

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM AND LOCAL ECONOMY COMMITTEE** held at The Grand Hotel, Burlington Road, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 27th NOVEMBER 2024** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor J Dorrington

Swanage Town Council

Councillor T Foster

Swanage Town Council

Councillor J Lejeune

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Moreton

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Sutton

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Ms L Bish

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Ms L Egan

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Ms A Hinsull

Accessible Swanage

Mr R Patterson

Swanage Railway

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Mr M Whitwam

Purbeck Community Rail Partnership

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mrs E Evans

Democratic Services Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

Mrs J Moulder

Business Development Officer

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

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised.

1) **Apologies**

There were no apologies to record.

2) **Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct.

Agenda Item 12) - Councillor Tomes declared a pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a private beach hut user.

Agenda Item 12 c) – Councillor Bonfield declared a pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a boat park user.

3) **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 3rd July 2024**

There were no matters raised.

4) Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 13th November 2024

a) Matters arising from the Meeting held on 13th November 2024

It was noted that Dorset Council would be reviewing the local byelaws governing activities and regulations related to the use of the sea and coastal areas. The Town Council would work with Dorset Council and further discussion would be held at the meeting of the Swanage and Studland Bay Water Safety Partnership, being held in December.

A query was raised around the revised positioning of the temporary concrete sea defences. In response it was stated that the Environment Agency had provided information at the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee meeting held in July 2024 and, as the Pierhead development had been designed with flood protection, the positioning of blocks in the lower High Street was not deemed essential.

A query was raised regarding the options available for beach recharge. In response it was stated that a public consultation was anticipated in February 2025.

b) To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 12th February 2025 at 2.15 p.m. at the Town Hall

It was noted that the next meeting of the advisory committee would be held on Wednesday 12th February 2025 at 2.15 p.m. at the Town Hall.

5) Car Parks working party – To consider recommendation regarding Dorset Council’s Restricted Mobility Car Park Permit Scheme

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM which outlined the recommendation of the Car Parks Working Party regarding a Restricted Mobility Car Park Permit. It was noted that the Town Council did not previously offer discounted parking for Blue Badge holders, although accessible parking bays were available in all car parks. The Town Council supports the group ‘Accessible Swanage,’ which advocated adopting a scheme similar to Dorset Council’s Restricted Mobility Scheme.

Dorset Council’s Restricted Mobility Scheme provided free parking benefits for Blue Badge holders who could demonstrate receipt of certain qualifying mobility-related benefits, such as the higher rate mobility components of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, among others. The scheme also applied to vehicles registered as tax-exempt for disability reasons.

It was stated that administrative challenges and potential GDPR issues prohibited the Town Council implementing its own scheme, but acceptance of Dorset Council’s Restricted Mobility Permits in Town Council owned car parks under similar terms, could be considered. Permit holders were permitted to park for up to three hours free of charge, once daily, provided they displayed the Blue Badge and the Restricted Mobility Permit.

The scheme excluded privately owned car parks, such as the Co-op car park, unless those owners opted to participate. By March 2024, Dorset Council had issued 843 restricted mobility permits, with only a small proportion in Swanage. It was anticipated that local usage of these permits would increase, potentially resulting in minimal reductions in car park income.

Members noted the benefit for residents with substantial mobility impairments and Dorset Council’s clear and transparent scheme. It was stated that if implemented, it might necessitate a review of the Council’s Off-Street Parking Places Order and updating car park signage.

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

TO RECOMMEND

That the Town Council should introduce Dorset Council’s Restricted Mobility Scheme in Town-Council owned car parks.

6) Events - To consider 2026 applications and potential administration charges for events

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM regarding the provisional approval for events scheduled in 2026 and the potential introduction of administration fees. Members recognised the administrative burden of managing events and considered charging an administration fee to cover these costs. However, it was noted that should the Council charge a hire fee for event fields this would have VAT implications for any future works on these sites and an administration fee would likely need to be charged to recoup costs. Furthermore, the majority of events in Swanage were organised by community or charity groups, however, some were profit-generating businesses or national charity events.

Members discussed the charging element and how it would be implemented, especially for charity and community events. A discussion ensued around the creation of a schedule of charges and delegating the setting of fees for 2025 commercial events to the VSBDM, in consultation with the Events Working Party.

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

TO RECOMMEND

That the Town Council provisionally approves the events scheduled for 2026, subject to any relevant administration fee.

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

To explore the possibilities of charging an administration fee for events and to request officers to work with the Events Working Party to develop a proposal to be brought to the next meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee.

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

That delegated authority be provided to the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager, in consultation with the Events Working Party, for the setting of administration fees for 'commercial' events in 2025.

