

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Swanage  
Town Council held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on  
**MONDAY, 9<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024** at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor M. Bonfield  
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 one Member of the local press attended the Meeting.

**Public Participation Time**

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- In respect of agenda item 3, comments were made regarding the Sandbanks Ferry and the proposed increase in tolls, in particular in relation to the company's accounting practices. It was noted that it may be beneficial to seek ministerial interest in the situation.
- A representative from the Chamber of Trade stated that they had submitted an objection to the proposed increase in tolls on grounds of the negative impact to businesses. It was noted that during 2022/23 when the ferry had been inoperable due to lengthy repairs it had had a devastating effect on businesses due to the reduction in footfall from Bournemouth area. The council was strongly encouraged to take action to oppose any increase in tolls.
- A comment was made regarding the parking of motorcycles near to the Stone Quay. It was stated that motorcyclists frequently parked on this section of pavement, and it seemed unclear as to whether this was permitted. It was noted that there had been no obvious sign of a change to policy, however, recently motorcyclists had received Excess Charge Notices which deterred them from returning to the town. It was suggested that an area of nearby on-street parking could be allocated for this purpose as an alternative. In response it was noted that the next meeting of the Traffic Management Advisory Committee would be held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 and it would be appropriate to raise these concerns at that meeting.

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

71. **Apologies**

Councillors Brookes, Coward, Monkhouse and Moreton gave apologies for their inability to attend the meeting, and where reasons were given these had been noted.

72. **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.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

73. **Sandbanks Ferry application for proposed increase in tolls – to consider next steps in objecting to the application**

Further to Minute No. 5 of the Planning and Consultation Committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024, consideration was given to the recommendation contained therein to support Dorset Council's objection to the proposed increase in tolls for the Sandbanks Ferry and agree to contribute towards the cost of legal representation.

Members raised significant concerns with regards to the proposed increase in tolls, in particular the negative impact that such an increase in cost would have on businesses, residents and the emergency services. At a recent meeting between representatives from Dorset Council, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and local town and parish councils, it was reported that discussions had been held about the potential submission of a joint objection as a consortium.

Attention was drawn to the deadline for the registration of an objection, this being 12<sup>th</sup> September 2024, although it was noted that the consortium would be permitted to submit a detailed objection by 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Members acknowledged the timescales involved and as strong support had been voiced for lodging a joint objection to the proposed increase in tolls, it was deemed unnecessary to defer the matter. Members acknowledged the potential benefits to joining the consortium, which included sharing the costs of the fees for legal representation at the forthcoming public inquiry.

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

That the Town Council supports Dorset Council's objection to the proposed increase in tolls for the Sandbanks Ferry and agrees to contribute towards the cost of legal representation.

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

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 3 and 5 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk, which outlined potential next steps and contained a draft of Dorset Council's objection to the proposed increase in tolls together with the estimated associated costs in legal representation at an inquiry. The question of how best to review revisions to Dorset Council's draft objection was discussed, and the possibility of bringing back further drafts to future Council meetings was raised. In order to proceed in a timely manner Members deemed that a small working party would be best placed to fully consider the matter and work with the Town Clerk to provide feedback as required.

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

That a working party be appointed, consisting of Councillors Bonfield, Foster and the Town Clerk, with delegated authority to consider the content of Dorset Council's draft objection and to provide feedback to Dorset Council as required.

Consideration was given to the financial contribution from the Town Council towards the fees for legal representation, which there was outline agreement to share between the two principal authorities and neighbouring parish councils. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council caps its financial contribution towards legal representation at £4,000.

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

It was noted that the next meeting of the Council, to be held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024, would take place at The Swanage School, High Street, Swanage at 7.00 p.m.

75. **Property-Related Legal Matters**

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

Further to Minute No. 70 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk, which set out legal advice received from the Council's appointed solicitor, and valuation advice from the Council's appointed surveyor, dated 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

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

That the proposal set out by the surveyor in his letter of 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024, regarding access rights over the service road to the rear of 23 De Moulham Road, future maintenance of the road and payment of the Council's professional fees, be approved.

The Meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

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