

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 30th JANUARY 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chair

Councillor M.P. Bonfield

Councillor C. Finch

Councillor A. Harris

Councillor N. Rogers

Councillor C. Tomes

Councillor W. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, nine members of the public and one member of the local press attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised:-

- **Burlington Chine Public Conveniences** – the Town Council was praised for the manner in which it responded to reactive maintenance requirements at the Burlington Chine facilities. It was noted that, at the Public Meeting held in September 2022, the public were strongly in favour of the retention of the toilets and felt that responsibility of the facilities should remain with the Town Council, as a public asset. The proposed works to upgrade the facilities were welcomed, as an improvement for both residents and visitors using North Beach.
The Town Mayor thanked the member of the public for their positive feedback.
- **Sports Facilities** – it was, again, highlighted that the indoor sports provision for the town needed improvement. It was noted that the Methodist Church Hall was utilised for the local table tennis club, however, due to the size of the hall new members were placed on a waiting list. It was acknowledged that the Football Club redevelopment would provide an indoor sports facility, but that would take time.
- **ATM provision** – attention was drawn to the need for improved ATM provision in the town, both for the availability of cash and paying-in facilities, as access to banking provision was an important issue for local businesses.

Reverend Dave Richards, Associate Priest at St Mark's, Herston, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

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

128. **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Moreton, Bishop and Suttle. Councillor Monkhouse attended the meeting remotely.

129. **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 No. 11 (b) - Councillor Finch declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a committee member of the Fish Festival and Chair of the Swanage and District Chamber of Trade.

Agenda Item No. 15 – Councillor Bonfield declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being an acquaintance of the business owner.

Agenda Item No. 15 – Councillor Tomes declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being an acquaintance of the business owner.

Agenda Item No. 21 (a) – Councillor Whitwam declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a trustee of Swanage Railway.

There were no other declarations to record on this occasion.

130. **Minutes**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Rogers, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12th December 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

(b) Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Rogers and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Annual Estimates Meeting held on 16th December 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

131. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 5th December 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

4 a) To consider report on potential improvements to Station Approach, Swanage

Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Rogers and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council brings the existing location up to current highway standards (crossings, tactile paving, road markings), relocate the parking bays allocated for the railway to either the Co-op car park or to the two taxi bays adjacent to the disabled bays, adjust road marking/surfacing in the area where the railway parking was previously, install a cycle rack (location to be determined) and review the installation of additional crossings as per recommendations within the report, subject to stakeholder views and final costings (as set out in Option 2 of the WSP Feasibility Study dated September/October 2022).

Further to Minute No. 10 b) of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 5th December 2022, and discussions held at the Planning and Consultation Committee meeting held on 5th September 2022, disappointment was noted that the request made by Councillor Trite, as Dorset Councillor, for application P/FUL/2022/03004,

4 Hillview Road, Swanage, BH19 2QX, to be referred to the Eastern Area Planning Committee for consideration, had been refused.

- (b) Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Finch and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 9th January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

132. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st December 2022 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

133. **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 £213,172.04.

134. **Chairman's Announcements**

Councillor Foster reported that she had not attended any mayoral events, however, all councillors had had the opportunity to participate in the following workshops since the Council meeting held on 12th December 2022:

- Budget workshop – a worthwhile exercise which had reached a satisfactory conclusion. Thanks was given to those who gave up their time and provided their valuable expertise.
- Planning workshop – discussions held to discuss the Town Council's response to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation.
- Neighbourhood plan - work had continued to produce a Swanage Neighbourhood Plan and task teams created to undertake specific research.
- Seafront Masterplan workshops – review of consultation responses and the initial plans with more public engagement to follow.
- King's Coronation – looking forward to the 'glitz and glamour' to celebrate the King's coronation with more information to follow nearer the time.

The Mayor thanked officers and councillors for their time and commitment in dealing with the important work of the Town Council.

135. **Burlington Chine Public Conveniences – Statement re future operation**

Further to Minute No. 165 of the Council Meeting held on 4th April 2022 and Minute No. 130 of the Annual Estimates Meeting held on 16th January 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Town Clerk, which provided background information regarding the toilet facilities at Burlington Chine and a statement on the current position. The statement outlined the Town Council's short-term maintenance schedule, the budget allocation of £30,000 should the full re-lining of the pipes be deemed necessary, or a critical failure occurred, and confirmed the Town Council's commitment to the continued operation of the facilities for the foreseeable future. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves the statement as set out in the briefing paper, including the Town Council's commitment to continuing to operate a public toilet facility at Burlington Chine for the foreseeable future.

136. **Swanage Town Centre and Beach Front Accessibility Report – To consider recommendations**

Further to Minute No. 96 of the Council Meeting held on 17th October 2022, consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager, which set out a summary of the recently undertaken Swanage Accessibility Audit. A copy of the report, undertaken by DOTS Disability, had been provided as an appendix. It was noted that the report contained 78 recommendations, a relatively small number of which were directly under the control of the Town Council.

