

Minutes of the **MONTHLY MEETING** of the Swanage
Town Council held via Zoom on **MONDAY, 27th JULY 2020**
at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M.P. Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor C. Finch
Councillor T. Foster
Councillor A. Harris
Councillor D. Monkhouse
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor J. Page
Councillor G. Suttle
Councillor C. Tomes
Councillor W. Trite
Councillor M. Whitwam

Five members of the public attended the Meeting.

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

The Very Reverend John Mann, Team Vicar, Swanage & Studland Team Ministry, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matter was raised during Public Participation Time:-

- **Kings Road East Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO)** – concerns expressed regarding the ETRO and a request made for the Town Council to recommend to Dorset Council that it should cease the trial as a matter of urgency.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.15 p.m.

285. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for her inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Rogers.

286. **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.

Agenda Item No. 7 - Councillor Trite declared an interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a Director of the Swanage Railway Trust and a minor shareholder of the Swanage Railway Company Ltd.

Agenda Item No. 7 - Councillor Whitwam declared an interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a Director of the Swanage Railway Trust.

Agenda Item No. 20 (b) – Councillor Suttle declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of having a family connection with the contractor.

There were no other declarations to record on this occasion.

287. **MINUTES**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

288. **PLANNING AND CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**

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

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Consultation Committee held on 6th July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

289. **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

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

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee held on 21st July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

290. **STATEMENT OF CASH BALANCE**

(a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 30th June 2020 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

291. **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 3, amounting to £593,409.88

Further to their declarations of interest under Minute No. 286 Councillors Trite and Whitwam remained in the meeting during discussion of the following item, but did not take part in any decision or vote.

292. **REPORT FROM PANEL MEETING TO CONSIDER IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE PAYMENT OF RENTS AND LICENCE FEES HELD ON TUESDAY 21st JULY 2020**

Further to Minute No. 275 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Finance Manager and the Town Clerk which provided an overview of discussions held at the panel meeting on 21st July 2020 and set out its recommendations.

The panel recognised that Covid-19 had had a significant impact upon many businesses. However, they were also mindful of the financial assistance that had been afforded to businesses by central government, and the legal obligation of tenants to meet rental payments. The individuality of all cases had been noted, and attention was drawn to the approach taken by Dorset Council, which was to work with tenants on a case-by-case basis.

After careful consideration the panel had agreed that a rent deferral would be the primary financial assistance to be afforded to applicants, should any tenants make a successful application, and concurred that applicants would have to satisfy at least one or more of the following criteria:-

- The premises had been closed in accordance with the government guidance.
- The business could not trade.

- The business had been granted business rates relief as part of the government relief scheme.
- The business was considered micro or SME in accordance with current government guidance (less than 250 employees or turnover of less than £45m).
- The business had applied for all eligible government financial aid.

It was proposed that all applications would be assessed at a later stage in the financial year, when the impact of the pandemic would be clearer following the main summer season, on an ‘open book’ basis with applicants providing accounts and bank statements to evidence any financial hardship suffered.

A brief discussion ensued during which it was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Finch and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council addresses any requests for financial assistance from its commercial tenants and licence holders on a case-by-case basis at a later stage in the financial year, subject to the criteria as set out above and confirms that all applications will have to be made on an ‘open book’ basis.

293. **CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Bonfield reported that in his capacity of Town Mayor he had attended the following event during the past month:-

- The re-opening of Swanage Railway, and had flagged off the first train.

