

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM AND LOCAL  
ECONOMY COMMITTEE** held at The Grand Hotel,  
Burlington Road, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MARCH  
2025** 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

Outside Representatives: -

Ms L Bish

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Ms L Egan

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Ms C Finch

Swanage Pier Trust

Ms A King

Swanage Railway

Ms S Libicka

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Mr M Whitwam

Purbeck Community Rail Partnership

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mrs S Layton-Kelly

Administration Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

Mrs J Moulder

Business Development Officer

### **Public Participation Time**

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming new representatives to the committee, Ms A King, newly appointed Chief Executive of Swanage Railway, and Ms C Finch, newly appointed trustee of the Swanage Pier Trust.

#### **1) Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Moreton and Sutton, Mr G Johns (Swanage Railway), Ms T Churcher (National Trust), Mr R Pattinson (Swanage Railway), Ms T Deacon (Purbeck Coast Radio), Ms D Morley (The Mowlem Theatre), Ms K Black (Head Ranger Durlston Country Park) and Mr R Marsh (Swanage Fishermen's Association).

#### **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 11a)** - Councillor Tomes declared a pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a private beach hut user.

**Agenda Item 7)** – Councillor Bonfield declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of his position on the committee of Dementia Friendly Purbeck.

**3) Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

There were no matters raised.

**4) Matters arising from the Meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

A brief summary of matters discussed at the advisory committee was provided by the Chairman and officers.

**5) Dorset Town Of Culture 2026 – Update**

The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) provided an update on Swanage's bid to be recognised as the Dorset Town of Culture 2026. It was confirmed that despite a strong and well received application, Swanage had been unsuccessful in securing the title. The VSBDM reported that feedback from the judging panel is currently being reviewed to identify areas for future improvement. The outcome was met with disappointment, but gratitude was expressed to all those involved in the bid. It was noted that the Chairman and the VSBDM would continue to meet with representatives from the Mowlem Theatre to identify if there are proposals contained in the bid that could be taken forward.

**6) Heart of Swanage**

A discussion took place regarding a letter received by the Town Council from representatives of the Heart of Swanage business community, titled 'Proposal to Officially Recognise The Heart of Swanage'. Members welcomed the request but agreed that further clarity would be required regarding the specific nature and implications of the proposal prior to a decision being reached.

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

That Councillor Tomes and the VSBDM liaise with representatives of 'The Heart of Swanage' to seek further clarification of their proposal which will be presented at the next Council Meeting.

**7) Charity Beach Huts – Allocations for 2025-26.**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM which set out the applications received for the allocation of beach huts to charities and community groups during the 2025-26 season. The applications were considered in turn, as follows:

- Purbeck Runners: Concerns were raised regarding the number of potential users and the capacity in and around a beach hut. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the application be declined for 2025-26 but that the use of beach huts by sports clubs be reviewed prior to the allocation of charity huts for the next year.

- Swanage Mama Swim: During the discussion it was agreed that a short trial would be appropriate to assess the level of usage. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a trial period of four weeks be granted with a review to be undertaken at the next Tourism and Local Economy Committee Meeting.

- Dorset Council Purbeck Local Office-support to unpaid Carers in the Purbeck area: It was noted that the application lacked specificity in the reasons for requesting a

beach hut. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the VSBDM works with Carers in Purbeck to seek clarification and further detail regarding their application.

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

- Dementia Friendly Purbeck: It was proposed by Councillor Lejeune, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-  
That the application from Dementia Friendly Purbeck be agreed.

Councillor Bonfield re-entered the meeting.

- Jurassic Care: It was noted that insufficient information had been provided to support the application and AGREED:-  
That the application be declined on the grounds of lack of information.
- Hand H Care Dorset, Lewis Manning Hospice Care & Community Credit Scheme: It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-  
To grant the VSBDM delegated authority to approve one-day beach hut bookings for Hand H Care Dorset, Lewis Manning Hospice Care, and the Community Credit Scheme.
- It was further proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-  
To grant the VSBDM delegated authority to approve applications from schools, provided the schools have made use of a beach hut in previous years.

#### **8) Festive Lights-Consideration of future use of Mowlem projector**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper provided by the VSBDM which set out requests from event organisers seeking permission to use the facility for promotional purposes. Members raised concerns regarding potential planning and conservation issues, the requirement of consultation with the Mowlem Theatre, along with possible costs and the current absence of a formal policy governing such use. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a working party be formed to consider the future use of the Mowlem projector and report back to the committee in due course.

Councillors Bonfield, Dorrington, Tomes and the VSBDM agreed to sit on the working party.

Following consideration of this item, the Chairman was presented with a cheque for £600 by Ms L Bish, on behalf of the Chamber of Trade, as a contribution towards the town's Festive Lights.

