

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 24th JUNE 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor M. Bonfield
Councillor J. Dorrington
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, four 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 regard to agenda item 9, a representative of the Swanage Fish & Food Festival noted that the festival, due to be held on the weekend of 15th/16th June 2024 at Prince Albert Gardens, had been postponed due to the weather forecast predicting strong winds and rain. An application had therefore been made to Swanage Town Council to hold the festival on 24th/25th August at Sandpit Field, a venue the organisers would like to continue to use in future years. The benefits of holding the festival were noted which included the partnership working between local organisations and the revenue generated for local charities (c. £20,000 in 2023).
- Thanks were provided to the Town Council for the continued good upkeep of the bandstand and surrounding area, which provided much enjoyment to residents and visitors alike. Appreciation was also given to the active promotion of events hosted at the bandstand by the Swanage Information Centre.

Councillor Moreton offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

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

33. **Apologies**

Councillors Coward and Lejeune gave apologies for their inability to attend the meeting in person, Councillor Coward being abroad and Councillor Lejeune recovering from illness. They both attended the meeting remotely.

34. **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.

35. **Minutes**

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

That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 13th May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

- (b) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 29th May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

36. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Vile and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 3rd June 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

8a) **Time of future committee meetings**

- Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Moreton and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That future meetings of the Planning and Consultation Committee be held at 7.00 p.m. instead of 6.30 p.m.

37. **Finance and Governance Committee**

- (a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on 17th June 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

4a) **Prince Albert Gardens pathway repairs**

- Proposed by Councillor Monkhouse, seconded by Councillor Moreton and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That an additional budget of £7,000 for pathway repairs at Prince Albert Gardens, to be funded from a virement from the Environment Committee budget for electricity works in Parks & Gardens, be approved.

4b) **Beach Gardens Kiosk awning**

- Proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Moreton and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That an additional budget of £1,270 for the installation of an awning at the Beach Gardens kiosk, to be funded from a virement from the Environment Committee budget for electricity works in Parks & Gardens, be approved.

6) **Purchase of new car park ticket machines**

Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the addition of the procurement of Pay and
Display machines to the Council's capital
programme 2024/25, with a budget allocation of up
to £44,000, be approved.

38. **Statement of Cash Balance**

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

39. **Payment of Accounts**

In accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Council's Financial Regulations,
the following Payment Schedules were submitted for information:-

- Payment Schedule 2, amounting to £865,634.17.

40. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported her attendance at the following events since accepting
the role of Chairman of the Council in May:

- CanCare sanctuary garden – it was an honour to open the beautiful new CanCare
sanctuary garden at Prince Albert Gardens. The Mayor stated her sadness at the
recent reported vandalism but was pleased to announce the damage had been
quickly rectified.
- Pirate Festival and Fairy Festival, where much fun had been had by all.
- Focus Centre - attended the opening event at Chapel Lane.
- Mowlem Community room – attended the opening of the newly renovated
community room, now named 'The Studio', with amazing views to be had over
the bay.
- Skatepark Community Day – attended the community day where stunts were
performed and funds raised for the skatepark project.
- Annual Parish Assembly – informative talks had been given by representatives
of Dorset Police, Swanage Skatepark Community Project, Dorset Coast Forum,
National Trust, Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust, Dorset Coast Forum
and the Mowlem Theatre.
- Liberty Parade – the 11th Signals Regiment had exercised their Liberty of
Swanage on Saturday 8th June by parading through the town, the Mayor having
undertaken an inspection of the troops on the seafront.

41. **Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

- (a) **Public Conveniences – request to add Cllr Vile to membership**
Further to Minute No. 9 of the Annual Council meeting held on 13th May 2024,
where Councillors Bonfield and Moreton were appointed to the Public
Conveniences working party, a request was made to add Councillor Vile to the
membership of the working party.

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

That Councillor Vile be appointed to the Public
Conveniences working party.

- (b) **Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing, 22nd May and 5th June 2024**

It was reported that at the meeting held on 22nd May representatives from the
Swanage Skatepark Community Project had provided an update as to their plans for
enhancing the facility and the progress of their crowdfunder appeal.

Representatives from the Football Club had attended later during the meeting and further information would be reported under agenda item 11.

At the meeting held on 5th June, discussion had focused on the future use of Beach Gardens, including the need to establish formal agreements with the bowls and tennis clubs around the use of the pavilion. An update would be provided to a future meeting.

Further to a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That Councillor Sutton be appointed to the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing working party.