7) Tourism Marketing - Visit Swanage website update

The VSBDM provided an update regarding the Visit Swanage website, which included:

- The website launched in January 2024 and attracted 2,500 – 3,000 users. In August 2024 the users had increased to 11,000.
- The top five searches on the site were 'What's On', 'Eat and Drink', 'Attractions', 'Shopping' and 'Trails'.
- It was reported that 66% of users accessed the site via a mobile device, 76% were new users and 22% returned throughout the year.
- Initial discussions had been held regarding the 'Motion for the Ocean' and the inclusion of photos from under the sea to encourage visitors/residents to consider what lies beyond the sand. It was also anticipated this initiative would increase ecotourism.
- It was noted that the proposed improvements to the towns signage and a map of trails could be included on the site, providing a unified trail system.

8) Beach Huts – To consider charity beach hut procedure for 2026

The VSBDM provided information about the use of the Charity Beach Huts and proposed future arrangements.

Members noted the challenges in meeting user preferences for specific dates, particularly as most requests centred around Carnival Week. It was noted that the Town Council had allocated two beach huts for charity and community use, with one specifically reserved for schools to support pupils' mental health. Members emphasised the need to balance raising expectations with what could realistically be offered. They also acknowledged the administrative burden of offering one-day options during off-peak periods.

Further to discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Foster and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That delegated authority be provided to the Beach Hut working party to agree the procedure for booking charity beach huts for 2026.

9) Pedestrian Signage - To consider renovation of signs to assist wayfinding around town

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM which outlined issues with the existing wayfinding signage in town. It was noted that the Town Council had worked with the Swanage Chamber of Trade and Commerce to address issues with pedestrian wayfinding signage which had highlighted that the existing black and blue heritage signposts, owned by Dorset Council, required improvements, including repainting, removal of outdated or broken signs, and enhancing directional clarity.

Some signs featured inconsistent colouring, excessive or confusing directional arrows, or insufficient emphasis on toilet locations, while others were damaged or poorly placed. An audit of the signage was being conducted by the Chamber of Trade and Dorset Council. However, major changes to seafront signage would be deferred until further details were known about the planned Green Seafront and coastal defence works, which might provide funding opportunities.

The Council proposed a phased approach:

- **Phase 1:** Repainting all signs in a consistent 'Swanage Blue' colour during the winter of 2024-25, emphasising toilet signage, and removing or replacing outdated signs. Dorset Council had allocated £250 for maintenance, with additional funding or resources potentially provided by Swanage Town Council.
- **Phase 2:** A comprehensive review as part of broader seafront enhancements planned for 2026-2027.

Thanks were provided to the representatives of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce for their work on this matter.

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

That the current black and blue pedestrian signage with a 'Swanage Blue' colour be repainted by the Town Council in the winter of 2024/25, subject to receiving appropriate permissions from Dorset Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Lejeune, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council works with the Swanage Chamber and Dorset Council to identify and remove signs no longer of value and identify where

additional signs might be required, and if necessary to fund these from a proposed budget in 2025/26.

10) Dorset Town of Culture 2026 – To note approval to support a bid in principle

Further to Minute No. 126 of the Council Meeting held on 18th November 2024, Members noted that the Council had approved in principle to support the submission of a bid for the Dorset Town of Culture 2026.

The proposal would see Swanage Town Council, potentially with support from other parish councils, providing £30,000 alongside an equal amount from Dorset Council to deliver an enhanced cultural offer across the area in 2026. The theme that the bid focuses on is ‘Culture for all!’ with the bid stating, ‘our vision is that cultural activities and events across the area should be accessible to all’. The Mowlem Theatre would be leading on the project. On 2nd December the Council would be notified as to whether the bid submission had reached the second stage of the application process.

Should the bid reach the second stage the intention would be to hold a large workshop with cultural providers and other stakeholders to seek their views regarding the final application which is required to be submitted by 18th January 2025.

11) Consideration of First Aid provision by the Town Council and the role of Beach Warden/Seafront Advisor

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM which set out the existing provision of first aid by Town Council staff and the RNLI lifeguards. It was noted that when the RNLI Lifeguard unit began operations on the beach in 2016, it was understood that first aid on the beach would no longer be provided by the Town Council. Instead, all first aid requests were to be directed to the lifeguards as the primary responders.

It was reported that staff at the Swanage Information Centre were expected to provide basic first aid, such as hot water for weever fish stings and plasters for self-application. However, customers of the Information Centre often expected a higher standard of first aid, which the staff were not trained to deliver. Additionally, event organisers occasionally directed attendees to the Information Centre for first aid assistance.

Members discussed the benefits of enabling staff to provide basic first aid while ensuring that individuals requiring more advanced treatment were appropriately directed to the RNLI Lifeguards, local pharmacies, or hospitals as needed.