294. **REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS**

Updates were given on a number of matters including:-

- **Kings Road East reversal - Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO)** – further to Minute No. 269 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 it was reported that Councillors continued to receive complaints from local electors regarding the ETRO.
- **Single use barbecues** – the Council was still in the process of considering options to prohibit or control the use of disposable barbecues.
- **End of financial year 2019/20** – an update was provided regarding the most recent forecast of the likely year end out-turn. The Covid-19 pandemic had had a significant financial impact on the Council, estimated to be £60m. However, three tranches of government funding totalling £21m had been made available to support the Council’s budget pressures. It was reported that the Council had set a net budget of £304m for 2020/21.
- **Dorset Council Library Services** – it was reported that nine Dorset libraries had reopened today; this did not include Swanage which remained closed at the present time. However, an online order/collection service was available through the Swanage branch.
- **Council Meetings** - virtual meetings would be continuing for the foreseeable future. The next Cabinet Meeting was being held on 28th July 2020 at which consideration would be given to the following matters:-
 - Digital infrastructure projects to accelerate economic recovery from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic
 - Approval of the Youth Justice Plan 2020/21
 - Approval of the Draft Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2024
 - Draft Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy for public consultation
- **Speeding/noise nuisance in Swanage Bay** – a number of complaints/concerns had been received from local residents regarding boats and jet skis speeding in the bay and a meeting was being held on 28th July 2020 between representatives of the Town Council and Dorset Council to discuss this matter.

295. **STEERING GROUP UPDATES**

(a) **Sustainable Swanage**

Further to Minute No. 271 (b) of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020, an update was given on actions undertaken and progress made

with projects to date by Mrs Sarah Spurling, Sustainable Swanage Officer, which included the following:-

- The working up of proposals for The Downs Local Nature Reserve and the ‘pocket park’ on the green space between Rabling Road and Prospect Crescent.
- The compilation of a species list and habitat plan for The Downs in conjunction with the Council’s Operations Manager.
- A meeting had been held with new group ‘Planet Purbeck’ to discuss potential partnership working with Sustainable Swanage.
- An open meeting to discuss sustainable transport proposals for Swanage and the wider Purbeck area.
- Discussions held with Dorset Council regarding a possible planting scheme for 40 trees along the verge between the Swanage School and the Emmanuel Baptist Church.

296. **WORKING PARTY UPDATES**

(a) **Town Centre Recovery Plan**

Further to Minute No. 272 (a) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29th June 2020 an update was provided on the progress of the draft Town Centre Recovery Plan and Action Plan, which included the following:-

- Social distancing measures:
 - The installation of 100 ‘keep your distance’ stickers, and also bollard sleeves, at strategic points around the town, which had been funded by Dorset Council, and which had been featured as a news item on BBC’s South Today. Good feedback regarding these had been received from local residents and visitors. However, attention was drawn to ‘pinch points’ in the area around Station Approach which was now experiencing increased footfall from train and bus passengers.
 - Dorset Highways would be installing pedestrian ‘passing points’ in Shore Road to assist with the greater footfall in that area.
- The marketing material for the ‘Green seafront’ campaign would be arriving this week.

A request was made for the advisory signage in place at the entrances to the Council’s playparks, regarding social distancing guidelines, to be reviewed and updated/replaced if necessary.

(b) **Affordable Housing – Establishment of Steering Group**

Further to Minute No. 272 (b) of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Town Clerk setting out details of discussions at the Affordable Housing Working Party Meeting held on 1st July 2020 and actions taken to date.

A copy of the notes of the meeting were also provided for information purposes. Representatives from the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust and former Town Councillors who had expressed an interest in taking the project forward had also attended the meeting.

It had been agreed at the meeting that the next step would be to form a Steering Group, with the remit to establish a Swanage Community Land Trust (CLT), and

which would have the status of an Advisory Committee to the Town Council. Suggested Terms of Reference for the Group were noted as follows:-

- To agree the steps necessary to form a Swanage CLT and to recommend its preferred constitutional model.
- To organise a public meeting to promote the project and seek expressions of interest from those with the appropriate skills required to deliver a community housing project.
- To identify preliminary work that can be undertaken prior to the formation of the CLT in order to advance the project and recommend a course of action to the Town Council.
- To seek advice from the National Community Land Trust Network, as required.
- To draft the constitution of the CLT.
- To meet at least once a month and report accordingly to each full Council Meeting.
- Meetings to be held in public, with the option of excluding the press and public if necessary.

It was explained that once the CLT had been formally constituted and registered it would replace the Steering Group. It was noted that the Council would retain its Affordable Housing Working Party as a forum in which the Town Council's future role in the project could be discussed, including how it wished to participate in the CLT once it had been established.

