with Dorset Council licensing officers and police representatives in attendance.

(c) **Swanage Pier Trust**

It was noted that re-boarding works were continuing on the Pier.

(d) **Chamber of Trade**

Thanks were provided to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their contribution to the Chamber of Trade video, which promoted shopping local for Christmas, and would be shared on Facebook.

It was reported that Councillors Bishop and Finch had met with two companies keen to provide banking facilities in the town and further information would be provided to a future meeting.

125. **Reporting of delegated matters**

- (a) Further to Minute No. 80 of the Council Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022, it was noted that an update in respect of the SALIX grant had been given earlier in the meeting (see Minute No. 120 (a) above).
- (b) Further to Minute No. 105 of the Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, it was reported that discussions with Jurassic Fibre regarding the installation of an exchange cabin at North Beach car park were ongoing.

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

- (a) **Future of Swanage-based Ambulance Car – Update** – further to the information provided during public participation time, there was no further update to report.
- (b) **A & E Local – Update** – it was noted that Dorset Council had yet to establish a Task and Finish Group to address concerns regarding local A&E provision, to which it had previously committed. Dorset councillors agreed to raise this matter with the relevant portfolio holder.
- (c) **Swanage policing – Update** – further to a meeting with PS Colvin on 5<sup>th</sup> December it was noted that in order to secure appropriate officer support in Swanage, crime needed to be reported.
- (d) **Shore Road – Update on experimental closure of section between Victoria Avenue and the Mowlem** - it was reported that the feedback provided to Dorset Council to date consisted of 64 objections and 104 supportive comments.
- (e) **Corporate Plan - Update** – it was noted that 181 responses had been received to the consultation exercise, 114 paper responses and 67 online. Initial analysis had found that over 90% of respondents were supportive of the Council's stated priorities. The results would be studied in further detail and an update provided to a future meeting.

- (f) **Beach Monitoring** – it was stated that the Environment Agency, working with Plymouth University, was planning to install a temporary scanner on the promenade/sea wall near to the Alfred Memorial, in order to monitor changing sand levels on the beach.
- (g) **Swanage Town Accessibility Audit – Update** - it was noted that the Accessibility Audit had been completed and would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee.

### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Trite and AGREED:-  
That, under Standing Order No. 1 c), in the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda item 17 for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

Further to Councillor Suttle's declaration under Minute No. 107, he left the Meeting prior to discussion of the following item.

### 127. **Procurement**

#### (a) **Contract for repairs to Stone Quay, Parish Slipway and other coastal infrastructure**

Further to Minute No. 8 of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee, held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which explained the outcome of a recent tender exercise in respect of works required to the Parish Slipway, Stone Quay and Monkey Beach. Attention was drawn to the fact that although five companies had been invited to tender only one submission had been received. In considering next steps, Members took into account the following matters:

- The pool of five specialist companies invited to quote was determined with input from Project Engineers from Dorset Council who have experience of the range of suitable contactors for this type of specialist work regionally.
- The limited window of opportunity for these works to be undertaken, i.e. they cannot be undertaken in winter when the concrete wave barriers are in situ, nor can they be undertaken in the summer season due to the degree of disruption and safety concerns. This leaves April and September as the only feasible opportunities.
- The impact of any further delays to the work on the extent of deterioration in condition of the toe and edging stones of the Parish Slipway. Further delay may lead to increased costs and/or the structure becoming unsafe.

In light of the above, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, in accordance with Financial Regulation 18.2, Financial Regulations 11.2 and 11.11 be suspended (so far as they require tenders for work in excess of £60,000 to be advertised) in order to award the contract for repairs to the Parish Slipway, Stone Quay and Monkey Beach to Suttle Projects Ltd in the sum of £66,342.55 and that a 15% contingency be costed into the budget.

Councillor Suttle re-entered the Meeting.



(b) **Procurement of Additional Pay & Display Machines**

Consideration was given to a briefing note, prepared by the Finance Manager, which outlined the performance of the existing car park machines and pressures associated with increased visitor numbers. It was noted that the procurement of new machines would enable a quicker throughflow of visitors paying for parking and a more efficient use of Enforcement Officer time. The briefing note recommended acquisition of Flowbird Compact S5 machines, which had recently been installed in Lyme Regis and were performing well compared to other available models. Following due consideration, it was proposed by Councillor Bishop, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council agrees a budget of up to £25,000, financed from the general fund, to purchase and install 4 solar powered Compact S5 pay & display machines and directly awards the contract to Flowbird through the ESPO Framework 509.

The Meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

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