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

That the Swanage Information Centre provides only basic first aid (i.e. plasters for self-application and hot water for weever fish stings) and support as required to the emergency services, as led by them, together with a signposting service for further treatment.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:-

To ensure that all events held on Town Council land, however small, have a named individual with appropriate training in first aid.

Members considered the role of beach warden and/or seafront advisor as set out in the briefing paper. It was noted that the role had played an important part in the reassurance of beach users and in the operations of various front-line teams and discussions around its future functions required further consideration. It was suggested

that a working party be established to explore this matter, and a report be provided to a future meeting.

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

That a Beach Warden/Seafront Advisor working party be appointed, consisting of Councillors Bonfield, Dorrington, Sutton and Tomes, to consider the future parameters of the role of Beach Warden/Seafront Advisor.

12) Budget Setting 2025-26

a) Draft Capital Programme 2025/26

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM which detailed the draft Capital Programme for 2025/26. It was noted that the total amount referred to all projects related to all committees.

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

That the Tourism & Local Economy Committee projects set out in the Draft Capital Programme (Appendix 1) be taken forward to the meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee to be held on 11th December 2024 for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26.

b) Draft Significant One-Off Revenue Expenditure 2025/26

Members considered the proposed draft one-off revenue expenditure as set out in the briefing paper. It was noted that the total amounted to £39,500 and that Project Initiation documents would be provided accordingly to inform the Finance and Governance Committee.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the items listed in the proposed significant one-off revenue expenditure/minor works schedule (section 1) be taken forward to the meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee to be held on 11th December 2024 for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 2) Councillor Bonfield left the room during consideration of the following item.

c) Scale of fees and charges 2025/26

Consideration was given to the scale of fees and charges for the Boat Park as detailed in the briefing paper. It was noted that the annual launch fee for the Boat Park had been popular two years previously, however, it was anticipated that the proposed reduction from £285.00 to £265.00 would encourage additional use of the discounted rate and provide an increase in overall income.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the annual launch fee for the Boat Park should be reduced from £285.00 to £265.00 and be taken forward to the meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee to be held on 11th December 2024 for

consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26.

Councillor Bonfield re-entered the meeting.

Members considered the scale of fees and charges, excluding the private sites fees, which would be deferred due to the receipt of communication from the Beach Hut Association just prior to the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Moreton seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the scale of fees and charges 2025/26 relevant to the Tourism & Local Economy Committee (Appendices 2 and 3), excluding Private Sites, be taken forward to the meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee to be held on 11th December 2024 for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26.

Consideration was given to the recommendation of the Market Working Party to retain the Swanage Market fees for 2025/26 at the same rate as 2024/25. Attention was drawn to challenges involving some market traders only committing to stalls on favourable days, which created issues with consistent plot placement. It was proposed that weekly traders should make their payments a week in advance to ensure adequate plot allocation each week. The following amendments to the terms and conditions of the Market would be required:

“All market traders paying on a weekly basis, will be required to pay for at least one week in advance, which will be used for the subsequent week, whether they attend the market or not. On their first week in attendance, or at the beginning of the summer or winter season, each weekly trader will be required to pay for the current week and the week in advance. Genuine reasons for non-attendance, in which the payment in advance might be transferred to an alternative week, must be submitted to the Visitor Services Manager in writing for consideration and approval.”

It was proposed by the Town Mayor seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the additional terms for the Market as detailed above be adopted.

13) Update from the Visitor Services & Business Development Manager

The following update was provided by the VSBDM and included:

- **Beach Huts** – A new set of booking procedures had been implemented in October 2024. The bookings had seen an increase in demand and the huts were booked very quickly. The income had therefore increased. The main concerns raised by customers were around the restrictions in longer lets and the speed at which the huts were booked. It was reported that a technical problem arose on the last day of booking, which affected everyone in the same way, but this will be resolved for the forthcoming year.
- **AccessAble** - TIC [Swanage Information Centre | AccessAble](#), keen to put all of the town's accessible toilets on the website at a cost of just under £500.
- **Sauna** – It was reported that the sauna had been delivered to the seafront on 26th November and it was anticipated to be operational by mid-December.

During the week commencing 2nd December 2024, it was noted that a trench would be dug from the Mowlem to the sauna for an electricity connection. However, the road and footpath would remain open.

- **Christmas in Swanage** – The Swanage information centre staff have delivered the Christmas poster and the £2 parking all winter poster to most shops around town which had received a positive response.
- **Switch on the Lights** – It was noted that the switch on event would take place on Saturday 30th November 2024. At the event Santa’s sleigh and Polar Express dancers would be at the Mowlem Triangle from 3.00 p.m.
- **Water Quality** – A new sign would be installed outside the Information Centre, regarding water quality for 2024, which was reported to be ‘Excellent’. It was noted that the Town Council had been awarded the Blue Flag Award for the 23rd consecutive year.

