

## **Extraordinary Meeting 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

### **Item 12 a) Draft Swanage Town Centre Recovery Plan 2020**

#### **1. Current Context**

The impact on Swanage with regards Covid-19 has been significant from both a health and an economic perspective. The town's economy is highly dependent on visitors and we have seen a total collapse of this sector during the crisis.

The purpose of this document is to explore ideas to enhance the economic viability of the town as we enter the recovery phase of the crisis.

From 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020, with the re-opening of all retail outlets and the ferry once again in operation, the town will be able to carefully start to welcome visitors. In addition, the government is keen to see the tourism industry re-start from early July. It is acknowledged that a number of residents would like to see limited visitors to the town due to concerns about a resurgence or a second wave of Covid-19. This is understandable and any plans considered will need to include flexibility to adapt to any potential future lockdowns or restrictions.

The town's visitor economy is diverse and includes retail shops, food establishments (cafes, pubs and restaurants), accommodation providers and attractions. Each sector will have its own issues and constraints; however, this plan will need to encourage both visitors and residents to return to these businesses where possible.

#### **2. Key Issues identified in Swanage**

- How should the town be promoted and when should this promotion start?
- How to ensure, encourage and promote social distancing in the town?
- How to overcome the negative images of visitors from some residents?
- How might the town respond to a future lockdown and build in resilience?
- How might long queues of people be managed in Station and Institute Road?
- How might queuing around the Travel Interchange (Station Approach) be managed?

#### **3. Swanage local economy stakeholders**

- Swanage Town Council Officers and Councillors
- Swanage Information Centre
- Visit Dorset
- Dorset Council (Highways, Environmental Health, Economic Development etc)
- Chamber of Trade and Commerce
- Accommodation providers
- Residents
- Shop owners and employees
- Supermarkets and key businesses
- Swanage websites (Virtual Swanage / Swanage Online / Visit Dorset/ Town Council)
- Attractions (Railway, Pier, Museum, Durlston etc)
- Event Organisers (Carnival, Rotary etc)
- Transport operators (Ferry, Purbeck Breezer, City Cruises, Swanage Railway)
- Swanage Market

#### **4. Resources available**

- People – see stakeholder list above
- Facebook, Instagram, and other social media solutions
- Visit Dorset website and others
- Government and Dorset Council grants and funds
  - Are all businesses aware of what grants are available from national and local sources?
  - Stay local and spend local Fund from Dorset Council – see Appendix 2
  - Free advertising on Visit Dorset
  - Dorset Highways stencil kits – see Appendix 3
- Swanage Information Centre

#### **Action required:**

To note the draft Town Centre Recovery Plan and Action Plan set out at Appendix 1.

Culvin Milmer  
Visitor Services Manager

June 2020

## Appendix 1: Ideas and possible solutions

No.	Idea	How might this work	Progress to date (23 June 2020)	Timetable	Action Owner?	Cost?	Short/medium/long term
A.	<b>Promotional activities</b>						
1.	Promote the town as a 'safe' Covid-19 destination	Through social and digital media – work with Visit Dorset. Assume that we will not promote town until after July?	Culvin to work with Holly and Swanage Railway to consider a range of options for developing a video or series of videos to enable visitors to 'know before they go'. Culvin to see if an application can be made to the Dorset Council fund	July onwards	STC / Visit Dorset	£5,000 to £20,000	Short term
2.	Encourage people to use Sandpit Field and other sites to reduce pressure on beach– social media and signs. Promote the 'Green Seafront'	Produce digital and paper flyer which promotes the 'Green Seafront' to enable people to use these sites better	Culvin is working up an A5 flyer which will also be a poster and in digital format. Culvin will liaise with Durlston and also see if the Dorset Council fund can be used.	4 July	STC	£250 (design and print)	Short term
3.	Develop a webpage with links to Covid-19 local resources for visitors, what they can expect when they come to Swanage	Work with Visit Dorset to create a single web resource	Visit Dorset are considering a single Covid-19 page for each town. Culvin and Holly to draft up a page.	4 July	STC / Visit Dorset	-	Short term
B.	<b>Businesses</b>						
1.	Investigate 'Covid19 business Chartermark' scheme or develop a local one	If a national or Dorset scheme does not exist, a local 'checklist' scheme could be produced (perhaps by the Chamber) with local businesses displaying the accreditation in their windows	Information from the national scheme is imminent – propose we adopt this and support businesses to achieve requirements	July	STC / Chamber	-	Short to Medium term
2.	Ensure accommodation providers sign up to relevant Covid-19	Accommodation providers that use booking websites are required to demonstrate that they meet certain Covid-19 precautions through	Holly/Culvin working with accommodation providers	July	STC / Visit Dorset	-	Short term

