

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 18th NOVEMBER 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor M. Bonfield

Councillor M. Coward

Councillor J. Dorrington

Councillor J. Lejeune

Councillor D. Monkhouse

Councillor C. Moreton

Councillor C. Sutton

Councillor C. Tomes

Councillor W. Trite

Councillor S. Vile

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, five members of the public and one representative of the local press and media attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time: -

- In relation to agenda item 4 (a), several open water swimmers highlighted the importance of understanding water quality in the bay and the necessity for appropriate signage over the winter months. It was noted that approximately 150 regular open water swimmers used the bay all year round. Suggestions for improved signage included the provision of information regarding all the overflow outlets around Swanage Bay, rather than solely the Ulwell Stream, and ensuring that the information would be accessible to all, such as ‘thumbs up’ or ‘thumbs down’ logos. The Town Council’s proposal for a central noticeboard was welcomed and a further suggestion was made to place a screenshot from the widely used ‘Safer Seas’ app on the central notice board daily.

Reverend Karen James offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.10 p.m.

114. **Apologies**

There were no apologies to record on this occasion.

115. **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.

No declarations were made on this occasion.

116. **Minutes**

- (a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Moreton and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21st October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

117. **Environment and Green Spaces Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee Meeting held on 23rd October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

5) **Swanage Bay Water Quality-To consider proposals for improving the provision of information to the public**

- Proposed by Councillor Monkhouse, seconded by Councillor Vile and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a budget of £1,500 for 2025-26 to amend the header board of the existing A2 double sided noticeboard, to be sited at the Swanage Information Centre, at a cost of £1,000, and to install appropriate signage along the seafront at a cost of £500, be allocated.

118. **Personnel Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 23rd October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

4) **Review the statement of policy on the local government pension scheme 2014**

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

That a revised 'Statement of Policy on the Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 Discretions' be adopted, amended as follows: Part A: To update the APC figure to £8,344 in relation to Regulation 16. Part B: To delegate the calculation of APP to the Town Clerk and Finance Manager in relation to Regulation 21.

119. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 4th November 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

120. **Finance and Governance Committee**
(a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Tomes and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance
Committee Meeting held on 6th November 2024 be
approved as a correct record and signed.

121. **Community Services Committee**
(a) Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Coward and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Community Services
Committee Meeting held on 6th November 2024 be
approved as a correct record and signed.

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

- 7) **Swanage Library – to consider appointment of Councillor Sutton as observer
to the Friends of Swanage Library**
Proposed by Councillor Dorrington, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That Councillor Sutton be appointed to the Friends of
Swanage Library in the role of observer.

122. **Statement of Cash Balance**
(a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st October 2024 was submitted for
information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

123. **Payment of Accounts**
In accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Council’s Financial Regulations,
the following Payment Schedule was submitted for information:-
• Payment Schedule 7, amounting to £2,140,90.44.

124. **Chairman’s Announcements**
The Town Mayor reported that she had attended the following events since the
Council Meeting held on 21st October 2024:
- Remembrance Sunday – Remembrance Sunday had been a deeply moving event,
with strong attendance from councillors and the wider community. Marching
together served as a powerful symbol of unity and respect, honouring the
sacrifices of those who served and reminding us of the enduring importance of
remembrance.
 - Gainsborough Care Home - The town was deeply saddened to learn of the recent
loss of life at Gainsborough Care Home. Heartfelt thanks were extended to
everyone who came together to provide support during this challenging time.
The Mayor also expressed gratitude to the Deputy Mayor for his thoughtful and
compassionate statements to the press, delivered on behalf of the Council.
 - Candles by the Sea - On 26th October 2024, the Mayor attended the Lewis
Manning ‘Candles by the Sea’ event held at the Bandstand in memory of loved
ones. The Mayor opened the event by reflecting on the losses at the care home
and the collective grief experienced by the community. The poignant gathering
highlighted the strong community spirit and shared compassion that unites
people during difficult times.

