

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Methodist Church, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 24th MARCH 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor M. Bonfield
Councillor M. Coward
Councillor J. Lejeune
Councillor D. Monkhouse
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor C. Tomes
Councillor W. Trite
Councillor S. Vile

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, one member of the public and 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.

197. **Apologies**

Apologies for her inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Brookes. Councillors Dorrington and Sutton attended the meeting remotely.

198. **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 10) – Councillor Tomes declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of family members being private site licencees.

199. **Minutes**

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

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24th February 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

200. **Finance and Governance Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on 26th February 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

201. **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 March 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

202. **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 12th March 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

7) **Council Priorities Spring/Summer 2025**

- Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the draft Council Priority Plan for spring/summer 2025 be approved.

10) **Annual Review of Corporate Risk Register**

- Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the amended Corporate Risk Register for 2025/26 be adopted.

203. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 28th February 2025 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

204. **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 11, amounting to £906,878.49.

205. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported her attendance at the following events since the Council meeting held on 24th February 2025:

- **Dorset Council Planning Event** – The Mayor, along with the Planning and Community Engagement Manager and the Democratic Services Officer, attended the event on 4th March 2025. The event brought together 130 councillors and officers from across Dorset to learn more about the planning system and the proposed timeline for the draft Dorset Local Plan.
- **Carbon Literacy Training** – All staff and councillors had either completed, or were in the process of completing, the Carbon Literacy training to better understand the climate crisis and explore ways for the Council to meet its targets.
- **Water Quality Event** – A water quality information event, hosted by Wessex Water on 6th March 2025, attracted 45 residents. The event provided information on ongoing efforts to maintain clean streams and seawater.

- **Corporate Plan** – The Mayor reported that work was underway to produce an updated Corporate Plan, outlining the Council’s vision for Swanage. It was noted that public engagement would be an integral part of the process. Members of the public were also encouraged to participate in upcoming engagement events related to the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme and the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Meeting with Lloyd Hatton M.P.** – A positive meeting had been held with Lloyd Hatton M.P. on 14th March, at which he had expressed his support for the Town Council’s work in the town.
- **Parish Assembly** – The work of volunteers and local organisations was celebrated at the Parish Assembly, with well-deserved winners announced for the Community Awards 2024.

206. **Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

(a) **Community Awards Panel, 6th March 2025**

A list of Community Award winners, as announced at the Parish Assembly, had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the work of volunteers and organisations had greatly improved the lives of many in the town. Thanks were given to the Planning and Community Engagement Manager for her efforts in organising both the awards event and the Parish Assembly.

(b) **Property Panel, 24th March 2025**

It was reported that at the meeting of the Property Panel held on 24th March Members had discussed potential asset disposals, property-related legal matters and live rent reviews. A valuation report containing recommendations regarding the rent reviews would be presented to a forthcoming meeting.

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

Further to Minute No. 188 of the Council Meeting held on 24th February 2025, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Planning and Community Engagement Manager, which set out further grant applications for the 2024/25 financial year, received since the Council Meeting held on 24th February 2025.

It was noted that the Council had approved a grants budget of £10,000 for 2024/25, a total of £2,650 of which had been awarded to date. A further £6,850 had been requested and it was proposed that £2,850 be awarded. Members considered the summary of the recommendations of the Grants Panel as outlined below:

Applicant	Sum Requested	Recommended grant	Summary of project	Reason for support
Purbeck Film Festival	£500	£500	Registered Charity No. 1195008. Established in 1996 with the aim of bringing diverse cinematic experiences to Purbeck, and enriching Swanage’s cultural life. The festival offers a wide range of screenings, fostering social connection while showcasing different cultures, viewpoints, and lifestyles. Funding comes from the British Film Institute, and fundraising,	Recommend approval. Special event - 30 th anniversary. Benefit to the local community’s health and wellbeing, social activities, and local economy.

			<p>advertising, donations, and audience revenue.</p> <p>This application seeks support for the October 2025 festival – its 30th anniversary.</p>	
Purbeck Sounds Radio	£5,000	£1,000	<p>Not for profit Ltd Company No. 15540514 - run by volunteers.</p> <p>Community radio station in the ‘Heart of Swanage’, launched October 2024. Informs residents and visitors about local matters, events, lifestyle topics, and accessibility.</p> <p>The station builds community cohesion, reduces social isolation, and provides skills development and volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Income comes from member subscriptions (£10/£20 p.m.), fundraising, and advertising.</p> <p>This application seeks funding towards first year start-up, equipment, and marketing costs, estimated at £6.3k.</p>	<p>Recommend approval at £1,000.</p> <p>Benefit to the local community’s health and wellbeing, opportunities for young people, and promotion of local community events and services.</p>
Swanage Library Friends	£1,100	£1,100	<p>Friends group (project under the umbrella of Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust) - run by volunteers keen to support Swanage Library and help develop the services it provides.</p> <p>A newly formed group collaborating with the Library on key priorities: enhancing the downstairs children’s area, and the upstairs computer area. The group aims to encourage local children to use the library through activity programmes and primary school visits to promote ‘The Summer Reading Scheme’. Income will come from fundraising,</p>	<p>Recommend approval.</p> <p>Benefit to the local community’s health and wellbeing (free events/social activities/ services for all ages).</p> <p>In support of grant funding in recognition of the valuable contribution that the library service makes to the town and local community.</p>