	compliance – could a basic checklist be developed by Visit Dorset to provide visitor re-assurance	their risk assessments. This needs to be promoted in an effective and clear way					
<b>C.</b>	<b>Physical items</b>						
1.	'Keep Swanage Safe' spots on floor	Dorset Highways can provide a generic stencil and paint for the Town Council to install around the town. Or we may wish to go for 'stickers' attached to the ground	Stencils have been applied to 'pinch-points' around the town. We have now been offered stickers and other assets which will be provided to businesses and placed at relevant points around the town when they arrive. This will be done through the Chamber	June	STC	-	Short term
2.	Signs at key points to remind people about social distancing	Need to consider where signs might be placed. We already have the Dorset Council '2 metres' signs at 3 locations across the town. We could do with something similar at each beach entry point (5 locations) and car park pedestrian point (5?).	See immediately above	June	STC	-	Short
3.	Signs from car parks showing 'safe' ways to walk to the beach and green seafront (avoiding town)	Reluctant to have too many signs but could include this information in a flyer available at the car parks and online.	Not sure this is required at the moment but can review as time goes by	July	STC	-	Short
4.	Station Approach – issue around trains / buses / taxis and pedestrians – a pinch point	Work with stakeholders to see what solutions might be possible. This might be an area where infrastructure changes might be appropriate funded through the Dorset Council fund	Working up solutions	July	STC	£?	Medium / Long
5.	Shore Road – Clocktower to Ocean Bay	Work with stakeholders to see what solutions might be possible. This might be an area where infrastructure changes might be appropriate funded through the Dorset Council fund	Working up solutions	July	STC	£?	Medium / Long
<b>D.</b>	<b>Beach and other Town Council sites</b>						

1.	Punch and Judy – move to hardstanding with social distance spaces marked on ground	Work with concession – will free up space on the beach and help prevent any potential confrontation with beach users	Ongoing	Mid July	STC	-	Medium
2.	Seafront Advisors – back of polo shirts could say ‘Keep 2 metres apart’	Seafront Advisors start from 13 <sup>th</sup> June – we need to order new tops anyway	Being procured – will say something along lines of ‘keep your distance’	End June	STC	£40	Short
3.	STC could publish a document specifying how often, on a usual basis, that toilets and water points will be cleaned	Very basic information but will provide reassurance that toilets are cleaned 3 times a day. We will also look at cleaning the water points by the Shore Road beach huts	Working up	July	STC	-	Short
4.	Promote payment by card for parking machines	Already in place	Done	In place	STC	-	In place
5.	Market – each stall must submit a risk assessment before approval and is assessed during the day by the market attendant	Already in place	Done	In place	STC	-	In place
6.	Swanage Information Centre	Currently planned to open 4 <sup>th</sup> July and will be, as far as possible, offering an outdoor service in the garden	Ongoing	4 July	STC	-	Short
	<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>£?</b>	

<b>Document Management</b>	
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Version	0.4
Date	23 June 2020

# Appendix 2: Town Recovery Working Party – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020

## SWANAGE TOWN RECOVERY WORKING PARTY MEETING TO DISCUSS TOURISM MATTERS HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020

Present via Zoom (due to Covid-19 social distancing guidelines):

Councillor Finch (Host), Councillor Bonfield, Councillor Foster, Councillor Tomes and Councillor Whitwam.

Outside Representatives: Holly Lagden (Visit Dorset), David Rawsthorn (Swanage Railway), Anne Rothery (Swanage Chamber of Trade) and Alistair Tuckey (Durlston Country Park).

Also present: Culvin Milmer and Emma Evans.

The meeting opened at 12.30 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the following:

1. Brief update from Stakeholders
2. Revised Recovery Plan
3. Actions to take forward

Councillor Finch opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees.

Apologies were received from Councillor Monkhouse and Sylvia Libicka (Swanage Chamber of Trade).

### **Brief Update from Stakeholders**

**Visit Dorset** – The Visit England charter mark entitled ‘We’re good to go’ was nearing release and it was hoped that many local businesses would sign up for the free scheme. It was reported that the new government guidelines, which would impact the risk assessment for businesses had not yet been released, but it was anticipated within a few days. The delay was in part due to the potential change in distance required whilst in public and an update would be provided at the next meeting.