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

That an Advisory Committee, to be known as the Swanage Community Housing Steering Group, be established to take forward a community housing project for Swanage, consisting of Councillors Bonfield, Foster, Harris and Monkhouse, Mr J Bishop, Mrs G Green, Dr T Morris, Mr S Poultney, Mr J Sinclair-Taylor and Mr R. Sutcliffe.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Steering Group would be finalised following the inaugural meeting of the Group, which would be brought back to a future Council Meeting for review.

297. **KINGS ROAD EAST EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (ETRO) – RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Town Clerk which provided background details on the ETRO, a timeline of discussions and decisions made to date, together with a brief summary of the key points raised against the proposal and those in its favour. The ETRO was the subject of a Dorset Council public consultation exercise which would end on 7th August 2020.

It was noted that for many years town councillors had received representations from residents in the south of Swanage requesting an alternative route to their homes. Consideration had previously been given to the reversal of Church Hill, but this had been rejected following significant objections being lodged via a previous public consultation. This left Kings Road East as the only potential alternative route.

It was reported that since 2017 the demand for a second route to the south of the town had been partly motivated by the safety issues in Institute Road, which had now been significantly eased as a result of the pavement widening.

A discussion ensued during which Town Councillors provided details of

representations which had been received by them from local residents, which included the following concerns:-

- The governors of Swanage Primary School raised concerns regarding the increase in traffic in Queens Road and the High Street, and the increased risks to schoolchildren when walking to/from school.
- Increase in traffic in the High Street, which itself was very narrow in parts, with large vehicles having been seen mounting the pavements to pass parked vehicles.
- Large vehicles/lorries using the High Street and the alternative routes into the town centre, which were not considered suitable for such vehicles.
- One of the alternative routes, Church Hill, was very narrow, with a sharp bend halfway down it, and had a narrow pavement on one side of the road only. It was noted that a large vehicle had recently become stuck in Church Hill and had had to reverse back up to the High Street. The poor condition of the road and pavement was also noted as a concern.
- Vehicles had regularly been seen travelling in the wrong direction in Kings Road East, and it was noted that one person when questioned had stated that his Sat Nav had sent him that way.
- A local business had regularly witnessed a number of ‘near misses’ outside the Swanage Library/exit from Kings Road East into the High Street as motorists had not been aware of the change in priority for traffic flow at this junction. Regular issues with the traffic lights had also caused a great deal of confusion in this area.

Following consideration of the representations received, Members concurred that they were in support of the concerns raised regarding the ETRO and felt unable to support the permanent reversal of traffic flow along Kings Road East.

It was therefore agreed that the Town Council should request that Dorset Council ceases the ETRO forthwith in the interests of safety, and that traffic flow in the road be returned to its original direction of east to west. However, concerns were raised that the town was particularly busy at the present time (as it would have been Swanage Regatta and Carnival week this week), and that it was vital that any amendment to the ETRO should be subject to full signage being put in place to alert all motorists that the trial had ended. Members felt that if the road were to be reversed straightaway with inadequate signing then motorists/pedestrians could become confused and that this could lead to an increased risk of accidents occurring.

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

That Dorset Council be requested to cease the experimental reversal of traffic flow along Kings Road East forthwith and return the road to its original out of town direction, subject to due process, and full signage alerting motorists to this change.

At 7.50 p.m. the Town Mayor invoked Standing Order No.1 p. to briefly suspend the Meeting so as to allow the Town Council to respond to a question from a member of the public regarding Agenda Item No. 12.

298. **DOWNES LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR) – TO REQUEST DELEGATION OF POWERS TO DESIGNATE A LNR FROM DORSET COUNCIL UNDER THE NATIONAL PARKS AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE ACT, 1949**

Further to Minute No. 271 (b) 2 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note titled ‘Local Nature Reserves’ which had been prepared by Dorset County Council’s Ecologist, Annabel

King, in March 2015 and which set out the process of declaration for a Local Nature Reserve.