- Pop-up shop – On 11th November, the Mayor and her consort opened the Purbeck Dementia Friendly pop-up shop, raising funds for this well deserving charity.
- Police – A meeting had been held with the local Police Inspector to discuss policing in the town. It was noted that a PCSO based in Swanage had recently left their role; however, a stronger police response presence is now stationed in Wareham. The Mayor urged attendees to report any crimes promptly, either by calling 101 or using the online reporting system.
- Town Council website – The Mayor announced that the Town Council website was to undergo an upgrade. Members were encouraged to contribute by providing a brief résumé and a photograph for inclusion.

125. **Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

(a) **Communications Strategy, 23rd October 2024**

At the meeting held on 23rd October 2024, Members discussed the need for increased community engagement. It was anticipated that the Annual Report would be published and circulated electronically prior to Christmas. A quarterly newsletter would be resurrected in the new year entitled ‘Talk of the Town Hall’ and would be available online and via email with some hard copies to be made available in local public buildings. Recipients would be encouraged to provide an email address for future circulation. Members had also discussed the upgraded website. It was noted that due to the sad incident at Gainsborough Care Home not all matters on the agenda were covered and a further meeting would be held in due course.

(b) **Car Parks, 23rd October 2024**

At the meeting held on 23rd October 2023, Members had reviewed the outturn of the summer season and a draft Scale of Fees and Charges for 2025/26, which would be considered at the Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting being held on 27th November 2024. A further discussion regarding the Co-op car park would be discussed under Agenda item 16 b).

(c) **Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing, 23rd October 2024**

Further to Minute No. 103 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 21st October 2024, it was reported that a meeting with the Tennis and Bowls Clubs had been arranged for 27th November 2024 to take forward discussion of a pavilion licence agreement and development of a long-term vision for Beach Gardens. It was anticipated that further information would be provided to a future Council meeting.

(d) **Seafront Masterplan, 13th November 2024**

Further to Minute No. 103 (e) of the Council Meeting held on 13th November 2024, it was reported that the Council had received the latest feedback from the early contractor involvement regarding the Green Seafront Scheme and potential Highways improvements to the northern section of Shore Road. It was noted that there would be opportunities for further discussion of these options and that it was anticipated that public consultation would be undertaken in the spring of 2025.

126. **Dorset Town of Culture 2026 – To consider whether to support a bid for Swanage and Purbeck and commit to provide funding**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM), which outlined the progress made in preparing and submitting an Expression of Interest for Swanage and Purbeck to be considered for the Dorset Town of Culture 2026. It was noted that neighbouring parish councils had been invited

to participate, although they had not yet had the opportunity to officially consider the proposal.

A meeting of local organisations, including the Mowlem Theatre, Swanage Railway and Purbeck Art Weeks, had taken place, during which the agreed theme of the bid was identified as 'Inclusion and Diversity.' The theme aimed to enhance the accessibility of cultural events across the region. The National Trust had also expressed its support, and the Mowlem Theatre had agreed to act as the host organisation for the bid.

The briefing paper highlighted the financial requirement for the bid, totalling £30,000, to be provided over two financial years (2025-26 and 2026-27) by town and parish councils. The successful bidder would unlock a further £30,000 contribution from Dorset Council. It was further noted that securing the support and engagement of other local partners would significantly enhance the chances of a successful bid.

Members discussed the positive impact that this proposal could have on Swanage and the surrounding area, noting the region's diverse and varied cultural activities. The aim to deliver these experiences in a more accessible format was commended. A query was raised regarding the potential impact of the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme and the town centre flood defence scheme, both of which were expected to be underway by 2026. Concerns were noted regarding the potential effect on the town's appearance and logistical challenges for visitors. In response, it was suggested that a successful bid could help attract visitors during this period and mitigate any potential downturn in visitor numbers.

The timeline for the application process was also noted, with notification of a successful second-round bid expected by 18th January 2025, coinciding with the Council's budget-setting process. It was reported that much of the funding would be allocated toward the procurement of a project coordinator, who would be responsible for securing additional grant funding and overseeing the delivery of a range of cultural projects.

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

To support the Swanage and Purbeck Town of Culture 2026 Expression of Interest, with the Mowlem Theatre acting as the host organisation, agreeing in principle to commit to a sum of up to £30,000 to support the bid.

