

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 28th APRIL 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor M. Bonfield

Councillor M. Coward

Councillor J. Dorrington

Councillor J. Lejeune

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 two representatives of the local press and media attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised:

- **Agenda item 9)** – Support was expressed for improvements to the highways and footways in Commercial Road and Kings Road East, as part of ongoing efforts to increase footfall and support the local shops in this area of the town, which aspires to be known as the ‘Heart of Swanage.’
- It was further noted that a ‘Heart of Swanage’ map had been produced to promote the area and identify the wide range of shops and services available. It was noted that this area could be overlooked as it was situated behind the main street.
- **Agenda item 8 (c)** – The organisers of the proposed ‘Backyard Ultra’ event spoke to highlight the benefits that it could bring to the local community. It was explained that, if approved, it would be promoted to encourage participation from runners of all abilities in ultra-distance challenges.

Reverend Dave Richards offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.15 p.m.

218. **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Brookes, Monkhouse and Moreton.

219. **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 Lejeune declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being the owner of a property in the proposed ‘Heart of Swanage’ area and a member of Swanage and District Chamber of Trade.

220. **Minutes**
(a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Coward and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24th
March 2025 be approved as a correct record and
signed.
221. **Tourism and Local Economy Committee**
(a) It was reported that an early draft copy of the Minutes of the Tourism and
Local Economy Committee held on 19th March 2025, had been circulated in
error and therefore the approval of the Minutes would be deferred to the next
Council Meeting. It was noted that two of the three recommendations
contained within the minutes had been approved at the Council meeting held
on 24th March 2025 and that a further recommendation regarding the
committee's outside representatives would be considered at the Annual
Council Meeting.
222. **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 7th April 2025 be
approved as a correct record and signed.
223. **Statement of Cash Balance**
(a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st March 2025 was submitted for
information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).
224. **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 12, amounting to £1,684,748.16.
A query was raised regarding the payment to Meta. In response, it was
explained that the payments related to Facebook advertising aimed at
increasing publicity for beach hut rentals and upcoming events.
225. **Chairman's Announcements**
The Town Mayor reported her attendance at the following events since the
Council meeting held on 24th March 2025:
 - **Swanage Coastwatch** – 30th anniversary tea party at which there had been the
opportunity to speak to the volunteers who work hard to help make the seas
safer.
 - **Swanage Skatepark event** – An enjoyable time had been had at the Swanage
Skatepark Community event on 12th April.
 - **Allsort'd Choir** – A joyous concert held at the Mowlem Theatre.
 - **Focus Centre, Welcome Lounge Open Day** – Together with the Deputy
Mayor, this had been a useful opportunity to learn about the future plans for
this important community facility.The Town Mayor also reported that the first edition of the Talk of the Town
Hall newsletter had been published today. All were encouraged to contribute to the
content and the Mayor looked forward to feedback. Thanks were recorded to all those
involved in the production of the newsletter.

226.

Working Party Updates and Recommendations

(a) **Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing, 2nd April 2025**

Members had been provided with an update regarding a proposal to install an artificial 3G pitch which was the subject of agenda item 12.

(b) **Seafront Masterplan, 14th April 2025**

It was reported that at the meeting of the Property Panel held on 24th March Members had discussed the upcoming public engagement on the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme, further information about which would be provided under agenda item 17 (b).

(c) **Events, 16th April**

At the meeting of the Events working party held on 16th April 2025, Members had met with the organisers of a proposed ultra marathon event, the 'Backyard Ultra 12'. Consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined the event, to be held on 13th September 2025 at Day's Park from dusk until dawn. It was anticipated that competitors would be on site from approximately 6.00 a.m. until 9.00 p.m. and would be reminded to minimise noise during the early hours and later in the day.

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

That the 'Backyard Ultra 12' event is provisionally approved and that an administration fee of £420 is charged.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 219, Councillor Lejeune left the room during consideration of the following item.

227.