14) Updates from outside representatives

Outside representatives provided the following updates:

- **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership** - It was reported that Perenco had withdrawn from talks regarding the possibility of developing a hydrogen engine service. Initial discussions were being held with the owners of Blue Pool for the establishment of a halt at the site.
- **Accessible Swanage** – It was reported that Accessible Swanage had recently celebrated its first anniversary. The first year had seen the group working with the Town Council and stakeholders to provide information regarding dropped kerb locations, improvements to Station Approach, the seafront scheme, and the provision of accessibility information around the town. A national initiative entitled ‘Safe Places’ was noted as a positive step in the provision of safe places should members of the public feel vulnerable. It was reported that 125 businesses in Poole had signed up for the initiative. Members were encouraged to contact Accessible Swanage if they wished to join a panel to explore the idea further.
- **Swanage Railway** - It was reported that Swanage Railway had undertaken changes to prevent insolvency e.g. had changed to cashless payment methods, withdrawn the dining train and was in the second year of the Polar Express experience. The need for the Town Council and the Swanage Railway to work effectively together was noted and the railway was encouraged to supply event dates to the VSBDM to aid with a coordinated approach to event planning and promotion. It was noted that two rail tours had been scheduled on 25th June 2025 and 10th September 2025.
- **Chamber of Trade** – It was reported that the Chamber was growing in membership and emphasised the importance of collaboration with the Council and other businesses had been highlighted. It was noted that some events negatively impacted shop owners by drawing trade away, but there was a feeling that improved communication and the inclusion of local businesses could help mitigate this.

15) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

Members were encouraged to raise items for forthcoming agendas and contact the Town Hall with any suggestions.

16) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 2.15p.m. at The Grand Hotel, Burlington Road, Swanage.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 4.10 p.m.



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Daisy May's Shopping Arcade
2-4 Kings Road East
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Dorset
BH19 1ES

04/03/2025

Martin Ayres
Swanage Town Council
Town Hall
Swanage, Dorset

Subject: Proposal to Officially Recognise 'The Heart of Swanage'

Dear Martin,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing on behalf of *The Heart of Swanage* to formally request that Swanage Town Council consider officially recognising the roads between Station Road and Institute Road as 'The Heart of Swanage.'

Over the past year, we have been actively working to promote this area and support the businesses and services within it. We have printed and distributed leaflets locally, which have received a positive response, and we have recently introduced signage to help visitors and residents locate and identify this part of town more easily. Our aim is to increase footfall and ensure this vibrant area thrives for the benefit of the local economy.


We are pleased to have the support of both the Swanage Chamber of Trade and the Swanage Tourist Information Centre in this initiative.

Our request is

We would be grateful if this request could be included as an agenda item at the next council meeting for discussion.

Please let us know if there are any further steps we need to take or any additional information you require. We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to your response.

Best regards,

Martin Curtis [Martin's Purbeck Memories] 

Andy Knill [Andy Knill Art Studio] 

Helen Leach [Purbeck Ear Care]

On behalf of *The Heart of Swanage*

Chairty Beach Huts – Allocations for 2025-26

Each year the Town Council takes requests for the free use of its Beach Huts for charity and community purposes. Generally, if these are for less than a week and outside the summer season, they will be approved by the Visitor Services Manager, otherwise they are brought to this Committee for approval.

Attached at Appendix 1 is the list of applications received as part of the published application process during February 2025.

Councillors are asked to review the recommendations suggested for each of the eight applications.

It should be noted that the Swanage Information Centre receives requests for less than 7-day charity use of the huts throughout the year. The Visitor Services Manager will consider these under delegated authority.

Decisions required

Consider and approve the recommendations proposed in Appendix 1.

Culvin Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager, March 2025

Appendix 1 – Charity Beach Hut requests received as part of published application process – February 2025

	Name	What are the objectives of your Charity/Community Group?	How will you use the beach hut?	What benefits will your Charity/Community Group get from the beach hut?	Dates required	Further information	Recommendation
1	Purbeck Runners	<p>To promote running and fitness in Purbeck.</p> <p>We have all ages (from 18 onwards to late 70s) and promote running and fitness - we welcome new members and over the years have introduced many residents to running.</p>	<p>We meet on a Wednesday night for our runs - we would like a base so that members could meet, go for a run, store items, change and swim</p>	<p>The club is made up of local residents. We have about 120 members. We would use it to store items when off running, to change and as a safe place on a Wednesday</p> <p>We have no base and in the winter meet at the British Legion. In the summer we will try and meet on the seafront and a base would add to the experience, allow more members to come and swim and allow safe storage and privacy. We would meet at 6.45 and swim after 8pm</p> <p>We would not seek to use it during the day</p>	When available	It maybe that another club or organisation would be willing to share with us	<p>Consider - There are challenges with allowing groups of people to attend beach huts. Propose that this is done as a trial, subject to availability, for May and June (excluding May half term) with the decision for the remainder of the year delegated to the VSM, in consultation with the Beach Hut Working Party (note the VSM is an informal member of the running club).</p>

