

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 27th JANUARY 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 Natalie Davies, Swanage & Studland Ministry Team Curate, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

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

163. **Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

164. **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.

Further to Minute No. 157 of the Annual Estimates Meeting held on 20th January 2025, consideration was given to applications received from Councillors Dorrington and Monkhouse, who had not been present in person at that meeting, for a Grant of Dispensation until May 2029 in respect of setting the Council Tax Precept.

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

That a dispensation be granted to Councillors Dorrington and Monkhouse to participate in the setting of the Town Council's precept, such dispensation to be valid until May 2029.

165. **Minutes**

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

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 16th December 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

- (b) Proposed by Councillor Coward, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Annual Estimates Meeting held on 20th January 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

166. **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 6th January 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

167. **Personnel Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Vile and seconded by Councillor Moreton:-
That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 8th January 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.

168. **Statement of Cash Balance**

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

169. **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 9, amounting to £620,562.94.

170. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported with sadness the passing of Mrs Gerry Norris on 15th January. Mrs Norris and her husband, Mel, worked tirelessly for the community, dedicating themselves to many local charities, groups, and campaigns, and she would be greatly missed. Sincere condolences were extended to her husband Mel.

The Mayor then announced that she had attended the following events since the Council Meeting held on 16th December 2024:

- **Gainsborough Care Home** - The Mayor, her consort, and the Deputy Mayor attended an open day on 24th January to welcome residents and their families back to the home. The event included a tour of the home, a cream tea, and an opportunity to meet the care home's staff team.
- **The Focus Centre, Chapel Lane** - Town Councillors had enjoyed a visit to The Focus Centre to learn about the town's new health and wellbeing hub for families, and its ambitious future plans.

The Town Mayor reminded those present about the upcoming Mayor's Charity Ball, which was being held at the Swanage Bay View Holiday Park on Saturday 22nd February 2025. The event would be celebrating the golden anniversary of the Town Council and raising funds for the Dementia Friendly Purbeck Group. Tickets were available from Corben & Son Estate Agents, Swanage.

171.

Working Party Updates and Recommendations

(a) **Property Panel, 8th January 2025, and to consider Cllr Sutton’s request to become a member of the Panel**

At the meeting on 8th January, Members had set the Council’s work plan for the upcoming year. The Panel would meet monthly from now on to discuss its three work streams: asset disposal, rent reviews, and legal matters.

Councillor Sutton had expressed an interest in becoming a member of the Property Panel and it was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That Councillor Sutton be appointed to the Property Panel.

(b) **Events, 15th January 2025**

Further to Minute No. 6 of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee Meeting held on 27th November 2024, at the meeting on 15th January Members had considered the administration fees to be charged for commercial events held on Town-Council-owned land for the upcoming year. It was suggested that charges would remain the same as this year’s rate of £420 per event and this was agreed.

(c) **Communications Strategy, 16th January 2025**

Following the Finance and Governance Committee's recommendation on 13th January to increase the Town Council’s share of Council Tax for the upcoming financial year, working party members agreed that it would be prudent to convene and plan the best way to communicate this decision to residents, should it be approved. The increase was subsequently approved at the Annual Estimates Meeting on 20th January, and a report was prepared and shared on the Council’s Facebook page and website. The response to this was largely positive, with the Facebook post alone garnering over 2,100 views to date.

At the meeting, Councillors Foster, Sutton, and Vile set a date to meet for initial discussions regarding the format and content of the Town Council’s new ‘Talk of the Town Hall’ newsletter (29th January).

172.

Reports from Council representatives on outside organisations

a) **Swanage Town and Herston Football Club**

It was reported that representatives of the Town Council and the Football Club had met with the Football Foundation and it was noted that Swanage has been identified as the most suitable location for a new 3G pitch within Purbeck. Given the significant challenges posed by waterlogged grass pitches during the winter months, the new facility would provide substantial benefits to local teams, offering a durable, all-weather playing surface that could be used multiple times each day without deterioration. It was noted that the total project cost was estimated to be £1.2 million and that a funding plan was being developed accordingly, including contributions to an annual maintenance reserve. A full report would be brought to a future council meeting.

In respect of this project and the community sports facility at Day’s Park, it was reported that meetings would continue to be held with the Leisure & Cultural Commissioning Team Leader at Dorset Council and the CEO of Active Dorset, to consider next steps, and an update would be provided to a future Council meeting.

173.

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 the inquiry was now drawing to a close. It was noted that

the sessions held in Poole had not been very well attended by local residents. However, the session held in Wareham had seen a better turnout of circa 50 people.

- Devolution Deal – It was reported that the Leaders of Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire Councils had submitted a letter to the Government to confirm that they wished to be considered as part of the Devolution Priority Programme. Discussions were ongoing with BCP Council, Swindon Borough Council and North Somerset Council about potentially expanding the partnership should they wish to consider joining in the future.

174. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There were no matters to report on this occasion.

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

(a) **To note removal of emergency phone from Peveril Point**

It was explained that, due to the impending digital switchover, users would need to use broadband internet connections for their phone services, typically via VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) technology, allowing phone calls to be made over the internet. Following the rationalisation of the Town Council's phone lines to VoIP, and after consulting with the local National Coastwatch Institution teams, it had been decided to remove the phone at Peveril Point. Mobile phone coverage at this location had been tested and confirmed as adequate. As a result, the phone line would be disconnected in one week's time.