(c) **Environmental Policy and Action Plan, 3rd June 2024**

Further to Minute No. 222 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29th April 2024, it was reported that the working party meeting had provided an opportunity to explore the Motion for the Ocean declaration. It was anticipated that a draft declaration would be presented to the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting on 26th June 2024 and a further update provided to a future meeting.

(d) **Seafront Masterplan, 5th June 2024**

It was reported that the meeting held on 5th June 2024 had provided an opportunity to update newly elected councillors with information regarding the Seafront Masterplan and the Green Seafront Scheme. It was anticipated that the briefing would be repeated for those members unable to attend the meeting.

42. **Events – To consider application from Swanage Fish & Food Festival to hold event on Sandpit Field 24th/25th August 2024**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper prepared by the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) which outlined a request from the event organisers of the Swanage Fish and Food Festival, to alter the date and venue of the event for 2024 on the grounds of having to postpone due to poor weather in June. Members noted the points as set out in the briefing paper, which included the date falling on the bank holiday weekend, the potential impact on the condition of the field and that a music festival would be held on Prince Albert Gardens over the same weekend. During a brief discussion, Members acknowledged the important part the Fish and Food Festival played in the event calendar and wished the organisers success for the event.

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

That the proposed rescheduling of the Swanage Fish and Food Festival to 24th and 25th August 2024 be approved, for one year only on condition that in future years the event returns to a date in June, and that the change of venue to Sandpit Field for 2024 only, be approved, subject to a review thereafter in advance of any decision for 2025.

43. **To consider Council support for campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries and their disposal**

Consideration was given to an email received from a member of the House of Lords, requesting support for a bill to improve the safety of lithium batteries (used in e-bike and e-scooters) and their disposal. It was noted that the charity Electrical Safety First were working to promote the bill to ensure greater safety in the use and disposal of lithium-ion batteries. The supporting papers contained detailed information about fires caused by these batteries and a summary of the bill which included clauses to ensure third party

independent approval testing was undertaken for bikes/e-scooters entering the market and the establishment of regulations for the safe disposal of used lithium-ion batteries.

Members noted the value in supporting the campaign and it was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council confirms its support for the campaign for improved safety of lithium-ion batteries and their disposal.

44. **Day's Park Community Sports Facility - To consider release of funds to Swanage Town & Herston Football Club Ltd for planning application**

Consideration was given to a request from Swanage Town & Herston Football Club (STHFC) Ltd for the release of the second tranche of grant funding towards the development of plans for a community sports facility that had been agreed in principle under Minute No. 181 of the Council meeting held on 29th January 2024. It had subsequently been clarified that the sum being requested was £21,927 (£26,312.40 inc. VAT). The grant had been agreed 'subject to the supply of further information that demonstrates that the project is deliverable, that question to be determined by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing working party'. Deliverability was to be assessed taking into account the availability of funding and clarification of the legal structure of the entity that will lead on the project. Following the recent Town Council election, the Town Clerk and lead member for the Sport, Leisure & Wellbeing working party had agreed that the matter should be brought back to the Town Council for determination.

In assessing whether or not the criteria for the release of the grant had been met, Members noted the content of a draft investment case/business plan that had been circulated prior to the meeting. This set out the estimated capital cost of the build project as £2.965m. An assessment of grant opportunities had been commissioned from a professional fundraiser, which had identified a total of 78 potential funding bodies with maximum grant support available of £3.6m; there was deemed to be a comparatively high chance of success in securing £750,000 towards the total cost from these organisations. It was also reported that a discussion about funding and other related matters had recently been held with the charity Active Dorset which operates the Redlands leisure centre in Weymouth.

In terms of establishing the legal status of the body to deliver the project, it was reported that it is currently anticipated that either a CIC (Community Interest Company) or CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) would be the best options. These are being explored by STHFC Ltd, pending receipt of the specialist VAT advice that has been commissioned by the Town Council further to Minute No. 224 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29th April 2024.

Plans for a forthcoming public engagement event were noted and the importance of this in establishing broad-based community support was highlighted, together with community fundraising. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To release the second tranche of grant funding to Swanage Town & Herston Football Club Ltd to fund the submission of a planning application for a community sports facility at Day's Park, in the sum of £21,927 (£26,312.40 inc. VAT), subject to specialist VAT advice received.

45. **Footpaths – To consider support for, and requests for financial contributions towards the following schemes:**

a) **Crossing at bottom of Currendon Hill**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out a proposal that had been prepared by Dorset Council in conjunction with the National Trust to improve the

crossing point at the junction of Currendon Hill and Ulwell Road. The proposed works had been designed to improve safety for existing users of this route, promote active travel options and slow down traffic using this route.