2	Swanage Mama Swim	Enable parents to enjoy the sea while looking after their young family/babies. There are many benefits to swimming for both physical and mental health and it can be very challenging for parents/primary care givers to do this when also looking after a baby. The group exists to support local parents to be able to swim/dip while the community looks after the babies.	To provide a known location to meet, a warm dry spot for babies and parents, and a place for toys, seats and tea/biscuits.	Designated meeting space for parents, a warm, dry place to keep clothes and baby toys, have tea and biscuits. Having a known place will also encourage more people to join the community, those who may be nervous or intimidated about joining would feel more reassured and gain the benefits of being part of a community, and getting some exercise while looking after a baby.	Fridays (as many as possible)	We are a new local community group, looking to grow (particularly in the warmer weather!) and provide an opportunity for local parents to support each other while also take to the water. Currently the group meets weekly on a Friday, and we have a Facebook page to connect and organise. A future ambition would be to set up as a social enterprise or charity depending on requirements. https://www.mammaswim.com/	Consider - They have asked for as many Fridays as possible - Councillors to consider - suggest monthly throughout year
3	Dorset Council Purbeck Local Office - support to unpaid Carers in the Purbeck area	To support unpaid Carers to ensure they look after their own mental and physical health and wellbeing.	For unpaid family informal Carers to access to provide a respite break.	We would not profit from using the beach hut, we would proactively promote the use of it and offer it to registered unpaid Carers.	Any days would be beneficial to unpaid Carers.	I work with various charities which are commissioned to support unpaid Carers in Dorset Council area. However they do regularly change. To enable us to keep control of the beach hut I would prefer to have it in the name of Dorset Council. We can work with our charities to support Carers to access the beach hut. This would bring a well deserved and desperately needed resource for unpaid Carers in Dorset Council area we simply don't have. Carers are always reporting they need a break and this would very much make a massive difference to their wellbeing, mental and physical health.	Approve - this might be for more than a couple of days - delegated to VSM to work with this individual to see how their cause can be supported

4	Dementia Friendly Purbeck	To support those local families living with dementia with activities and to raise funds towards supplying the area with a second specialist dementia Admiral Nurse	As a meeting place for those families living with dementia and an information hub.	To enable us to reach more people who may not know that we are available to help those with dementia.	A week in June		Approve - 1 week in June
5	Jurassic care		To bring clients down	To meet up with friends	June/july		Decline - insufficient information provided about group
6	Hand H care Dorset	To give disabled young adults a day opportunity to enrich their lives. We take them out and assist them with opportunities they may not be able to do alone.	We will bring a group for a day to the seaside with a dry safe space to use.	The group would benefit from a day at the seaside where accessibility is not always possible. Also a place away from the crowds. And inside electric for a nice cuppa tea when funds aren't available to most to do this.	Mon, Tue or Thurs	Thankyou for this opportunity. It enriches a group of peoples life that may not get the opportunity to visit the seaside	Delegated to VSM - 1 day booking
7	Lewis Manning Hospice Care	To provide a space for carers to have time away for themselves, to enjoy the outdoors and benefits of being close to the sea. To have a break from day to day routine, that is so needed to continue with their 24/7 care for loved ones.	Provide a space for relaxation, togetherness -provide food and refreshments that the carers rarely have provided for them	There are huge benefits from having the beach hut, giving our very important carers a space to be whatever they need to be with others who understand-tears, laughter and any other emotions that may come along.	Friday June 13th or Friday July 11th		Delegated to VSM - 1 day booking

8	Community Credit Scheme	Enable people with learning disabilities to volunteer, attend activities and take part in various training opportunities	We will bring groups from different areas of Dorset to thank them for volunteering. We are also supporting carer's in offering a day out.	Being able to have a beach hut is wonderful for so many of our guy have physical issues as well. Bringing groups from Ferndown, Swanage, Blandford, Dorchester and Weymouth into one space each year has huge benefits: Improving mental health, meeting old and new friends, sharing volunteer stories, meeting other carers/people having the same issues etc	April or May would be lovely. Mondays or Wednesdays	Thank you so much for Swanage Tourist for providing this much needed respite once a year.	Delegated to VSM - 1 day booking
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Festive Lights – Consideration of future use of the Mowlem Projector

The 2024 Swanage Christmas lights included, for the first time, two projectors, which presented an image of a snowman and ‘Merry Christmas’ onto the Mowlem Theatre over the Christmas period.