The report had suggested the establishment of a local ‘Disability Reference Group’ to enable the development of the Action Plan, and to better inform decisions around future changes to the town centre and seafront. It was anticipated that the group would report to the Tourism and Local Economy Committee, who would support the group and monitor and review the progress in implementing the Action Plan.

Further to a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Tourism and Local Economy Committee develop, monitor and review the Swanage Accessibility Audit Action Plan and that a budget of £1,000 be approved for the support and establishment of a ‘Disability Reference Group’.

An email received from a member of the public was read out which requested that Council meetings should be held in accessible venues when such matters were being discussed. It was noted that the Tourism and Local Economy Committee would need to consider the location of meetings to ensure they would be accessible to those involved in the development and implementation of the Action Plan.

137. **Friends of Swanage Bandstand – To consider request to repair coping stones and proposal to donate remaining funds to the Town Council to ringfence for future maintenance of the bandstand**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which summarised a report by Dorset Council’s Regional Property Surveyor regarding the condition of the coping stones around the bandstand. The report had recommended the replacement of ten coping stones, and although several more stones had been noted as cosmetically defective, the replacement of these had not been deemed essential at this time.

Further to a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council agree to undertake the replacement of at least ten coping stones, within a reasonable period, such works to be funded by the Friends of Swanage Bandstand. Furthermore, any remaining funds held by the Friends of the Swanage Bandstand to be transferred to the Council and held in an earmarked reserve for future maintenance of the bandstand.

The Council thanked the Friends of the Swanage Bandstand for their tireless efforts to retain the bandstand.

138. **Working Party Matters**

(a) **Environmental Policy and Action Plan**

It was reported that the working party had recently met to review the Environmental Policy Action Plan. The proposed amendments would be considered at the forthcoming meeting of the Environment Committee. It was

noted that this would be an iterative document, the implementation of which would be overseen by that committee.

Further to Councillor Finch's declaration under Minute No. 129, she left the Meeting prior to discussion of the following item.

(b) **Grants Panel**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Planning and Community Engagement Manager, which detailed the grant requests as reviewed at the Grants Panel meeting held on 24th January 2023. An annual budget of £10,000 had been allocated to the grants and donations budget for 2022/23. A total of £1,250 had been awarded to date, a total of £5,713.43 had been requested, and it was proposed that £1,924.43 be awarded. The balance of £6,825.57 would be available for applications received throughout the remainder of the financial year. It was noted that the Grants Panel had recommended refusal of the grant requested by the Swanage Fish Festival as this was an established event and, as such, was ineligible under the Council's Grants Policy. Attention was drawn to the fact that in-kind support, including the use of Prince Albert Gardens and free parking arrangements, would most likely continue.

The possibility was raised of providing regular annual donations to local volunteer/community groups in the future, in order to support the invaluable services provided. It was noted that this proposal would be considered at a forthcoming Grants Panel meeting, prior to presentation at a Finance and Governance Committee for consideration.

It was proposed by Councillor Rogers, seconded by Councillor Harris and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council approves the recommendations of the Grants Panel, as set out in Appendix 3 of the briefing paper dated January 2023 and summarised in the table below, to award grants totalling £1,924.43.

Art Workshop Swanage	£300.00
Lewis Manning Hospice Care	£484.43
Purbeck Good Neighbours	£500.00
Swanage and District Chamber of Trade	£500.00
Swanage Town Band	£140.00
Swanage Fish Festival	£ 0.00

Councillor Finch re-entered the meeting.

(c) **Events**

Members gave consideration to the two event requests, as discussed at the Events Working Party meeting held on 25th January 2023. The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) had summarised the request from the Antiques Roadshow to use the Pier and Prince Albert Gardens for filming, and Broad Road carpark to site the production team. It was anticipated that the filming would be undertaken in May/June 2023 and, due to the popularity of the programme, had the potential to showcase the attributes of the town to a wider audience.

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

That the use of Prince Albert Gardens and part of Broad Road car park for the Antiques Roadshow event be approved, with delegated authority being granted to the VSBDM to agree a date and fee, in consultation with the Events Working Party.

It was noted that the use of Prince Albert Gardens had been requested by the 'Wild Swimming Co.' on 15th July 2023 (16th July as a reserve date) as a base for a catering and merchandise stall for the attendees at a wild swimming event. It was noted that the organisers had altered the original planned swimming route to mitigate concerns around swimming near to moored boats, and in that respect would be renamed the 'Jurassic Swim Challenge' as opposed to the 'Four Piers Swim Race.'

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

That the use of Prince Albert Gardens by the 'Jurassic Swim Challenge' swimming event be approved.