127. **Remote Meeting Attendance – To consider response to consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings**

Members noted the content of the government's initial consultation on enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at meetings. Discussions highlighted the benefits of in-person attendance, particularly the value of face-to-face interactions. However, Members also acknowledged the advantages of remote attendance and proxy voting for those unable to attend in person due to childcare, health, or other logistical challenges. It was recognised that remote participation could enhance inclusivity by enabling contributions to discussions and ensuring that votes were counted, even when physical attendance was not possible. Some concerns were raised regarding the potential implications of proxy voting, particularly the importance of hearing all perspectives on a topic before making a decision.

It was anticipated that once the government had reviewed the consultation results, the Town Council would have the opportunity to assess the implications in greater detail and amend its Standing Orders as necessary. It was suggested that a workshop be held to explore all possibilities further following the government's response.

It was **AGREED:-**

That those Members who wish to contribute to the consultation should do so individually, the Town Council committing to giving the matter further consideration following publication of the government's response to the initial consultation results.

128. **Reports from Council representatives on outside organisations**

a) **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership**

It was reported that an information board would be installed at Wareham railway station and that discussions were being held regarding its potential use to promote Swanage.

b) **Swanage Library**

It was noted that a new manager had been appointed at Swanage Library and a meeting would be arranged as a way of introduction to the Council.

c) **Swanage Railway**

It was noted that during 2025 the railway would be celebrating a significant anniversary and initial plans suggested Victorian themed events. Further information would be provided to a future meeting.

d) **Chamber of Trade**

It was reported that the Chamber of Trade had discussed the possibility of extending the festive lights to include Kings Road East. In response, it was stated that the supply and installation of the lights were operated under a three-year fixed price contract and therefore the Council would be unable to make alterations to the location of the lights at this time.

e) **Action for Health and Care Purbeck**

It was noted that NHS Dorset would be holding a consultation event regarding upcoming changes at Wareham Town Hall on Thursday 21st November 2024 between 10.00 a.m. and 12 noon. Members were encouraged to notify NHS Dorset should they wish to attend.

129. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillor Trite:

- Budget – It was noted that the current budget deficit stands at £13.2 million, an increase from the £10 million forecasted at the end of July. The central government funding settlement for the next financial year would be finalised at the end of December, and setting a balanced budget for 2025/26 would likely require difficult decisions.
- The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology has given Dorset Council £163k to bring Wi-fi to the Swanage Railway (station and trains). This will be a test case for how innovative technology can boost the rural economy.
- Eastern Area Planning Committee – A decision had been made to approve a planning application for Lidl to build a store at Sandford.

130. **Reporting of delegated matters**

(a) **Treasury Management Advice – To consider extension of existing contract**

Further to Minute No. 112 (a) of the Council meeting held on 21st October 2024, it was reported that the Council's existing contract with Arlingclose for the provision of Treasury Management advice services had been extended in accordance with Financial Regulations 11.1 b) and e).

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

(a) **To note content of consortium objection to Sandbanks Ferry toll increase.**

Members noted that the Sandbanks Ferry inquiry had been rescheduled and would be held mid-late January 2025. Concerns were raised over the potential location of

the inquiry, and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would write to the relevant authorities seeking reassurance that every effort had been made to make the inquiry as accessible as possible to residents of Swanage and Studland. An update would be provided to a future meeting, following an upcoming meeting of the consortium.

(b) **Station Approach improvement works – To note minor amendments to final design**

Members noted that minor amendments had been made to the disabled parking bays within the final design for the Station Approach improvement works.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Coward 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 15 and 16 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

132. **Procurement**

(a) **Seafront Ground Monitoring – To consider extension of existing contract**

Further to Minute No. 109 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 18th September 2023, Members considered the content of a briefing paper prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which explained that real time monitoring and data collection about the nature and rate of slope instability, and the levels of ground water across locations on the seafront, is integral to understanding the rate and extent of ground movement.

A proposal had, therefore, been brought forward to extend the current contract with South-West Geotechnical Services for monitoring arrangements for a further five-month period at a cost of £7,012.50.