In the last few months the Town Council has received a number of requests from event organisers across the town and from those using the Mowlem to allow them to use this facility to promote their events.

This image is a template, of which a range of different options can be procured. There are a limited range of relevant generic templates, however bespoke ones can be created.

While the projector is operated by the Town Council, the projection is on the Mowlem Theatre wall, so any decision regarding types of images would need their approval.

The Town Council is reluctant to become involved in managing such a facility and would prefer to simply provide a template with ‘Welcome to Swanage’. Costs for the creation of this bespoke template are being sought. It should be noted that the projector only works well in the darker hours, and it does not show significant detail so only limited text and pictures should be used. Furthermore, any messages providing advertising may be subject to planning permission therefore further advice would be required to be sought.

The Mowlem has requested that they take on responsibility for the projector images in order to promote their events.

Councillors are asked to consider how they might wish the projector to be used.

In addition to costs associated with the creation of templates, there are likely to be additional costs incurred in accessing the projector and setting up each image, including the setting of timers and electric supply.





Decision required

To consider that an image be procured stating 'Welcome to Swanage' to be projected onto the Mowlem Theatre. It is suggested the seasonal timing of this accords with the dates that the catenary coloured fairy lights are lit. To note that this is subject to permission being received from the Mowlem Theatre and relevant costs.

Culvin Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager, March 2025

Fishers’ Huts – Consideration of Allocations Policy

Background

Swanage Town Council has long supported the local fishing industry, recognising that it plays a small but important role in our town’s economy. It is for this reason that matters relating to the fishers’ huts at Peveril Point fall within the remit of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee. In 2018/19 the Town Council undertook a £450,000 improvement scheme to the fishers’ facilities at Peveril Point which was 75% funded by a grant administered by the MMO (Marine Management Organisation).

The Town Council provides 19 storage huts above the shoreline at Peveril Point Boat Park. These are let out under annual licence agreements, at a charge of £520 for the 2025/26 financial year.

As a result of low demand in the past, some in the fishing industry have been able to occupy multiple huts. Furthermore, a number of the huts have been let to commercial boat operators and other local residents. As a result the huts are fully occupied.

Recently there has been a growing number of people on the waiting list and this has prompted a review of the Town Council’s current allocations policy, which was agreed by the Boat Park Committee in December 2004, as follows:

- Category 1 - Those whose primary employment is fishing.
- Category 2 – Fishing as secondary employment.
- Category 3 – Commercial boat operators
- Category 4 – Others

Copies of the following documentation have to be provided in order to demonstrate eligibility:

- Certificate of British Registry from the Maritime & Coastguard Agency.
- Current licence issued by DEFRA/ Certificate of Competence RYA/MCA Coastal Skipper Certificates.
- Evidence from Inland Revenue of Self –Employment, Self Assessment Form or Letter from Accountant.

Review Process

When this matter was first raised at the Tourism & Local Economy Committee Meeting on 3rd July 2024, a working party was appointed to review the existing hut allocations policy, comprised of Councillors Tomes, Bonfield and Sutton. The working party invited all hut occupiers to a meeting at the Angling Club on 29th January 2025 and 9 of the current 15 occupiers attended. They occupy 14 of the huts between them.

As a result of discussion at the meeting, the following changes to the allocations policy are recommended, in terms of both prioritisation and eligibility:

- The first two categories to be merged to read ‘Category 1 - Those whose employment is commercial fishing’.
- Categories 3 and 4 to be renumbered 2 and 3.
- Eligibility to be restricted to those with a boat registered to an address in the area covered by the Town Council’s Residents’ Parking Scheme, i.e. the civil parishes of Swanage, Studland, Langton and Worth Matravers (including Harmans Cross), Corfe Castle (including Kingston), Kimmeridge, Church Knowle and Steeple.
- Evidence of eligibility for the new categories 1 and 2 to be provided by a Certificate of British Registry from the Maritime & Coastguard Agency and/or either a commercially endorsed skipper’s licence (eg. RYA/MCA) or a Sea Fish Industry Authority skipper’s card.
- In terms of applications from those in Category 1 for a second shed, these would take precedence over applications from individuals in Categories 2 or 3.
- It is presumed that applications from those in Category 2 for a first shed would take precedence over those in that category who were seeking a second shed.