Heart of Swanage – To consider how best to support proposed branding of Commercial Road businesses

Further to Minute No. 6 of the Meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee held on 19th March 2025, Members considered the content of a briefing paper which set out proposals from the 'Heart of Swanage' group to increase footfall for the shops around Commercial Road and Kings Road East. A letter had been circulated prior to the meeting, outlining the group's request for the Town Council to officially recognise this area as the 'Heart of Swanage' to assist with the promotion of the shops and services provided. Thanks were given to the members of the group for the enthusiasm they had demonstrated and for their commitment to improving the vibrancy of the area.

Members confirmed that the condition of the road had been raised at recent meetings of the Traffic Management Advisory Committee and noted that it was felt that safety could be improved in the area through enhanced street lighting. It was proposed that input be sought from Dorset Council, as the authority responsible for highways and street lighting. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Trite and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council recognises the area as a 'destination' known as 'Heart of Swanage' within its promotional material, alongside other destinations such as the Swanage Railway and Pier, and that the Visitor Services Manager will consider and implement, if appropriate, an enhanced presence for the group on the Visit Swanage website.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Trite will pursue matters related to the improvement of Commercial Road with Dorset Council.

Members acknowledged the valuable contribution that the ‘Heart of Swanage’ representatives could provide to meetings of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee and therefore it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Vile and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a representative of the ‘Heart of Swanage’ be invited to attend meetings of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee as an outside representative.

Councillor Lejeune re-entered the meeting.

228. **Sandpit Field and Weather Station Field – To consider request from Mowlem Land Trust (De Moulham Trust) and Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust for assurance re. future use of land.**

Further to Minute No. 86 of the Council Meeting held on 24th July 2023, at which the Town Council had agreed to consider outright acquisition of Sandpit Field and Weather Station Field (from the Mowlem Land Trust (De Moulham Trust) and Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust respectively) in order to undertake the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme, consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out a request received from both Trusts seeking reassurance about the Town Council’s future plans for those parcels of land. Both Trusts had met on 23rd April 2025 and had resolved to write to the Town Council to ask it ‘to consider entering into a legally binding agreement, most likely in the form of a covenant, that each parcel of land will be protected as public open space for the benefit of local residents, to a standard that is at least equal to the protection the land currently has through its charitable status’.

In considering this request, Members noted that the Town Council had managed these two parcels of land as public open space since the Council’s creation in April 1974. Furthermore, the Council had sought to protect this property by its inclusion in Policy OSR (Open Space and Recreation) in the Swanage Local Plan and was seeking to extend this protection through the developing Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.

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

That, subject to legal advice, the Town Council agrees to provide a legally binding assurance, most likely in the form of a covenant, that if it acquires Sandpit Field and Weather Station Field this land will be protected as public open space to a standard that is at least equal to the protection that it currently has through its charitable status.

229. **Mowlem Land Trust (De Moulham Trust) – To confirm authority of Town Council Members and/or Officers to act on behalf of the Trust**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which set out the obligation of the Town Council to hold the Mowlem Land Trust’s funds in a bank account in the name of the Trust and to account for the funds separately from those held by the Council in its role as a local government body. It was reported that Lloyds Bank had recently closed the Mowlem Land Trust bank account; however, following representations made on behalf of the Trust, the bank had agreed to open a new account.

It was stated that, in order to meet the requirements of the compliance process, Lloyds Bank had sought a ‘board resolution’ from the Town Council confirming ‘who can act on behalf of Swanage Town Council and under what authority’. The bank’s compliance department had refused to accept certified minutes of a De Moulham Trust meeting, and therefore the Town Council had been requested to pass a resolution confirming certain key information, as follows:

