

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council  
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on  
**MONDAY, 24<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2025** at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor M. Bonfield  
Councillor S. Brookes  
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, one representative of the local press and media attended the Meeting.

**Public Participation Time**

There were no matters raised.

Reverend Jo Levasier, Swanage & Studland Ministry Team Rector, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.05 p.m.

177. **Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

178. **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 9)** – Councillor Moreton declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a member of the Town Band.

**Agenda item 14 a)** – Councillor Tomes declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of having a family connection to the seaweed contractor.

179. **Minutes**

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

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

180. **Personnel Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

181. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Bonfield and seconded by Councillor Moreton:-  
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Upon being put to the Meeting, ELEVEN Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

182. **Environment and Green Spaces Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Monkhouse and seconded by Councillor Tomes:-  
That the Minutes of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Upon being put to the Meeting, ELEVEN Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

183. **Personnel Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-  
That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

184. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

185. **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 10, amounting to £989,351.02.

186. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported with sadness the passing of Sue Whitton who had been a stalwart of the town's volunteering community. Last year Sue had deservedly won the Volunteer of the Year award at the Town Council Community Awards.

The Mayor then provided the following updates:

- **Sandbanks Ferry** – It was reported that Councillor Bonfield had represented the Town Council at the recent Ferry Inquiry along with other representatives of the consortium. It was noted that the ferry company had recognised a need to improve public relations and further information would follow in due course.
- **Dorset Town of Culture** – The Town Council had worked closely with various representatives to submit a bid to the Dorset Town of Culture and although Swanage had not been successful, the process had reflected the impressive work of the town in the support of cultural activities.

- **Czech Ambassador** – The Mayor and her consort enjoyed meeting with the Czech ambassador on her recent visit to view the Trevor Chadwick statue, about which the ambassador had been extremely complimentary.
- **Swanage Railway Community weekend** – The Town Mayor reported a busy day on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, which began at the Swanage Railway Community Weekend. The Mayor and her consort were given a tour of both Swanage and Corfe Castle stations. Fellow travellers on the train expressed their enjoyment at visiting Swanage.
- **Swanage and Purbeck Rotary Silver Tea Party** – An enjoyable afternoon was spent with residents of the town, where fond memories had been shared.
- **The Mayor's Golden Ball** – Thanks were given to all those who attended the Mayor's Ball which raised an impressive £600 for the Mayor's Charity, Dementia Friendly Purbeck. An evening of dancing and nibbles provided a great evening for all!
- **Swanage Town Council Community Awards** – The Mayor reminded attendees to cast their vote for a local organisation or individual who had contributed to making the town a wonderful place. The closing date for nominations was noted as Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025, at 12 noon.

187. **Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

(a) **Fishers' Huts, 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

At the Fishers' Huts Working Party meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January, Members met with Fishers' Hut tenants at the Angling Club to discuss the guidelines for hut allocation. Further information would be provided at the Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

(b) **Beach Warden/Seafront Advisor, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025**

Further to a lengthy discussion at the Beach Warden/Seafront Advisor working party meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January, the importance of a staff presence on the beach was noted and the recruitment for 'Seafront Assistant' roles would commence soon.

(c) **Communications Strategy, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

It was reported that members of the newsletter editorial team had met to discuss content and a further update would be provided to a future meeting.

(d) **Car Parks, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

At the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025, a range of issues were discussed which included future car park administration, Station Approach and Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCs). An update would be provided to a future meeting.

(e) **Emergency Health Services, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

An update was provided following the receipt of data requested via a Freedom of Information (FOI) request from South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) for the period July to December 2024. The data showed that the staffing level of the ambulance car had reached 87%, reflecting a 14% increase. There had also been a rise in callouts to 540, up from 400 in the first half of 2024. The response time for Category 1 emergency calls was recorded at 10 minutes, compared to the target time of 7 minutes. The improvements to services were noted.

Ongoing concerns had been raised regarding the operating hours of the Swanage Hospital Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) and the process of accessing the MIU through the allocation system when calling 101. It had been suggested that a letter be sent to the NHS Trust requesting that steps should be taken to improve patient access to

the services at Swanage Hospital, including removal of the sign outside of the Hospital requiring patients to call 111 prior to entry and ensuring inclusion of Swanage Hospital clinics on the dropdown list of options for appointments. Councillor Monkhouse, as lead member of the working party, had offered to draft the letter which would be circulated to working party members and reviewed by the Town Clerk prior to sending. A request was made for the draft letter to be circulated to all councillors and it was noted that if any significant changes were suggested it could be reviewed at a future Council meeting.

The working party had also recommended that a Freedom of Information request should be sent to the NHS Trust to seek information about the number of patients attending Swanage Hospital MIU and outpatients clinics over the last 6 months, together with details of the clinics that have been withdrawn from Swanage Hospital over recent years.