Approval had been provided at the above meeting for Sustainable Swanage to commence the four-step process for the declaration of The Downs as a LNR. However, in accordance with the process of declaration as set out in the briefing note, a formal application to Dorset Council was required to request the delegation of power to the Town Council to declare the LNR.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Harris and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council applies to Dorset Council for delegation of power to designate The Downs, Swanage as a Local Nature Reserve under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Sections 19 and 21.

299. **TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO PROPOSE ANY MOTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND AGM FOR THE DORSET ASSOCIATION OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS (DAPTC)**

The Annual General Meeting of the DAPTC was scheduled to be held on 14th November 2020 and the Town Council had been invited to consider whether to propose any motions for consideration at the meeting.

A discussion ensued during which a number of concerns were raised regarding the use of disposable barbecues, and attention was drawn to the recent extensive fires in Wareham Forest. A question was raised as to whether consideration should be given to prohibiting the use of these, and for the Town Council to propose this as a motion for the AGM.

A further question was raised as to whether the Council should consider banning the use of these on the beach, and/or whether improved signage should be considered (to educate people regarding their safe use) at the entrances to the Council's parks and gardens, and car parks. It was noted that a trial had been undertaken in Bournemouth with electric barbecues for members of the public to use. However, a comment was made that greater consideration needed be given to this matter as many businesses order stock long in advance of the summer season and any decision regarding the banning of single use barbecues could potentially have an adverse impact on local traders. It was therefore felt that it would be more appropriate to place this matter on the agenda of a future Operations Committee Meeting for further consideration.

It was **AGREED:-**

That consideration regarding the use of disposable barbecues on Town Council owned land be placed on the agenda of a future Operations Committee Meeting for further discussion.

It was therefore noted that Members had no matters to raise at the AGM.

300. **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

- (a) **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership** – Councillor Whitwam reported that the PCRP now had a new website, the details of which would be circulated to Town Councillors in due course.
- (b) **Purbeck Citizens Advice (CAB)** – Councillor Moreton asked whether the Town Hall offices would be available for use by the CAB. It was reported that the Town Hall remained closed to members of the public at the present time and that some of the rooms used by the CAB service were currently being used by Town Council staff, which enabled staff to adhere to Covid-19 social distancing guidelines. However, it was confirmed that officers would make contact with the

CAB to discuss its future plans and Covid-19 'return to work' risk assessment for the Town Hall offices accordingly.

301. **REPORTING OF DELEGATED MATTERS**

There were no matters to report on this occasion.

302. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

(a) **Removal of Ambulance Car from Swanage – Update** – further to Minute No. 280 (a) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29th June 2020 it was reported that no further update had been received as yet. Any response would be circulated as soon as it was forthcoming.

(b) **A & E Local – Update** – further to Minute No. 280 (c) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29th June 2020 it was reported that no further update had been received as yet. Any response would be circulated as soon as it was forthcoming.

303. **ADDITIONAL FESTIVE LIGHTS FOR CHRISTMAS 2020**

It was reported that the Swanage and District Chamber of Trade had approached the Town Council regarding its proposal to fund additional festive lights for the town for Christmas 2020. Consequently, it was noted that the Town Council would be placing an order for icicle lights and two lamppost displays to be installed in the High Street between the Swanage Library and the Town Hall. The order would be for a two-year hire of the lights, in line with the Council's existing lighting contract.

The Town Council thanked the Chamber of Trade for funding this proposal.

304. **PRINCE ALBERT MEMORIAL – UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 274 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 it was reported that a request had been received from the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust for a financial contribution of £1,000 towards the Trust's structural engineer's costs for monitoring the erection of the Prince Albert Memorial. A brief discussion ensued during which further questions were raised and it was therefore AGREED:-

That consideration of the request from the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust be deferred to a future Council Meeting.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by the Town Mayor 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 items 20 to 23 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

305. **PROJECT DELIVERY – COMMITMENT TO SPENDING**

(a) **Seymer Road wall repairs – to award contract**

Further to Minute No. 251 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 20th March 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Operations Manager.

It was reported that the previous estimate received for the wall repairs had assumed Building Cost Information Service rates and had not included any allowances for the re-use of existing stone, or for any foundation works. Further

quotes for these works had therefore been sought from specialist sub-contractors and this had reduced the estimated cost significantly.