- The property belonging to the Mowlem Land Trust was vested in the Town Council by a Deed of Assent dated 11 May 1990.
- The Town Council became the registered corporate trustee of the Mowlem Land Trust on 21 September 1995.
- The De Moulham Trust/De Moulham Estate Trust are working names of the Mowlem Land Trust and are registered with the Charity Commission as such.
- All 12 elected town councillors manage the affairs of the Mowlem Land Trust through meetings held separately from Council Meetings, referred to as meetings of the De Moulham Trust.
- The Town Council appoints council officers to fulfil key responsibilities on behalf of the Mowlem Land Trust/De Moulham Trust.
- The Town Clerk, Martin Ayres, acts as Clerk to the Mowlem Land Trust/De Moulham Trust and this role is contained in his job description.
- The Finance Manager, Alison Spencer, manages the financial affairs of the Mowlem Land Trust/De Moulham Trust, including submission of annual accounts to the Charity Commission, and this role is contained in her job description.
- Swanage Town Council makes arrangements for the administration of Mowlem Land Trust funds in its capacity as corporate trustee of the Mowlem Land Trust/De Moulham Trust.
- In accordance with Financial Regulation 5.2 the Town Council must approve a list of authorised signatories for each bank account.
- The Town Council, acting in its capacity as Corporate Trustee of the Mowlem Land Trust/De Moulham Trust, confirms that Martin Ayres and Alison Spencer have authority to act on behalf of the Mowlem Land Trust, including the exercise of signing rights. Both these officers must provide authorisation for any financial transactions on behalf of the Trust.

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

That the Town Council confirms the details set out
above regarding the Town Council's management of
the Mowlem Land Trust (De Moulham Trust).

230. **Swanage & Herston Football Club – To consider request for funding pledge towards the installation of an artificial football pitch at Day's Park**

Further to Minute No. 172 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 27th January 2025, consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out the details of the report presented to that meeting and outlined the latest proposals for the installation of an artificial playing surface at Day's Park, as part of a phased redevelopment of facilities.

It was noted that this project is potentially eligible for a substantial grant under the Football Foundation's Artificial Grass Pitch Framework 2024–28, which could provide up to 75% funding towards the estimated £1.2 million cost of installing an artificial playing surface on the main pitch. The Council was therefore asked to allocate £100,000 from the existing capital grant allocation of £180,500 for improvements at Day's Park towards the cost of this installation. This allocation represents phase one of the broader redevelopment project, with phase two comprising the construction of a new sports hall.

It was acknowledged that the release of the £100,000 would be subject to the submission and approval of a robust business plan by Swanage Town & Herston Football Club, confirmation that all necessary match funding had been secured, and the Town Council entering into a lease agreement with the Football Club or the newly formed Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to ensure adequate security of tenure.

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

That the recommendation of the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing working party to make a budget allocation of £100,000 in the Council's capital programme towards the installation of an artificial playing surface at Day's Park, out of the existing total allocation of £180,500 towards the improvement of facilities at Day's Park, be approved, with the final decision as to the release of the funds to be subject to the submission of a robust business plan and entering into the necessary lease agreement.

231. **Greengage Community Garden Project – Confirmation and drawdown of grant**

Further to Minute No. 159 (b) of the Annual Estimates meeting held on 20th January 2025, consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined section 5.9 of the approved Budget Report, which included a £15,000 capital allocation for the Greengage Community Garden Project at Prospect Nursery. The grant had been intended to support match funding for a mobile field shelter and improved toilet facilities, subject to the applicants continuing to seek funding from alternative sources. Greengage had raised £14,400 towards the £30,000 total project cost, including a £6,780 pledge from the Talbot Village Trust.

The Town Council had subsequently been informed that Greengage had been unsuccessful in securing further significant grant funding and that due to a time limit attached to the Talbot Village Trust grant, the group needed to commence the project promptly in order to retain the pledged funding. Greengage had therefore requested drawdown of the full £15,000 capital funding allocated by the Council to be paid in two tranches as follows:

1. **Early May 2025** – A payment of £6,000 to cover the deposit required upon placing the order for the mobile field shelter.
2. **Early August 2025** – A further payment of £9,000 to fund the refurbishment of the existing brick toilet block at Prospect Nursery.

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

That the budgeted capital grant of £15,000 be released in accordance with the revised project delivery timetable as set out above.

In order to ensure that Town Council funds were only required if absolutely essential, it was agreed that Greengage should be encouraged to continue to seek alternative funding prior to the drawdown of the second phase of the grant.

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

There were no reports on this occasion.

233. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillor Trite:

- Dorset Council's Chief Executive – It was reported that a new chief executive had been appointed and announced as Dr Catherine Howe. It was anticipated that she would take up her duties at the end of August.
- Recycling – A DEFRA report had placed Dorset at the top of the league table for recycling waste. The national average was 44% whilst Dorset recycled 60.5%.
- Community and Culture Project Fund – It was reported that round 9 of the Community and Culture Project Fund was now open with grants available between £1,500 - £5,000 for new projects which would benefit the community.
- Small Capital Grants Fund – One-off grants available between £5,000 - £15,000 for the improvement, adaptation or refurbishment of play areas, local green spaces or similar venues.

234. **Reporting of delegated matters**

Further to Minute No. 217 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 24th March 2025 it was reported that it had not been necessary to significantly amend the proposals for the recruitment of the Project Delivery Officer role.

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

(a) **Events Emergency Plan**

Thanks were recorded to Mr Ian Brown for his assistance in helping event organisers in the development of an emergency plan with regard to events held on Sandpit field.

(b) **Dementia Friendly Purbeck**

It was reported that Dorset Health and Dementia Friendly UK had authorised the advertisement of a second Admiral Nurse post for Purbeck, making it the first area in the country to appoint a second nurse. Of the total funding required (£120,000), £40,000 was still outstanding.

(c) **Swanage Library**

An open event would be held on 21st May 2025 to promote the services provided by the library.

(d) **Overspend on contract for internal refurbishment of Swanage Information Centre**

Further to Minute No. 176 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 27th January 2025 and in accordance with Financial Regulation 12.3, it was reported that due to the need to install loft insulation and upgrade IT infrastructure an additional £2,046 had been spent on the internal refurbishment of the Swanage Information Centre.

(e) **Green Seafront – Update on proposed public engagement**

It was noted that the public engagement process would commence on 1st May 2025. This would include a new proposal for the Green Seafront alongside options for safety improvements to the northern section of Shore Road. Members were encouraged to share the consultation details and direct respondents to the dedicated website and various in-person events.

(f) **Swanage Neighbourhood Plan – Update on public engagement**

A briefing note had been tabled at the meeting which set out the objectives of the neighbourhood plan process and the provisional dates of the engagement which were noted as 12th May – 20th June 2025.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Lejeune 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 18 to 21 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

236. **Swanage Neighbourhood Plan – Confirmation of Town Council sites for inclusion in forthcoming public engagement**

Further to Minute No. 170 of the Council Meeting held on 15th January 2024, consideration was given to a briefing note which provided an update in respect of the three parcels of land in its ownership that the Council had agreed to submit to the Neighbourhood Plan Call for Sites. The briefing note summarised planning and valuation advice which had been obtained further to Minute No. 138 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 27th November 2024 and Minute No. 194 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 24th February 2025.

With regard to the Spa and Weather Station Field, attention was drawn to the need to ensure that planning policy within the Neighbourhood Plan would not prevent the delivery of essential seafront stabilisation and enhancement works. On balance, a view was taken that there should be no need to include the Weather Station Field in a list of potential development sites to achieve this, especially in light of the Council's commitment to retain this as a green open space (see Minute No. 228 above). However, given the potential to expand the provision of beach huts onto a small section of the existing green space adjoining the Spa within one of the options for the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme, it was agreed that this land should be included within the list of potential sites for commercial development. In light of the planning advice received it was noted that this land is highly constrained by planning policy and, therefore, is best retained as a mixture of open space and beach huts.

In respect of the third site, North Beach Car Park, constraints on its potential redevelopment were also noted. However, on balance, it was agreed that local residents should be given the opportunity to comment on the potential for future retail, hospitality or leisure use of this site. Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Vile and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That of the three sites nominated through the call for sites in January 2024, two (The Spa with land adjoining and North Beach Car Park) should be included in the forthcoming public engagement on potential development sites to be allocated within the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan and one (Weather Station Field) should be withdrawn.

Councillor Sutton left the meeting.

237. **Rent Reviews – To consider valuer's recommendations**

Members considered a letter dated 22nd April 2025 containing valuation advice in respect of rent reviews due in relation to the following seafront properties.