(b) **Green Seafront Scheme – to report commissioning of further monitoring report**

Further to Minute No. 132 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 18th November 2024, it was reported that further monitoring of land slippage had been undertaken and an order for a report on this had been placed with WSP as a contract extension in the sum of £1,950. The report would be presented to a future Council Meeting.

(c) **Swanage Town Council Community Awards 2024**

A request was made for the Community Awards Panel to consider a posthumous lifetime achievement award for Mrs Gerry Norris, to recognise her achievements and longstanding community service. It was confirmed that the Panel would be meeting imminently to consider this year's awards.

(d) **Freedom of Information (FOI) request – Swanage Hospital**

It was reported that members of the community had submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request in respect of data on attendance at the Minor Injuries Unit and outpatient clinics at Swanage Hospital. A question was raised as to whether the Town Council would consider lodging regular six-monthly FOI requests to monitor these statistics as a means of supporting service improvements, in a similar way to the regular requests made to SWAST regarding the deployment of the ambulance car. It was noted that this would be considered at a meeting of the Emergency Health Services Working Party.

(e) **Affordable Housing**

Further to Minute No. 154 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 16th December 2024, it was reported that a response had been received from Dorset Council, including social housing stock figures, and that Members' concerns would now be followed up with Aster.

- (f) **Sandbanks Ferry Inquiry**
Councillor Bonfield reported that he had attended day four of the inquiry on 24th January and provided an overview of the proceedings. A copy of Councillor Bonfield's statement of objections, which had been submitted to the inspector, had been circulated to Members for their information. Thanks were extended to Councillor Bonfield for representing the Town Council at the inquiry, and to the Mayor, Councillor Bonfield, and officers for their work in compiling the necessary information and evidence required for the hearing, as well as for their collaboration with Dorset Council and the barrister regarding the consortium's objection and response to the Ferry Company's Toll Application.
- (g) **Durlston Bay – new fossil species**
It was reported that a new fossil species had been discovered in Durlston Bay, and that this would be donated to the Natural History Museum.
- (h) **Shore Road – additional tarmacking**
It was reported that Dorset Highways had completed additional road surfacing works on Shore Road as part of the installation of the electrical supply for the sauna, but that as this was substandard remedial works would be required.
- (i) **Sauna Concession – request for small area of temporary decking**
It was reported that a request had been received for the installation of a small, freestanding temporary decking area to the rear of the sauna. The proposed decking would serve as a changing area and a place for users to leave their belongings while using the facility. It would be positioned out of sight.
During the discussion, concerns were raised that approving this request might set a precedent for further requests for additional items or space. In response, the Town Mayor requested an informal show of hands among Councillors to gauge support for allowing the decking on a temporary basis.
It was subsequently agreed that the decking would be permitted as a temporary measure, with any permanent solution to be considered at a future meeting.
- (j) **Dorset Town of Culture 2026**
Further to Minute No. 149 of the Council Meeting held on 16th December 2025, it was reported that Swanage's application for the Dorset Town of Culture 2026 had been submitted today. Thanks and appreciation were extended to Dawn Morley and Richard Coleman of The Mowlem, as well as to the Council's Visitor Services Manager, for their hard work in preparing the town's bid.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Lejeune, 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 item 13 for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

176. **Procurement**

- (a) **Swanage Information Centre – To award contract for internal improvements**
Consideration was given to a briefing note regarding the procurement of works to the Swanage Information Centre to provide improvements, both internally and externally, in order to overcome challenges that the current layout presents to the effective delivery of visitor services. Further to Minute No. 132 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 18th November 2024, it was reported that two suitably qualified contractors had been provided with details of the project and been asked to provide

a quotation; however, neither contractor had responded within the reasonable timescale of four weeks provided to them.

A quote had been provided by Blacknoll Ltd, the former Dorset Council Repairs, Maintenance, Minor and Small Capital Works (RMMSCW) framework contractor. It was noted that as the framework had expired and only one cost estimate had been received the Council's financial regulations would need to be waived in order to allow for the award of contract. Therefore, in the absence of three quotations, and in order to allow the works to proceed without further delay, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That Financial Regulation 11.11 be waived in order to award a contract to Blacknoll Ltd in the sum of £15,791 to complete improvement works to internal areas of the Swanage Information Centre, and to extend the level platform outside of the front door to improve access to the building.

(b) Bandstand – To authorise expenditure and award contract for replacement coping stones

Further to Minute No. 137 of the Council Meeting held on 30th January 2023, consideration was given to a briefing note setting out the actions taken to procure the replacement of coping stones at the bandstand. Following an inspection by a Dorset Council surveyor in late 2024 it had been identified that 16 stones required replacement.

It was noted that efforts had been made to obtain three quotations to carry out this work and that, although only one had been received, this fulfilled the Council's obligation under Financial Regulation 11.11 to strive to obtain three quotes for works costed between £2,500 and £10,000.

It was noted that the work would be funded from the monies transferred to the Town Council by the Friends of Swanage Bandstand group, currently held in an earmarked reserve for bandstand maintenance and improvements.

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield and seconded by Councillor Tomes:-

That a contract to undertake the replacement of 16 coping stones at Swanage Bandstand be awarded to Blacknoll Ltd in the sum of £6,502, the work to be funded from the bandstand earmarked reserve.

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

The Meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.