It had further been agreed with the sub-contractors that trial pits would be excavated to explore the foundations of the existing wall, which would enable a more robust cost estimate for the works to be provided.

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Suttle and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council authorises the contract for the Seymer Road wall repairs to be awarded to Blacknoll Ltd, under Dorset Council's Minor and Small Capital Works Framework Agreement, up to the budgeted maximum of £85,000, subject to the final contract price being reported to members of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee prior to an order being placed.

Further to his declaration of interest under Minute No. 286 Councillor Suttle remained in the meeting during discussion of the following item, but did not take part in any discussion, decision or vote.

(b) **Urgent repairs to concrete revetment adjoining Stone Quay**

Consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Operations Manager. It was reported that a large hole had appeared in the concrete revetment adjoining the Stone Quay. Upon investigation, it could clearly be seen that there had been significant undermining of the structure and the area had been marked as a hazard. Since June there had been a further collapse of the concrete adjacent to the original hole.

Advice had been sought from members of Dorset Council's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management team and a site visit had been held with a project engineer and representatives of Suttle Projects, a company which had previously been engaged by local principal authorities to undertake coastal protection works. The company had subsequently provided an estimated cost of repairs in the sum of £14,742.

Given the potential for further collapse of the structure, which was being undermined by the sea on a daily basis, and the significant hazard that this represents to members of the public, officers were seeking authorisation to suspend Financial Regulation 11.11 in order to procure these works without seeking competitive tenders. It was noted that this would not contravene the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as the contract value was below £25,000. Following consideration of the above it was proposed by Councillor Page, seconded by Councillor Finch and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That, in accordance with Financial Regulation 18.2, Financial Regulation 11.11 be suspended on grounds of urgency and that a contract be awarded to Suttle Projects in the sum of £14,742 to carry out the repairs to the revetment adjoining the Stone Quay.

It was further **RESOLVED:-**

That delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk and Operations Manager, in consultation with the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor, to incur additional spending if required on grounds of urgency.

Further to Minute No. 283 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note jointly prepared by the Town Clerk and Operations Manager. It was reported that the structural engineers, Smith Foster, had undertaken a further inspection of the new jetty and had provided an amended specification for remedial works to the fenders. As a consequence, the cost of the works had increased by £9,127 to £26,492.

In light of the urgency of addressing these works it was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council retrospectively authorises the additional expenditure incurred to rectify the defects in the fishermen's jetty.

The Town Clerk also reported on negotiations with relevant parties to minimise the cost of these works to the Town Council and it was noted that these discussions were ongoing.

307. **SANDBANKS FERRY – CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM BOURNEMOUTH-SWANAGE MOTOR ROAD AND FERRY COMPANY DATED 11th MAY 2020**

Further to Minute Nos. 280 (d) and 281 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Town Clerk which provided an update on actions taken to date. It was noted that the Department for Transport were in the process of appointing an inspector to hear an inquiry into the Ferry Company's proposed toll increase. Contact had been made with officers at Dorset Council to discuss a potential joint approach to this matter, and a meeting had been arranged for 31st July to further these discussions.

In respect of the Ferry Company's letter of 11th May, Members felt that it would be prudent to seek legal advice and to engage with neighbouring parish councils prior to making a formal response. Therefore, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council seeks legal advice to inform further deliberations on this matter at a future Council meeting.

On a related matter, it was reported that the Ferry Company was seeking to arrange a meeting of its Community Liaison Group in the near future. Councillor Finch made clear that she had attended previous meetings of this group as a representative of Swanage and District Chamber of Trade, and not as a Town Councillor. It was therefore proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Community Liaison Group be advised that the Town Council wishes to appoint Councillor Whitwam as its representative.

308. **PERSONNEL MATTER - UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 284 of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 an update was provided by the Town Clerk on an ongoing personnel matter. It was anticipated that this matter would now be concluded during the week commencing 3rd August 2020, and a further update would be given at the next Council Meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 p.m.