(a) **Seabreeze Restaurant**

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To accept the valuation advice set out in the letter dated 22nd April 2025 in respect of the rent of Seabreeze Restaurant for the three-year period

commencing 27th January 2025 and the annual licence fee for the adjoining gated area.

(b) **Swanage Beach Kiosk Ltd**

It was proposed by Councillor Dorrington, seconded by the Councillor Coward and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To accept the valuation advice set out in the letter dated 22nd April 2025 in respect of the rent of the Swanage Beach Kiosk for the five-year period commencing 1st April 2025.

(c) **Santa Fe Fun Park and Family Games Room**

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

To accept the valuation advice set out in the letter dated 22nd April 2025 in respect of the rent of the Santa Fe Fun Park and Family Games Room for the four-year period commencing 1st April 2024.

It was noted that the revised rental figure included the two car parking spaces allocated for this business.

238. **Procurement - To consider awarding contracts for the following works:**

(a) **Burlington Chine public conveniences internal refurbishment, Recreation Ground resurfacing and kerbing, and Swanage Information Centre garden improvements**

Members reviewed a briefing paper which set out the agreed budget allowance for each of the above one-off projects and the procurement process that had been followed. Specifications for each had been prepared and collated by Dorset Council Asset & Property Services into a package of works in order that preliminary and overhead costs could be minimised.

It was reported that three compliant submissions had been received which had been assessed on the grounds of cost and quality. The submission from David R White Building Services was the highest scoring in both respects. However, despite being the lowest priced submission, the price was £5,325.98 over the agreed total budget of £20,000. It was proposed that this shortfall should be funded from the Council's General Fund.

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

That a contract be awarded to David R White Building Services for the sum of £25,326 to undertake internal refurbishment of Burlington Chine public conveniences, resurfacing and new kerbing to the Recreation Ground and provide an external, level access decked area to the Swanage Information Centre to enable visitor services to be provided outside in busy periods.

(b) **Town Hall – Replacement and upgrade of car park gates**

Consideration was given to a briefing note that highlighted deficiencies in the operation of the gates to the Town Hall car park that had been identified during a recent inspection. Advice had been received that it was not possible to make adjustments to the existing gates to address the deficiencies and that, therefore, the options available to the Town Council were either to purchase replacement

gates at a cost of approximately £9,000, or to remove the gates entirely. During the debate the possibility of seeking further guidance from a relevant trade body was raised.

After detailed consideration of the options it was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Vile and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the gates to the Town Hall car park should be disabled and that further information should be sought regarding alternative options, prior to a revised report on the matter being brought to a future Council meeting.

(c) Seafront ground monitoring – To consider extension of existing contract

Further to Minute No. 109 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 23rd September 2023, Members considered a briefing note outlining the requirement for continued monitoring of ground movement and water levels on Sandpit Field, Weather Station Field and the land to the north of the Spa beach huts. The importance of this to understanding the rate of ground movement and providing potential early warning of slope failure was highlighted. The need for consistency in the approach to gathering data was noted during the discussion. Some concern was raised regarding an increase in the contract cost and it was agreed that the frequency of monitoring over the summer months could be reduced to ensure that this work was delivered within the agreed budget of £17,000. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That, in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1.e, the contract with South-West Geotechnical Services to provide monitoring of ground movement and water levels on the Green Seafront land, and reporting on the same, be extended for a further twelve-month period at a cost of up to £17,000.

239. Car Park Enforcement – To consider options for summer 2025

Members considered the content of a briefing note outlining the Council's options for recruiting to the vacant post of Enforcement Officer. It was noted that if the post were to be filled via an agency or car park management company then the cost would have to be vired from the staffing budget to the car parks hired services budget. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That delegated authority be provided to the Assets & Compliance Manager to take appropriate steps to source an Enforcement Officer resource for up to 5 days per week until 14th September 2025, noting that this may be via an employment agency or parking management company, within the allocated budget of £35,000.

It was further agreed that the future of car park enforcement should be reviewed by the Car Parks Working Party prior to budget setting for the 2026/27 financial year.

The Meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.