It was noted that the total project cost would be approximately £60,000 and in support of other grant applications the National Trust had asked the Town Council to consider making a small contribution of up to £2,000 towards the project.

Members acknowledged the advantages of the scheme for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle users and were supportive of the project being taken forward. However, it was also noted that the Town Council did not have primary responsibility for footpath improvement works and had no budget from which a financial contribution could be made. Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Vile and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

To write to the National Trust and Dorset Council in support of the proposed footpath improvements at the bottom of Currendon Hill, but not to make any financial contribution.

b) Sheps Hollow Steps

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which set out a proposal from Dorset Council to provide temporary access to the beach at Sheps Hollow following the destruction of the previous steps by storm damage and a request for a small financial contribution towards the scheme. Dorset Council's proposal included a flight of steel steps and a new boardwalk. It was noted that the total estimated cost of the works would be approximately £19,000, and that a small contribution from the Town Council would be beneficial to help leverage other funding.

It was anticipated that a longer-term solution would fall within the scope of the Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP), which was being led by Dorset Council's Flood and Coastal Erosion Management Team, together with the Environment Agency. During the ensuing debate, Members acknowledged there was a significant demand for use of the steps by local residents as well as visitors and that the current situation was potentially dangerous due to people ignoring the closure notices that were in place. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield and seconded by Councillor Tomes:-

To write to Dorset Council in support of the proposal to provide temporary access at Sheps Hollow and makes a small financial contribution of £500 towards the scheme.

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

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

(a) **Wellbeing Swanage**

It was noted that the Focus Centre, Chapel Lane had employed staff and work continued on plans for the internal remodelling of the buildings.

(b) **Swanage Carnival**

It was reported that the Swanage Carnival programme of events would be released imminently.

47. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillor Trite:

- It was reported that due to the elections held in May, non-essential committee meetings had been postponed.

- The Cost-of-Living Fund had been reintroduced with the £2 million p.a. cost to be met from reserves.
- Councillors Suttle and Trite had met with a local resident regarding concerns around overly bright street lighting. The concerns had been raised with the Director concerned and a further update would be provided to a future meeting.
- Dorset Council had announced that it would trial a reduction in the cost of parking in three locations in Weymouth, Lyme Regis and West Bay to improve access to the towns and provide the council with information regarding car park usage/financial implications. The cost of parking would equate to the winter prices during the summer months.
- The alteration to library opening times had been raised with Dorset Council representatives who had agreed to meet with Dorset and Swanage Town councillors to discuss the potential impact.
- In this year's Adult Social Services Carers Challenge (part of Carers Week), Dorset Council had been credited with nine initiatives to support unpaid carers, more than any other county in England.
- The Executive Director of Children's Services had handed in her notice. It was reported she had improved a range of services in the area and introduced specialist family hubs in Dorset.

48. **Reporting of delegated matters**

(a) **Utilities – to report award of contract for gas further to Minute No. 32(a) of the Special Council Meeting held on 29th May 2024.**

It was reported that the contract for supplying the Town Council with gas had been awarded to SEFE (Securing Energy for Europe), a 100% renewable energy supplier, on a 39-month contract from October 2024.

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

(a) **Change in Library Opening Hours**

Further to recent consultation it was noted that the Swanage Library opening times had been altered and although the total hours opened within a week had not been reduced, the length of time the library would be open on a Saturday had decreased from six and a half hours to three. Members raised concern over the impact this may have on young people and an update would be provided to a future meeting following a meeting with Dorset Council representatives.

(b) **Emergency Health Services**

It was reported that the six-monthly Freedom of Information (FOI) request to South-west Ambulance Service Foundation Trust (SWASFT) would be due at the end of the month. Steps were also being taken to follow up a proposal from NHS Dorset to form a health working group for Swanage and Purbeck. It was noted that the Emergency Health Services working party would continue to review data received to consider any further steps required to ensure emergency services are retained in the area.

(c) **Former Harrow House International College**

It was noted that an engagement meeting would be held between councillors and the developers of Harrow House to consider revised plans for the site. Members noted concern around the reduction in affordable housing in the revised plans and welcomed an opportunity for clarification.

(d) **Public Conveniences working party meeting**

It was noted that a Public Conveniences working party meeting would be held in the autumn to consider public convenience provision at the cemetery and allotments and it was anticipated that a report would be provided to the Community Services committee meeting being held on 6th November 2024.