**Swanage Railway** – The proposed date for the trains to re-start was noted as 11<sup>th</sup> July and would include four services per day using diesel engines. The trains would not be stopping at stations for embarkment but rather as a non-stop service between Swanage and Corfe Castle. Volunteers had been working in the background to ensure the risk assessments were in place and that a through put of passengers could be accommodated in accordance with government guidelines.

**Durlston Country Park** – It was reported that the café was operating a limited menu as a take away option. Outdoor seating would be provided when able to do so in accordance with guidelines. Risk assessments were currently being drawn up to enable the castle to re-open with the planned date week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> July. Scheduled events would be limited and numbers attending appropriate to the situation.

**Swanage Chamber of Trade** – It was reported that most people accessing the shops this week had maintained social distancing rules and used hand sanitiser where required. The longer term plan was for the Christmas lights ‘Switch on Swanage’ and a separate meeting would be held regarding this.

**Swanage Pier Trust** – The pier hoped to re-open on 4<sup>th</sup> July potentially with a one-way pedestrian route.

**Swanage Town Council** – It was reported that since the some shops had re-opened on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June most people had been compliant with social distancing and using hand sanitiser where required. There had been a few cases where people had refused but had been the minority.

It was noted that various pedestrian congestion points had been identified in the town and a stencil on the pavement stating 'Leave Space' had been placed on these spots.

It was anticipated that the Tourist Information Centre may open on 4<sup>th</sup> July with the majority of enquiries dealt with outside.

### **Revised Recovery Plan**

The screen share function was enabled for all participants to view the draft document.

Some discussion was held over the use of the word 'safe town to visit' and alternative suggestions included 'everything has been done to ensure the town is as safe as possible' or that Swanage was a town that 'cares about your safety'.

It was noted that a video showing what to expect when you visited Swanage could be produced and the cost would need further investigation. A suggestion of a local photographer was made and Durlston Country offered the skills of their ranger responsible for promotion of the park.

In addition it was suggested that the videos from the various attractions in town be linked to the town council webpage. It was stated that a plan for this would be brought forward to a future meeting.

It was noted that as the guidelines in relation to Covid-19 were liable to change the information could become dated and this would need consideration.

It was further suggested that a draft leaflet promoting the town's 'Green Seafront' be brought forward to a future meeting.

Preparing a brand or slogan for the town was suggested, however, it was felt that this needed to be considered together with the longer term promotion of the town.

The Visit England charter mark was discussed, entitled 'We're good to go'. Further to the government risk assessment being released, businesses could access this free scheme by answering some questions on line. The answers would be checked by Visit England staff and, on successful completion of the requirements, the businesses would be sent an information pack containing a certificate and logo to display.

Further information would follow and be available through the Visit Dorset newsletter.

The scheme would be open to food and drink establishments, accommodation and attractions. It was noted that new group had been established by the town's accommodation providers to share information and best practice, currently through online meetings.

Various areas of the town were discussed where social distancing could be difficult to maintain which included Shore Road and Station Approach. Suggestions included Shore Road becoming one-way with traffic diverted to De Moulham Road and, to alleviate pedestrian traffic in Station Approach, buses to drop off in Rempstone Road/Gilbert Road.

The suggestions would be collated by officers to be forwarded to DC Highways.

A discussion ensued around the styles of stickers, signs and sanitisers available for Swanage Town Council provided by Dorset Council. Most felt that around 100 stickers would be useful (yellow signs that stated 'keep your distance'), around 20 bench signs, 30 bollard signs and 3 or 4 sanitiser units. It was suggested that the A2/A3 poster style signs may be placed in the blue shelters, however, this would be investigated prior to ordering.

### **Actions to take forward**

1. Obtain cost of producing a video demonstrating what to expect when you visit the town, including contacting the local photographer (CM).
2. Organise a meeting between the local attractions; Swanage Railway, Durlston Country Park, Swanage Pier Trust and Swanage Railway to ascertain if a combined video would be feasible and cost effective (CM).
3. Draft the leaflet for 'Green Seafront' (CM).
4. Check the Visit Dorset newsletter distribution (EE).
5. Feed back relevant information from DC Highways regarding plans for Shore Road/other areas where social distancing could be difficult (MB).
6. Collate suggestions to alleviate pedestrian traffic to forward to DC Highways (CM).
7. Order stickers, signs and sanitiser units from DC (CM).
8. Complete a walk through Station Approach with DC Highways team (CM).
9. Establish if retail establishments would be included in the Visit England charter mark scheme (HL).

The next meeting of the working party was scheduled for Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June at 2.00 p.m.

Councillor Finch thanked attendees for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 1.55 p.m.

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