During the meeting, the importance of the hut licences being issued to those who are in occupation of the hut was emphasised and it was made clear that if steps were not taken to regularise any anomalies then the prohibition in the licence agreement against subletting would be enforced.

Other matters raised at the meeting included a request for the Town Council to provide a bin for rubbish generated by hut occupiers and the potential for a hut inspection to be arranged to check on Health and Safety/COSHH compliance.

Impact of Introduction of New Criteria

The current hut occupiers would be classified as follows under the revised policy: nine fishers in category 1 occupying 13 huts; two boat operators in category 2; and four others in category 3.

When this matter was first brought to the committee last summer there were five people on the waiting list for a first hut: two in the new category 1, two in category 2 and one in category 3. There were also two requests for second huts from existing occupiers, one in category 1 and one in category 2.

All of those on the waiting list for a first hut were written to in August 2024 to determine if they still wished to remain on the waiting list. Only three of the five responded, and they would be categorised as follows: two in category 2 and one in category 3. Together with the requests for second huts the waiting list would now be prioritised as follows:

- Category 1 – 1 request for second hut from local commercial fisherman/boat operator
- Category 2 – 2 requests for first huts and 1 for a second hut from boat operators
- Category 3 – 1 request for storage of kayaks/paddleboards.

If the new policy is to be applied from April 2025 it would result in hut licences not being issued to all four of the current hut occupiers in category 3 to accommodate those on the waiting list in categories 1 and 2. One of the category 3 occupiers has already agreed to relinquish the hut they currently occupy, so that can be allocated to the only fisherman on the waiting list.

It may be necessary to obtain legal advice in terms of enforcing the vacancy of the other three huts occupied under category 3.

Decisions required

To consider whether to confirm the changes to the fishers' huts allocation policy set out above.

To agree how this policy should be implemented from April 2025.

Martin Ayres
Town Clerk

March 2025

Scale of Fees and Charges

a) Private Sites – Licence fee for 2025-26

Usually, the annual fees for the private site licences, which permit licence holders to place a beach hut on the beach each year, are set as part of the Council's budget process which was completed in January 2025. However, following discussions with the body that represents licence holders, known as Swanage Private Sites Association, the matter was deferred by the Tourism and Local Economy Committee in November 2024. Two meetings have subsequently been held with representatives of the Association on 10th February and 10th March 2025.

When the fee for 2024/25 was agreed at the Council Meeting held on 15th January 2024, Council noted that queries that the Association had raised about the payment of rates and the applicability of VAT remained unanswered and hence it was resolved:

That the Scale of Fees and Charges for 2024/25 in respect of the Private Beach Hut Sites fees be approved and adopted, subject to the fee being reviewed if: i) if Dorset Council or the VOA advises that the beach hut owners should be individually rated; ii) if there is any change in the rateable value and/or; iii) in light of further advice regarding the application of VAT.

In respect of the three issues listed in the resolution, the following information has been ascertained:

- i) Dorset Council will be writing to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to request the VOA to determine whether or not each individual beach hut site will be separately rated. The Association has requested that the liability for business rates to be transferred from the Council to the individual licence holders. If this was the case it is likely that many of the licence holders would pay a negligible amount for/nil business rates due to the small business rates relief scheme. An update will be reported to a future meeting.
- ii) As a result of a challenge to the rateable value from the Town Council, the VOA have agreed that the rateable value of the sites should be reduced to £15,750 from £21,000. The business rates bill payable by the Town Council is therefore now estimated to be £7,860 in 2025/26, reduced from £10,400. This lower rateable value should also be backdated to 2023/24.
- iii) Questions have been asked about the application of VAT by the Town Council to the licence fee. Advice has been sought from LAVAT, the Town Council's specialist advisers, and HMRC. In both cases the response has been that the Town Council has treated the application of VAT correctly, although there is one outstanding issue remaining around the rate of VAT charged during the pandemic arrangements in 2021.

During the budget setting process a fee of £539 for the licence was suggested. The fee for 2024-25 was £495. It is now proposed that a 5% increase be applied to that figure, resulting in a fee of £520 being levied for 2025-26 (all figures incl. VAT). The income from the private site fees can be seen as a contribution towards the costs incurred by the Town Council

in administering the licence agreements, maintaining the beach hut staging and more broadly operating the beach. As such it is considered that a 5% increase is fair.

At the meeting with the Private Sites Association on 10th March, these issues were discussed, and the Association raised no objection to the fee being set at £520 (incl. VAT) for the 2025 season. The Association acknowledged that the fee would need to be set at the next Council Meeting to enable the Council to issue the licences ahead of Easter.