**9) Sandbanks Ferry – update following Public Inquiry**

Following a brief update provided by Councillor Bonfield regarding the Public Inquiry in January, which he had attended, Members considered extending an invitation to representatives of the Bournemouth Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company to join the Tourism and Local Economy Committee. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That a representative from the Bournemouth Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company be formally invited to join the Tourism and Local Economy Committee.

**10) Fishers' Huts – Consideration of Allocation Policy**

Further to Minute No. 10 of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2024, consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined proposed updated criteria for inclusion in the Fishers' Huts Allocation Policy. It was noted that these had been devised by the appointed working party following a consultation meeting with current occupiers of the huts. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Allocation Policy for the Fishers' Huts be approved.

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

That the implementation of the approved Allocation Policy commence in April 2025.

**11) Scale of Fees and Charges**

Further to his declaration under Minute No.2) Councillor Tomes left the room during the consideration of the following item. In the absence of the Committee Chairman, it was agreed that Councillor Bonfield would assume the Chair during consideration of this item.

**a) Private Site – licence fee for 2025-26**

Further to Minute No. 12(c) of the Meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the VSBDM provided a brief update on this matter, referring to a briefing paper circulated prior to the meeting which outlined the proposal to increase the Private Site licence fee to £520.00 (incl. VAT) for the 2025-26 period. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That the Private Site Licence Fee for the 2025-26 period be set at £520.00 (incl. VAT).

Councillor Tomes re-entered the Meeting and re-assumed the Chair.

**b) Swanage Market Fees – for 2025-26**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper outlining the proposed revised market fees to commence from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That the revised market fees be approved, with implementation to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

**12) Support for Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)**

The VSBDM referred to a briefing paper circulated prior to the meeting which set out information regarding an invitation to submit a letter of support from Swanage Town Council in relation to Dorset Council's application for LVEP status. The VSBDM advised that, regrettably, the request had not allowed sufficient time for the Council to compose a response ahead of the closing deadline. However, it was felt important that committee members be made aware that an application to form a LVEP had been submitted in February 2025.

**13) Update from the Visitor Services & Business Development Manager**

The following update was provided by the VSBDM:

- **Swanage Information Centre Refurbishment** – This has resulted in a more efficient internal layout and improved storage on the upper floor. The VSBDM expressed his thanks to the Town Council for supporting and approving the refurbishment.
- **Pedestrian Signage (finger signs)** – Dorset Council had granted permission for the Town Council to repaint the pedestrian finger signs within the town and allocated a small contribution from their budget towards the associated costs.
- **Lifeguard Base Unit** – The RNLI were considering the relocation of the Lifeguard Base Unit from its current location back to its previous position, closer to the Banjo Jetty, where it had been situated two years ago.

**14) Updates from Outside Representatives**

Outside representatives provided the following updates:

- **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership** - Following initial discussions with the new owners of Blue Pool concerning the potential establishment of a halt, a working group has been formed to explore the proposal further.  
Swanage Railway will be celebrating its 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May. A series of events and activities are planned throughout the month to commemorate the milestone, including a dedicated stand at Waterloo Station in London.  
An update was also provided on the status of the Wareham Railway Crossing. It was confirmed that the crossing will remain open.
- **Swanage Railway** – Attention was drawn to a report previously circulated, which outlined events held since the previous Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting as well as upcoming events planned for 2025. It was noted that the Swanage Belle has two scheduled tours from London Victoria to Swanage on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June and Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September. Members were further informed that Swanage Railway is in the process of finalising its schedule for Halloween and the Christmas period.  
In her new role as Chief Executive, Ms King was formally welcomed by the Town Mayor to both the Tourism Committee and Swanage.
- **Chamber of Trade** – It was reported that the Chamber continued to experience growth in membership. Members were informed that the new organiser of the Pirate Festival had approached the Chamber with a view to engaging local businesses in the event.  
Concerns were raised regarding the increase in on-street parking fees set by Dorset Council, which are considered to be a potential deterrent to customers. However, it was noted that car parks operated by Swanage Town Council remain competitively priced.  
It was further reported that the Chamber of Trade will soon be celebrating its centenary. Discussions are ongoing regarding ways to commemorate the occasion, and representatives will report back to the Committee in due course.

- **Swanage Pier Trust** – The Committee received an update regarding the success of recent events held at the Pier, and details regarding upcoming events aimed at attracting visitors to that area of the town. It was further reported that consideration is being given to hosting a nostalgic/heritage weekend, which could also provide an opportunity for local businesses to celebrate their own history. Additionally, the Committee was advised that five piles on the Pier are in need of replacement.

**15) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

It was reported that public consultation regarding the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme is being planned for late April.

**16) Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee had been provisionally scheduled for Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025 at 2.15p.m. at The Grand Hotel, Burlington Road, Swanage.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 3:40 p.m.

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