The report from the EHSWP was noted. It was reported that Councillor Brookes had made a request to join the EHSWP and it was proposed by Councillor Monkhouse, seconded by Councillor Vile and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**  
That Councillor Brookes be appointed to the  
Emergency Health Services working party.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 178 Councillor Moreton left the room during consideration of the following item.

188. **Grants Panel – To consider recommendations**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Planning and Community Engagement Manager, which set out recent grant applications received for the 2024/25 financial year.

It was noted that the Council had approved a grants budget of £10,000 for 2024/25, a total of £2,000 had been awarded to date, and a further £650 had been requested. The balance of £7,350 would be available for applications received prior to the end of the financial year. Members considered the summary of the recommendations of the Grants Panel as outlined below:

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Sum Requested</b>	<b>Recommended grant</b>	<b>Summary of project</b>	<b>Reason for support</b>
Swanage Town Band	£150	£150	<b>Committee-run (by members).</b> The Town Band provides live music at local events, fostering musical enjoyment and participation for all skill levels. Encouraging the local community to join the band and nurturing young talent. This application seeks funding to assist with the purchase of two new pieces of music, supporting the band's annual repertoire and member development. Last year, with the support of the Town Council (£150), the band acquired three pieces for £195.79.	<b>Recommend approval.</b> Benefit to the local community's health and wellbeing (free events/social activities/youth services).  In support of funding the capital purchase of new music, in recognition of the valuable contribution that the band makes to the town and local community.

			The band funds its operations through donations and band membership fees (which increased from £60 to £105 p.a. last year to cover rising costs, including hall rental, performance expenses, and a new Music Director).	
Purbeck Youth Music (PYM)	£500	£500	<p><b>Registered Charity No. 1190008.</b></p> <p>Purbeck Youth Music (PYM) aims to ‘inspire and enthuse a new generation of young musicians’ by providing instruments, lessons, and interactive music programmes, including creative singing, strings, woodwind, brass, and guitar. Partnering with nine primary schools in Swanage and Purbeck, PYM makes music fun while developing young people’s skills. Recently, 110 children from four Purbeck primary schools received a free brass trial lesson, with 55 enrolling for group lessons in 2025.</p> <p>To meet growing demand, PYM seeks funding to attract more tutors to Swanage by increasing travel and expense rates and covering DBS checks. Additional support will help 500 Purbeck primary school students and provide access to subsidised/free lessons and instrument loans for low-income families. This initiative enriches not only the children but also the wider community.</p> <p>PYM continues to seek funding from local trusts, music organisations, and individuals.</p>	<p><b>Recommend approval.</b></p> <p>Subsidised and free services, benefitting the local community by supporting mental health, overall wellbeing, and social engagement, particularly among young people. In support of funding PYM’s efforts to attract more tutors to travel to Swanage to increase offering for local children.</p>
<b>Total:</b>	£650	<b>£650</b>		

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

That the Town Council approves the recommendation of the Grants Panel from its meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025, for the sum of £150 for the Swanage Town Band, as set out in the table above.

Councillor Moreton re-entered the meeting.

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

That the Town Council approves the recommendation of the Grants Panel from its meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025, for the sum of £500 for Purbeck Youth Music, as set out in the table above.

In light of the value of the remaining grants budget for the 2024/25 financial year, Members were encouraged to promote the Swanage Town Council grant process as a potential source of funds for local organisations.

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

a) **Mowlem Theatre**

It was reported that Councillor Moreton, in his capacity as observer to the Mowlem Institute Trust, would attend the final interview stage in the recruitment process for the appointment of an Executive Director at the Mowlem Theatre.

b) **Swanage Chamber of Trade**

It was reported that the Chamber of Trade would be holding its AGM in March during which Fairtrade and Swanage in Bloom would be discussed. An update would be provided to a future meeting.

c) **Friends of Swanage Library**

It was reported that the interior of the library had undergone some alterations and that fundraising would continue. The Friends of Swanage Library were encouraged to apply for a Swanage Town Council grant to support their fundraising efforts for the service.

190. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillor Trite:

- Bournemouth-Poole Motor Road and Ferry Company's Toll Application – It was reported that there had been a noticeable absence of members of the public in attendance at the inquiry, although the evening event at The Springfield Hotel had attracted around 50 members of the public.
- Portland incinerator – Dorset Council had requested intervention from DEFRA to oppose the incinerator being cited at Portland, however initial response from central government had not been encouraging.
- Dorset Council Q & A – it was noted that an online Q & A session covering Dorset Council's budget, would be held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 6.00 p.m.
- Devolution bid – it was reported that the devolution bid 'Heart of Wessex' had not been approved as part of the first round of such proposals.

- Ukraine support – Dorset Council had reaffirmed its support for Ukraine, as 24<sup>th</sup> February would mark the third year of conflict. 1000 Ukrainians now resided in Dorset, supported by various organisations. Thanks were given to those who had offered support.

191. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There were no matters to report on this occasion.

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

(a) **UK-wide Covid-19 Day of Reflection, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

It was noted that a UK-wide Covid-19 Day of Reflection would be held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025, with various events being hosted around the UK.

