

Notes of an Informal meeting of the Tourism Committee held via Zoom video conference platform on Tuesday 6th July 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

In Attendance:

Councillor C Tomes – Chair
Councillor C Finch
Councillor T Foster
Councillor C Moreton
Councillor M Whitwam
Dr M Ayres – Town Clerk
Ms T Churcher – National Trust
Mrs E Evans – Management Support Officer
Miss H Lagden – Visit Dorset
Mr C Milmer – Visitor Services Manager

There was one member of the press present.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor A Harris, Councillor M Bonfield, Ms K Black (Durlston Country Park), Mr I Brown (Coastguard), Mr M Norris (Swanage Museum), Mr S Pinkard (RNLI Area Lifesaving Manager), Mr M Smith (RNLI Senior F2F Manager) and Mr P Sykes (Swanage Railway).

2) Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with paragraphs 9 - 13 of the Council's Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

3) Matters arising from the Minutes of the Tourism Committee meeting, held on 23rd March 2021

It was noted that under item 12 b) Tourism Manager Report, Discover Purbeck, based at the library in Wareham, should have been included in the list of Visitor Information Centres that would no longer be council run.

4) Matters arising from Minutes of the Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 30th June 2021

A short verbal update was provided which stated that Phil Palmer, Pierhead Water sports, had provided an update to members regarding bay safety. He had noted the success of educating water users and the benefit of working closely with Blake Compton, from Ocean Bay Water Sports, to increase bay safety.

5) Tourism marketing plan for 2021/22 – update

a) Marketing Working Party - update

A briefing note, prepared by the VSM, had been circulated prior to the meeting which included the following updates:

- A number of interviews had been held with businesses with the results to be used to inform a strategy for the future.

- A digital survey to complement the interviews and to reach a wider audience would be released in due course.
- Various matters would be considered for the strategy, including the increase to visitor numbers during the off-peak season, the type of branding for the town and the development of technological solutions to enhance the visitor experience.
- The intention would be to bring a draft strategy to the Tourism Committee meeting in November for consideration and budget setting.

6) **Events**

A list of approved events had been circulated prior to the meeting. A further three events had subsequently been requested which were:

- Walk to Recovery – use of Sandpit Field as an end of walk venue, low key event.
- Songs of Praise – filmed at Prince Albert Gardens on 29th July 2021, 460 expected numbers in attendance, Government Covid restrictions would no longer be in place, however, a robust risk assessment would be completed.
- Swanage Sea Rowing event – use of Prince Albert Gardens and/or Monkey Beach, 90 expected numbers in attendance, more information had been requested from the event organisers but had not been forthcoming.

It was noted that the Events Working Party had recommended approval for the Walk to Recovery and Songs of Praise events and although an invitation had been extended to the organisers of the Swanage Sea Rowing event to attend the meeting, and to provide further information, this had not been forthcoming.

- Further to a short discussion Members were in agreement with the recommendation of the Events Working Party as follows: That the Walk to Recovery and Songs of Praise events be granted permission, but that the Swanage Sea Rowing event should not be permitted, due to the lack of information and the short timescale.

7) **Seafront Management 2021**

A briefing paper had been prepared by the VSM, which included:

- MACC (Dorset Council led Multi Agency Control Centre) – Friday to Sunday the TIC staff provided a brief update to MACC regarding waste, crime, traffic, and visitor numbers to assist with urgent responses from agencies across the county.
- Seafront Advisors – Four seafront advisors had been employed seasonally by Swanage TC with an additional advisor employed for 12 months. Dorset Council Covid support funding had enabled the Town Council to increase some hours and employ an additional member of staff. The role had changed slightly to include wider ‘maintenance’ tasks.
- Waste Management – Two beach cleaners are employed by STC over seven days and the ‘Beach Buddies’ voluntary group had completed a beach clean every Sunday and Tuesday. The Dorset Council Waste Services bins along Shore Road had recently been changed from wheeled to more traditional bins with some initial problems with capacity and frequency of emptying. It was reported that Town Council staff are working closely with Dorset Waste Services to reduce the impact of this on the town.