(e) **The late Mr Ian Saunders**

Members were informed of the recent death of well-known local resident Mr Ian Saunders who had taken considerable interest in Town Council affairs and been a regular attendee at Council meetings for very many years prior to the Covid pandemic.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Bonfield 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 17 and 18 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

50. **Procurement**

(a) **Festive Lights – to report inability to award contract for Lot 2 in accordance with Minute No. 228(c) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29th April 2024 and to consider award to alternative contractor**

Further to Minute No. 228(c) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 29th April 2024, consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out the requirement for the reversal of Minute No. 228 (c) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held in April, due to the inability of the contractors to fulfil the terms of the contract for the sum set out in their tender submission.

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

That Standing Order No. 9 be suspended in order to reverse Minute No. 228 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 29th April 2024 to the extent required to recognise that the Council cannot proceed to award the contract for the installation and removal of festive lighting with Event Power Engineering as they are no longer able to fulfil the terms of the contract for the sum set out in their tender submission.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:

To award a 3-year contract (2024-26 inclusive) to Icthus Event Solutions Ltd for the installation and removal of the Council's seasonal festive lights for the sum of £7,200 per annum in years 1 and 3 (to include the testing of anchor bolts) and £6,100 in year 2.

(b) **Station Approach improvement works – to agree third party contribution and award contract**

Further to Minute No. 5 of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 13th March 2024, consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out the work undertaken with Dorset Council to provide a costing for the agreed improvement works at Station Approach. It was noted that the cost estimate for the works of approximately £150,300 now significantly exceeded the budget allocation of £120,000 contained in the Council's Capital Programme 2024/25. It was noted that this total included a 30% contingency, but because of increasing construction costs this total sum needed to be budgeted for. It was

also reported that a further £4,000 may be required for additional drainage works.

It was further noted that a significant proportion of the works would take place on land that is held by the Co-operative Group under their 250-year lease that commenced on 26th April 1994. Therefore, negotiations were underway to agree a financial contribution from the supermarket owner. In light of this, it was proposed by Councillor Monkhouse, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That an increase in budget to £154,300 be approved, subject to an appropriate contribution towards the total costs of the improvement works being agreed by the Co-operative Group.

It was noted that the award of contract would be brought back to a council meeting once the negotiations with the Co-operative Group had been concluded.

(c) **Prince Albert Gardens – To award contract for pathway works**

Further to Minute No. 4(a) of the Meeting of the Finance & Governance Committee held on 17th June 2024, consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined the requirement for pathway repairs in Prince Albert Gardens and the increased budget of £47,000 available to fund those works. It was noted that a cost estimate had been obtained via the Dorset Council Minor and Small Capital Works Framework Lot 11, and that further to Financial Regulation 11.1.c the Council could place an order directly via this framework agreement. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Sutton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That a contract for pathway repair works at Prince Albert Gardens be awarded to Blacknoll Ltd for the sum of £46,935.98, via the Dorset Council Minor and Small Capital Works Framework Lot 11.

51. **Property-Related Legal Matters**

(a) **Parking Permits - To consider requests from Swanage Beach Kiosk Ltd and Carve**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper, which outlined requests received from two of its business tenants on Shore Road regarding parking arrangements in Mermond Place/Residents' Car Park.

Having considered the options available, and taking into account a recommendation from the Car Parks working party, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Sutton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Town Council agrees to extend its existing annual and seasonal permit options for Main Beach and North Beach Car Parks, set out in the scale of fees and charges, to enable the Council's business tenants on Shore Road to obtain a single permit to enable them to park in the Residents' Car Park for periods exceeding 2 hours.

(b) **De Moulham Estate service roads – To consider arrangements for rear access to proposed redevelopment of 23 De Moulham Rd**

Consideration was given to a briefing note which set out advice from the Council's appointed surveyor and valuer further to correspondence received from representatives of the owners of 23 De Moulham Road, Westcoast Developments Ltd, regarding access rights to the property from the Council-owned back road. It was noted that the developer had recently acquired planning permission for the

demolition of the existing property and its replacement with four dwellings, built as two blocks of semi-detached properties.

Given the Council's obligation to obtain best value in connection with the disposal of assets (including rights over property), Members gave consideration to obtaining legal advice regarding access rights leading off the Town Council's back road.

It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That solicitors be instructed to advise on access rights to the proposed development at 23 De Moulham Road from the associated back road, to be funded from the Council's legal and professional fees budget.

The Meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.