			subscriptions, donations, and grants. A relaunch event is planned for May 2025. This application seeks funding for audiovisual equipment, decorating materials, and artwork, to enrich the children's provision.	
Swanage Tennis Club	£250	£250	Registered Community Amateur Sports Club in 2009 (unincorporated). Swanage Tennis Club, founded in 1930, is a nonprofit organisation registered with the Lawn Tennis Association Ltd (LTA). The club has a vibrant social section with the aim to provide a mixture of social, competitive and fundraising events, and to encourage new ideas to bring members together and to provide a consistent fundraising flow to support such initiatives as the junior bursary scheme, and the YPWA project. The Club also has a vibrant social scene, organising events to foster community and support initiatives like the junior bursary scheme and the YPWA project. The application seeks funding towards the YPWA project costs of £486, the Club's aim to create an inclusive tennis community where everyone feels welcome.	Recommend approval. Benefit to the local community by supporting overall health and wellbeing, mental health, and social engagement, particularly among young people.
Total:	£6,850	£2,850		

A query was raised regarding the Town Council's ability to support recurring events and festivals, which were currently not eligible under the existing Grants Policy. It was noted that the policy is under review and an update will be brought to a future meeting. A further query was raised about the difference between the amount requested by Purbeck Sounds Radio and the amount awarded. In response, it was explained that grant funding must be allocated fairly to ensure it remained available to a range of organisations across the town. The ability of the Council to make grants in exceptional circumstances outside of the criteria set out in the grant application guidelines was noted.

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

That the Town Council approves the
recommendation of the Grants Panel for the total
sum of £2,850 to be awarded to four organisations,
as set out in the table above.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 198 Councillor Tomes left the
room during consideration of the following item.

208. **To agree the proposed Private Site licence fee for the 2025-26 season and the proposed Market fees from April 2025**

Further to Minute No. 11 of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting held on 19th March 2025, Members considered a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM which set out the recommendations of that committee to agree a Private Site licence fee for the 2025-26 season and to agree the proposed Market fees to be implemented from 1st April 2025.

Following meetings with representatives of the Swanage Private Sites Association, held on 10th February and 10th March 2025, it was noted that the Association had raised no objection to the fee being set at £520 (incl. VAT) for the 2025 season.

Further to Minute No. 167 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 15th January 2024 an update on business rates and VAT, set out in the briefing paper, was noted. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Private Site licence fee of £520 (incl. VAT)
be agreed for the 2025-26 season.

Councillor Tomes re-entered the meeting.

Consideration was given to the proposed Market fees for 2025–26, as set out in the briefing paper and recommended by the Tourism and Local Economy Committee at its meeting held on 19th March 2025. Members reviewed the information presented in the table below, which distinguished between traders who had attended the previous week and those who had not, in order to provide some benefit to those traders who committed to regular attendance.

Stall Size	4 April to 23 May (8) 5 Sep to 31 Oct (9)		30 May to 29 Aug (14)		7 Nov to 27 Mar (closed 26 Dec) (20)	
	Mid season		Peak season		Low season	
	Attended previous week	First week	Attended previous week	First week	Attended previous week	First week
<2m	£15.00	£20.00	£22.00	£27.00	£10.00	£15.00
<4m	£25.00	£30.00	£32.00	£37.00	£15.00	£20.00
<7m	£35.00	£40.00	£42.00	£47.00	£20.00	£25.00
<12m	£45.00	£50.00	£52.00	£57.00	£25.00	£30.00
>12m ¹	£100.00	£105.00	£130.00	£135.00	£50.00	£55.00

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

That the Market fees as set out in the table above be
implemented from 1st April 2025.

209. **Annual External Auditor Report 2023/24 - To consider recommendation of Finance & Governance Committee**

Further to Minute No. 3 of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on 12th March 2025, Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which included the Annual External Auditor's Report for 2023–24. The report confirmed that the review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) had been conducted in accordance with Proper Practices, and that no other matters had come to the auditors' attention which gave cause for concern. It also confirmed that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met. The report drew the Council's attention to a recommendation that a note should be made in the asset register to record the notional market value of each investment as at 31st March 2024.

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

That the external auditor's recommendation be accepted and that a valuer be instructed so that the notional market value of each of the Council's investments as at 31st March can be noted in the asset register.

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

a) **Swanage Carnival**

It was reported that the Red Arrows air display team would be attending Swanage Carnival and that this would be their only display in Dorset this year.

b) **Swanage Chamber of Trade**

It was reported that the Chamber of Trade had held its AGM in March, during which it agreed to allocate funds to the Swanage Community Defibrillator Project for the provision of additional batteries.

c) **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership**

It was reported that the Purbeck Community Rail Partnership was considering the establishment of a link between Brockenhurst and Swanage. It was noted that community engagement and timetable considerations would inform the final decision and a further update would be provided to a future meeting.

211. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillor Trite:

- Day Opportunities Consultation – A consultation regarding a proposed new model of day opportunities is open until 9th June 2025. Dorset Council proposed a 'hub and spoke' model in which the hub would provide an opportunity to find out what is happening in the area and to join activities which may be of interest. There will then be community activities (spokes) which would include the provision of specialist services, libraries and community centres. Further information can be found on Dorset Council's website.
- Portland incinerator – The proposed incinerator plans were currently under review at the Royal Court of Justice and an update regarding the outcome would be provided to a future meeting.
- Housing – Dorset Council was making a determined bid to increase affordable housing using DC land that could be converted to housing. DC also planned to supply 100 homes for temporary accommodation reducing the need for the use of B&B accommodation.
- Wareham Railway crossing – It was reported that the Wareham railway pedestrian crossing would remain in its current configuration.

212. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There were no matters to report on this occasion.

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

There were no matters raised on this occasion.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Coward, 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 16 to 18 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality and item 19 for reasons of data protection considerations.

214. **Green Seafront – Interim progress update in advance of planned public engagement**

Further to Minute No. 138 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 27th November 2024, Members noted the contents of a briefing paper prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which provided an update on the progress of the scheme since that meeting. The key messages that would be provided to the public, along with the feedback that was intended to be sought throughout the engagement process, were also noted.

It was acknowledged that the next steps, including the final content of the public engagement material, would be influenced by the outcome of the valuation report, and that final decisions would not be taken until professional advice had been received and considered.

It was further noted that a meeting of the Green Seafront Working Party had been scheduled for 14th April at 5.00 p.m., and all councillors were encouraged to attend.

215. **Procurement - To consider awarding contracts for the following services in connection with the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme:**

(a) **Ecological Impact and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment**

Members reviewed a briefing paper, which explained that an ecological impact assessment was required as part of the planning process for the Green Seafront stabilisation project. As this type of assessment needed to take place during the summer months and before any planning application could be submitted, it was scheduled to be completed in 2025.

The results of the assessment would provide important baseline information to help calculate the project's impact on biodiversity. This would then be compared with the expected impact of any future development plans. The final report would include both the ecological assessment and guidance on how to achieve at least a ten percent improvement in biodiversity, either on-site or off-site, to meet planning requirements.

Three qualified local organisations were invited to provide quotes for the work. Two declined due to existing commitments, and one full quotation was received from LC Ecological Services for £2,331. The advice would be funded from the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme reserve.

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

That a contract be awarded to LC Ecological Services for the sum of £2,331 to undertake an ecological impact assessment and BNG assessment

to support the planning application for the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme.

(b) Planning Performance Agreement with Dorset Council

Members considered the contents of a briefing note outlining the Council's early engagement with senior officers at Dorset Council regarding a future planning application for the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme. During the discussion, the potential for entering into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) was explored. It was proposed that the Town Council enter into a PPA with Dorset Council to help reduce risk and ensure clear timelines and responsibilities.

The benefits of entering into a PPA included:

- Early identification of issues, helping to avoid abortive work and delays.
- Engagement with key consultees before submission of the application.
- Guaranteed timescales.
- Clear communication fostering collaborative working relationships.
- A dedicated Dorset Council case officer to ensure consistency of advice.
- Early identification of potential planning conditions and obligations.
- Access to Dorset Council's Building Control Team for guidance on Building Regulations.

A draft copy of the agreement had been appended to the briefing note for review. It was reported that the Town Council would qualify for a 50% reduction in the charge (£11,880) as a Town/Parish Council therefore making the sum payable £5,940.

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

That the Town Council enters into a Planning Performance Agreement with Dorset Council in respect of a planning application for the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme for the sum of £5,940.

216. **Sandbanks Ferry Inquiry – To consider e-mail from Dorset Council regarding payment for legal representation**

Further to Minute No. 73 of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 9th September 2024, consideration was given to email communication between Dorset Council and the Town Clerk regarding the Town Council's contribution towards the costs of the consortium's legal representation at the recent Sandbanks Ferry Inquiry.

In order to re-affirm the Council's position it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council confirms a contribution of £4,000 towards the costs of the consortium's legal representation at the Public Inquiry.

217. **Staffing Matters**

(a) To consider delegation of authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the chairman of the Personnel Committee, to amend proposals for the recruitment of a Project Delivery Officer

A brief discussion was held regarding the proposals for the recruitment of a Project Delivery Officer and the potential need to review this in light of a requested change in contracted hours for an existing member of management support staff.

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

That delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Personnel

Committee to amend proposals for the recruitment
of a Project Delivery Officer, if deemed necessary.

**(b) To consider any matters arising from recent meetings of the Personnel
Committee**

There were no matters to report.

The Meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.