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

That the Town Council extends the current contract with South-West Geotechnical Services for a further five-month period for monthly monitoring and reporting of ground movement and water levels on the Green Seafront for the sum of £7,012.50.

(b) **Swanage Information Centre – To award contract for internal improvements**

Further to Minute No. 6) of the meeting of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee, held on 16th October 2024, Members noted the content of a briefing paper prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager which set out proposed internal improvements to the Swanage Information Centre and specified the cost of the works as allocated from the significant one-off revenue expenditure/minor works budget 2024/25. It was reported that the Town Council had received information from Dorset Council that the Minor Works Framework had expired and, therefore, in order to be compliant with the Council's Financial Regulations, three quotations would be sought, as the works would exceed £2,500. It was stated that a further update would be provided to a future meeting.

(c) **Peveril Point Road Improvement Works – Update and approval of professional fees to Dorset Council**

Further to Minute No. 228 (e) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29th April 2024, Members considered a briefing paper prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager. The paper outlined the work completed to date in preparing project documentation and highlighted the requirement from Dorset Council’s Highways Improvement Team to review the project brief before a decision is made to proceed with the scheme as currently designed.

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

To award a contract to Dorset Council for the sum of £6,657 for project fees to provide information to the Council in respect of the Peveril Point Road improvement work.

(d) **Neighbourhood Plan – To consider proposal to engage Dorset Coast Forum to undertake public consultation**

Members considered the content of a briefing paper prepared by the Planning and Community Engagement Manager which outlined the discussions held by the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group about the importance of comprehensive community engagement at this stage of the plan. The successful prior engagement of Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) in Town Council projects, such as the Green Seafront and Shore Road enhancement schemes, was noted. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Sutton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

To waive Financial Regulation 11 so far as is required to directly appoint Dorset Coast Forum to deliver stakeholder and community engagement for the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan, in view of their proven ability to deliver consistent and effective communication and consultation strategies, for the sum of £20,125 (payable across this and the next financial year from agreed budgets and grant funding).

133. **Property-Related Legal Matters**

(a) **Swanage Railway – To consider proposed plans for new public conveniences**

Further to Minute No. 189 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 29th January 2024, Members considered an email received from Swanage Railway together with detailed plans of a proposed new toilet block on the northern side of the platform. It was noted that Swanage Railway were seeking landlord’s consent in order to proceed with pre-planning advice, prior to the submission of a full planning application. Members welcomed the inclusion of a Changing Places facility, which it was felt would prove to be a great benefit to the town and its offer as an accessible visitor destination. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Sutton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That landlord consent be given to the construction of a new toilet block at Swanage Station, as set out in the submitted plans and visualisation, subject to compliance with the terms of the lease and securing planning permission.

(b) **Co-operative Group Limited – To consider draft proposal for future management of shoppers’ car park**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk and Finance Manager which set out a proposal received from the Co-op group

regarding the future management of the Co-op car park. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That officers be requested to further consider the implications of the Co-op group's proposal and bring a revised report to a future Council Meeting for final determination.

(c) **Sauna Concession – Update**

Further to Minute Nos. 188 of the Council Meeting held on 29th January 2024 and 113 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 21st October 2024, Members noted the content of a briefing paper which outlined actions taken by the Town Clerk under Financial Regulation 4.8 (authorisation of urgent unbudgeted expenditure) with regard to the installation of an upgraded electrical supply to facilitate the operation of the sauna concession. It was noted that the total cost of the works (inclusive of VAT) was projected to exceed the agreed budget by £6,694 and that the full cost would be recharged to the concessionaire in accordance with the terms of their lease.

(d) **Town Hall annexe lease – Update**

Further to Minute No. 113 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 21st October 2024, it was reported that at the recent meeting held between the Town Mayor, Town Clerk and the local Police Inspector concerns over the future police presence in Swanage had been raised and reassurance had been received. Nevertheless, concerns over the requested insertion of a break clause in the draft lease of the Town Hall Annexe remained and these would be put in writing to the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner accordingly.

The Meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.