- Signage – A review of signage was undertaken early in 2021 and updated signs regarding beach safety and dog control measures were now in place.
- Volunteer Ambassadors - Dorset Council's volunteer ambassador scheme is up and running and a request was made to encourage any willing volunteers to apply to meet and greet visitors.

The chair thanked the Tourist Information and Depot staff for their hard work, particularly in keeping the town clean and tidy.

8) Swanage Friday Market – update

It was reported that the market continued to be successful with 30 stallholders currently trading and 'Artisans at Market' trading on the first Friday of each month.

a) Winter Market Charges

A briefing note had been shared prior to the meeting which demonstrated the proposed change in charges for the Winter Market, as discussed at a recent working party meeting. The main change noted was that a weekly pitch charge would be available rather than a single charge for a whole season. It was agreed:

- **TO RECOMMEND:** That the proposed Winter Market charges be adopted (see copy, appendix 1, at end of these minutes) and incorporated into the 2021/22 scale of fees and charges.

9) Bay Enforcement – update

It was reported that the multi-agency approach had proved successful and the work of Phil Palmer in educating water users was noted as extremely beneficial. Councillors thanked Phil Palmer and Blake Compton for their work to reduce noise pollution and provide increased safety in the bay.

10) Tourism Reports

a) Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer

In addition to item 7) it was reported that beach huts were in high demand this year.

- From 19th July 2021, fifteen additional huts would become available as Covid restrictions were lifted.

b) Tourism Manager

The following updates were provided by the Tourism Manager:

- Visit Dorset website – Redesigned and hoped to launch in August 2021.
- Marketing – A cautious approach was being undertaken and preparations underway for autumn and winter. Videos would be released for an autumn campaign.
- Comms – Messaging around the closure of TICs across the county.

11) Updates from outside representatives

The following outside representatives provided updates as follows:

National Trust

- High visitor numbers reported early season with an impact on Ferry Road and the ability for emergency vehicles to access the area.
- Financially beneficial but visitor experience and safety potentially compromised.

- Difficult to recruit staff and no alternative for refreshments at Studland causing challenging situations for staff.
- Reaching out to advise visitors in preparation for a visit to the area.
- Liaising with other marketing providers to enable a joint approach.
- Corfe Castle had now removed the pre-booking system with staff controlling numbers.
- Sustainable tourism – open minded approach and positive steps regarding sustainable transport with the proposed additional cycle/footpaths between Norden and Studland.
- Sustainable land management – likely trial for this season at two locations of 56-day campsites on National Trust land. Evidence and public consultation required prior to licence being provided. It was stated that this would be a trial period and it was not in the interest of the campsite providers to breach their licence as it would not be granted again in the future.

Durlston Country Park

The chair read an email which contained the following updates:

- It had been a busy few months were reported since restrictions were lowered, with more visitors throughout the week as well as at weekends.
- The Country Park had been abundant with wildflowers, birds, and butterflies.
- A reasonable number of visitors had attended the two outdoor evening events, Living Cinema and MacBeth.
- Durlston Bus service had resumed with funding from Durlston Country Park, Swanage Town Council, Cultural Recovery Fund and Swanage Development Trust. The bus stops at the hospital on the return journey. The marketing on the bus looked appealing.
- Good selection of events and activities over the summer.

The chair praised the park for the provision of the Woodland Trail for children.

Swanage Railway

The chair read an email which included the following updates:

- Passenger numbers had been encouraging despite COVID arrangements.
- Harmans Cross and Herston Halt not open during COVID limitations. To comply with requirements for social distancing, hand sanitation, etc. but HX and HH would open as soon as possible as and when restrictions were lifted.
- To cope with an expected increase in passenger numbers the two-train service is scheduled to start from Tuesday 6th July with Daily High Season scheduled to commence on Tuesday 20th July.
- Jonathan Evans, new recruitment, and retention officer, had been appointed to attract volunteers to the Swanage Railway as well as to main line station support groups at Holton Heath, Wareham, Wool and Moreton.