The Private Sites Association have asked the Council to note that they have not yet received a response to a complaint that they have lodged with HMRC about the application of VAT. The Town Council could consider any further representations from the Association, together with any response from the VOA around the individual rating of the beach hut sites, ahead of budget setting for the 2026/27 financial year.

b) Swanage Market - Fees for 2025-26

In January 2025 new fees were agreed for the Swanage Friday Market, to start from 1st April 2025. The fees were not increased from the previous year.

The fees included the following element:

With the exception of those paying annual fees, all traders must pay one week's fee in advance at the beginning, or during, the summer and winter periods. If a trader is unable to attend a week, the payment will be retained by the Town Council. Unused payments can be used for the following weeks, 31st October 2025 and 27th March 2026.

In the last few months, and in advance of the start of the new fee period starting on 1st April 2025, this approach has been re-considered by officers. The purpose of this approach is to encourage a greater commitment from traders and indeed is something that is being strongly encouraged by the more regular traders. The main concern is that this approach could discourage the summer 'tourist trade' traders who may only turn up for odd weeks. These are an important part of the summer market offering. In addition, we also have a small number of traders that are only able to attend fortnightly.

In order to achieve a similar outcome but retain a level of commitment it is now proposed that a revised approach is undertaken.

It is proposed that traders are split into two types. The first is those that attended the previous week who will receive the current rates (see table below). The second group is those that did not attend the previous week who will be charged a slightly higher rate. This approach would be easier to administer by the Council and would be easier to explain to traders yet still encourage a level of commitment. This is a similar approach to what is undertaken by Bridport Market, which is also operated by a Town Council.

Stall Size	4 April to 23 May (8) 5 Sep to 31 Oct (9)		30 May to 29 Aug (14)		7 Nov to 27 Mar (closed 26 Dec) (20)	
	Mid season		Peak season		Low season	
	Attended previous week	First week	Attended previous week	First week	Attended previous week	First week
<2m	£15.00	£20.00	£22.00	£27.00	£10.00	£15.00
<4m	£25.00	£30.00	£32.00	£37.00	£15.00	£20.00
<7m	£35.00	£40.00	£42.00	£47.00	£20.00	£25.00
<12m	£45.00	£50.00	£52.00	£57.00	£25.00	£30.00
>12m ¹	£100.00	£105.00	£130.00	£135.00	£50.00	£55.00

Note 1 - Subject to agreement with Swanage Town Council

Annual fees remained unchanged.

In addition, the Town Council will be undertaking a promotional campaign for the market during the summer which will include a questionnaire.

Decisions required

1. To recommend to Council the proposed Private Site licence fee of £520 (incl. VAT) for the 2025-26 season.
2. To recommend to Council the proposed Market fees as set out in the table above to start from 1st April 2025.

Culvin Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager, March 2025

Support for Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

The following email was received on 29th January 2025, which unfortunately did not provide sufficient time for the Council to make a response for the 6th February deadline. However, while this deadline has now passed, it is felt that Councillors should be made aware that an application to form a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) was submitted during February. The email below provides some information while more detail can be found here: [Local Visitor Economy Partnership \(LVEP\) Programme | VisitBritain.org](#)

Dear Mr Milmer

I am writing to you on behalf of Visit Dorset to request a letter of support from **Swanage Town Council** for Dorset's application for Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status. I am working with Sam Richardson, who is preparing Dorset's application.

In its formal response to the Du Bois report the government have recognised LVEPs as the preferred route to destination management going forward. For more information, VisitBritain have provided a guide to their [LVEP Programme](#).

The newly formed LVEPs are national portfolio destinations able to support the visitor economy at a strategic level. LVEP status ensures the county has a relationship with VisitEngland, DCMS and central government, gaining access to expertise, resources and the opportunity to influence policy and initiatives impacting the sector. Working collaboratively across all sectors and the whole county (Dorset Council + BCP Council boundaries) Dorset can unlock growth potential, increase productivity of the sector and tackle key issues like skills, accessibility and sustainability that are better approached at a macro level.

So far 35 LVEPs have been created across England, including in Devon and Cornwall. Somerset have submitted their application and are awaiting the outcome.

Visit Dorset, Dorset Council's tourism team are applying for LVEP status for Dorset. The application process is now well underway but to complete it we need strong evidence that local partners are backing the application. To achieve this, we would be grateful if you could supply us with a letter of support briefly explaining how your organisation is relevant and why you support the application.

As a guide, I attach a draft letter of support which you can use as the basis for your own. Please fill in your own details where indicated and then either add your own paragraph explaining why you support the application or use/amend the words already provided. To be included with the application we need your letter of support by Thursday 6th February. I have been asked to collate the support for the application so please email your signed letter to me before 6th February.

Kind regards

On behalf of Visit Dorset

Decision required

To note the report.

Culvin Milmer, Visitor Services and Business Development Manager, March 2025