(b) **VE Day 80, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

It was reported that discussions were ongoing with Royal British Legion, Swanage Railway and the Town Council regarding a potential joint event with Swanage Railway to sign the Armed Forces Covenant on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025. An update would be provided to a future meeting.

(c) **Sandbanks Ferry Inquiry**

A meeting had taken place between representatives from Sandbanks Ferry and nominated representatives of the Town Council. During the meeting, the ferry representatives clarified that the location of the Inquiry had been determined by the Inspector. The Ferry Company had expressed a desire for greater public engagement. It was suggested that they be invited to the next meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee and be considered for membership of that committee so that they could attend future meetings.

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Trite 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 14 to 16 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality and item 17 for reasons of data protection considerations.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 178 Councillor Tomes left the room during consideration of the following item.

193. **Procurement**

(a) **Beach and seaweed management**

Further to Minute No. 228 (b) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024, consideration was given to a briefing note regarding a proposed extension to the existing contract for seaweed and sand management services on Swanage Main Beach. It was noted that Financial Regulation 11.1.e made provision for such contract extensions, provided they do not contravene the terms of public procurement legislation. A budget of £12,000 has been set for 2025/26. Although it was noted that the cost of the service is heavily weather dependent, it is not envisaged that the total contract price will exceed the £30,000 threshold for compliance with the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023.

Feedback from the trial in terms of the beach and seaweed contractor and services provided had been positive, it was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a one-year contract extension be awarded to DWG Smith Ltd for seaweed and sand management services on Swanage Main Beach, all tasks associated with the delivery of this service to be chargeable at the same price as those submitted in the 2024 tender.

Councillor Tomes re-entered the meeting.

**(b) Installation and storage of designated bathing area marker buoys**

Members considered the contents of a briefing note, which outlined the consistently good performance of the current contractor to install, maintain and remove the designated bathing area marker buoys.

It was noted that the contract had been awarded further to Minute No. 131 of the Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and that Financial Regulation 11.1.e made provision for such a contract extension, where the total price is below £30,000. The cost of this contract over four years will be £19,464.

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

That a one-year contract extension be awarded to Swanage Sea Fishing Ltd for the installation and storage of the designated bathing area marker buoys for the sum of £4,866.

**(c) Public conveniences opening/closing and cleaning**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper which detailed the current public toilet cleaning contract and the associated costs. It was noted that the contract had been awarded for a three-year period with provision for a two-year extension, further to Minute No. 136 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The current contractor had indicated a willingness to continue to provide the service during a two-year extension, although an increase in the annual contract sum had been requested due to increases in vehicle, product and labour costs. Members noted that provision had been made in the Procurement Act 2023, which had come into force on the day of this meeting, for such below threshold contract modifications to be made.

It was proposed by Councillor Brookes, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a two-year contract extension be awarded to JD Facilities for the opening/closing and cleaning of public conveniences for the sum of £79,580.88 per annum.

194.

**Procurement**

**(a) To award a contract for valuation and planning advice in connection with the work of the Property Panel and Green Seafront Scheme**

Further to Minute No. 138 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024, Members considered a briefing paper which outlined the process undertaken to procure advice to the Council regarding potential asset disposals and commercial activity associated with the work of the Property Panel and the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme. It was noted that although Financial Regulation 11.1.b

exempted specialist services from the Council's contract regulations, four companies had been approached to submit proposals, two of which had declined to participate. The Council had received submissions from two companies with the skills and availability to deliver the advice required, both of which had met the Council's requirements. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield and seconded by Councillor Vile:-

That the Council enters into a contract with Symonds and Sampson to provide professional valuation and planning advice in accordance with their submission dated 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Upon being put to the Meeting, ELEVEN Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

195. **Adoption of Panorama Road and Cow Lane – To consider e-mail from Dorset Council regarding final cost of works**

Further to Minute No. 48 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 11th July 2022, Members considered a briefing paper outlining communication between the Town Council and Dorset Council to establish the final cost of the works required to bring Town Council-owned sections of Panorama Road and Cow Lane up to a sufficient standard for adoption as highway maintainable at public expense.

It was reported that Dorset Council had incurred expenditure of £14,378.09 in excess of the agreed cost of the works. The Town Council had received assurance that all of the costs had been legitimately incurred in respect of works required for the adoption to take place. It was noted that the original cost estimate reported in July 2022 had not made any provision for a contingency and that the final contract sum needed to be agreed so that the adoption agreement could be finalised.

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

That the Town Council agrees to pay 50% of the £14,378.09 overspend on the highway improvement works to Panorama Road and Cow Lane, making a total contract sum of £82,389.05.

196. **Confidential Staffing Matters – To consider any matters arising from recent meetings of the Personnel Committee**

An update was provided further to recent meetings of the Personnel Committee, held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2025. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Brookes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That decisions regarding the conclusion of matters recently considered by the Personnel Committee should be delegated to that committee.

The Meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

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