Swanage Museum

- Re-opening on 5th July.

12) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

a) Sustainable Tourism Vision

The Marketing working party had begun work on the vision in the spring. Due to the work involved in the preparation of a draft it was proposed that delegated authority be given to the VSM to work with the chair and another councillor. Engagement would be sought from the National Trust, Planet Purbeck, and other local groups.

- Councillors were in support of delegated authority being given to Culvin and a small number of councillors to prepare a draft Sustainable Tourism Vision.

13) Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 16th November 2021 @ 10 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11 a.m.

Appendix 1

| Winter Market Fees - 2021/22 | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|----------|--------|------------|------------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| * 25% reduction on all fees for a BH19 business address | | | | | | | | | |
| **Charity and community groups at no cost | | | | | | | | | |
| Electric charged at £5 pr day | | | | | | | | | |
| Charge | | | | | Equiv. Charge per week | | | | |
| Weeks | Small | Standard | Large | Very large | Small | Standard | Large | Very large | |
| 1 | 13.00 | 16.00 | 24.00 | 44.00 | 13.00 | 16.00 | 24.00 | 44.00 | |
| 2 | 25.50 | 31.50 | 47.00 | 86.00 | 12.75 | 15.75 | 23.50 | 43.00 | |
| 3 | 37.50 | 46.50 | 69.00 | 126.00 | 12.50 | 15.50 | 23.00 | 42.00 | |
| 4 | 49.00 | 61.00 | 90.00 | 164.00 | 12.25 | 15.25 | 22.50 | 41.00 | |
| 5 | 60.00 | 75.00 | 105.00 | 200.00 | 12.00 | 15.00 | 21.00 | 40.00 | |
| 6 | 70.50 | 88.50 | 123.00 | 234.00 | 11.75 | 14.75 | 20.50 | 39.00 | |
| 7 | 80.50 | 101.50 | 140.00 | 266.00 | 11.50 | 14.50 | 20.00 | 38.00 | |
| 8 | 90.00 | 114.00 | 156.00 | 296.00 | 11.25 | 14.25 | 19.50 | 37.00 | |
| 9 | 99.00 | 126.00 | 171.00 | 324.00 | 11.00 | 14.00 | 19.00 | 36.00 | |
| 10 | 107.50 | 137.50 | 185.00 | 350.00 | 10.75 | 13.75 | 18.50 | 35.00 | |
| 11 | 115.50 | 148.50 | 198.00 | 374.00 | 10.50 | 13.50 | 18.00 | 34.00 | |
| 12 | 123.00 | 159.00 | 210.00 | 396.00 | 10.25 | 13.25 | 17.50 | 33.00 | |
| 13 | 130.00 | 169.00 | 208.00 | 416.00 | 10.00 | 13.00 | 16.00 | 32.00 | |
| 14 | 136.50 | 178.50 | 217.00 | 434.00 | 9.75 | 12.75 | 15.50 | 31.00 | |
| 15 | 142.50 | 187.50 | 225.00 | 450.00 | 9.50 | 12.50 | 15.00 | 30.00 | |
| 16 | 148.00 | 196.00 | 232.00 | 464.00 | 9.25 | 12.25 | 14.50 | 29.00 | |
| 17 | 153.00 | 204.00 | 238.00 | 476.00 | 9.00 | 12.00 | 14.00 | 28.00 | |
| 18 | 157.50 | 211.50 | 243.00 | 486.00 | 8.75 | 11.75 | 13.50 | 27.00 | |
| 19 | 161.50 | 218.50 | 247.00 | 494.00 | 8.50 | 11.50 | 13.00 | 26.00 | |
| 20 | 165.00 | 225.00 | 250.00 | 500.00 | 8.25 | 11.25 | 12.50 | 25.00 | |
| 21 | 168.00 | 231.00 | 252.00 | 504.00 | 8.00 | 11.00 | 12.00 | 24.00 | |