(d) **Rents and Licences Panel**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Town Clerk, which detailed the proposal for the expansion of the remit of the current Rents and Licences Panel, to include the following:

- a review of Council-owned/leased assets;
- requests from third parties for the purchase of Council-owned assets;
- rent reviews;
- lease renewals;
- pursuit of rent arrears.

The briefing note included a suggestion to rename it the 'Asset Review and Commercial Property Panel'. However, in the interest of clarity and brevity, a preference was expressed for it to be renamed the 'Property Panel.'

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

That the proposals to expand the remit of the Rents and Licences Panel, as set out above, and to rename it the Property Panel, be approved.

During the discussion, Councillor Finch asked to be appointed to the panel and it was **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Finch be added to the membership of the Property Panel.

139. **Coronation of King Charles III – to consider proposals for celebration and commemoration**

Following the announcement of the date of the Coronation of King Charles III, consideration was given to a briefing note, prepared by the VSBDM, setting out the celebrations which had been planned by a small committee, including the Chamber of Trade.

In terms of the Council's commemoration of the event, Members had informally expressed an interest in providing the school children of the town with commemorative teaspoons. The briefing note provided an initial indication of cost, of approximately £2,000. A discussion ensued around the difficulties faced in ascertaining whether pupils,

particularly at secondary school, resided in the parish of Swanage and therefore it was decided that only primary school children would receive a teaspoon.

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

That the proposal to provide all primary school children in the town with a commemorative teaspoon be approved, at a cost of approximately £1,300.

140. **Recreation Ground and Sandpit Field Pathway repairs - To consider authorisation for works to proceed in current financial year**

Further to Minute No. 135(c) of the Annual Estimates Meeting held on 16th January 2023, Members gave consideration to information provided in a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, regarding the best time to undertake the repairs to the pathways at the Recreation Ground and Sandpit Field. It was noted that although the works had been scheduled for the start of the 2023/24 financial year, the school Easter holidays would fall in the first two weeks of that timeframe, and therefore there would be an increase in footfall during this time.

It was noted that the impact on Town Council budgets if the works were to be undertaken in the current financial year would be minimal, as the expenditure would be met by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council authorises the repairs to the Recreation Ground and Sandpit Field pathways to proceed in the current financial year.

141. **Recreation Ground, Remembrance Wall - To determine request for installation of commemorative plaque**

It was reported that the Town Council had been approached by the Swanage Branch of the Royal British Legion to request that a memorial plaque be placed on the Remembrance Wall at the Recreation Ground to commemorate Mr Leslie Smale, who died in Cyprus in 1956 at the age of 19 and was buried in the military cemetery in Nicosia. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That permission be granted for the Swanage Branch of the Royal British Legion to install a plaque on the Recreation Ground Remembrance Wall (of the same design as those existing in this location) to commemorate Mr Leslie Smale.

Further to Councillor Bonfield's and Councillor Tomes' declarations under Minute No. 129, they left the Meeting prior to discussion of the following item.

142. **Mobile Kiosk in vicinity of Stone Quay - To formulate Council's views and response to business owner**

Consideration was given to a briefing note, prepared by the Town Clerk, which outlined a proposal for a mobile kiosk to act as a pop-up shop and booking office in the vicinity of the Stone Quay. The briefing note included photographs provided by the business owner. It was reported that the business owner was informally seeking the Council's views on the proposal, the site being outside of the ownership of the Town Council.

A brief discussion ensued, during which some concerns were expressed around the style and design of the kiosk. However, it was acknowledged that the proposal would be referred to the Planning and Consultation Committee for consideration in due course as

part of the planning process. The incorporation of a solar panel to provide power was noted with approval.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would inform the business owner of the comments made during the discussion.

Councillors Bonfield and Tomes re-entered the Meeting.

143. **Prospect Nursery – To confirm lease to Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust (Greengage Project) at Peppercorn Rent**

Further to Minute No. 94 of the Council Meeting held on 1st November 2021, Members considered a briefing note, prepared by the Town Clerk, which set out the background to lease negotiations with Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust in respect of Prospect Nursery. It was noted that legal advice had clarified that the Town Council owned the property in its capacity as corporate trustee of the Public Pleasure Grounds Charity and therefore had to abide by charity law in making any decision to lease such property, as opposed to local government statute.

It was noted that as the lease was for a term of less than seven years the permission of the Charity Commission was not required. In order to fulfil the Council's obligation to obtain best value for the beneficiaries of the charity valuation advice had also been obtained confirming that a peppercorn rent would be fair 'due to the highly restrictive terms to be incorporated in the lease', ensuring that its use for a therapeutic gardening project was compliant with the requirement for it to remain as public pleasure grounds.

In light of the above, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Finch and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, in light of professional advice received, the Town Council, acting as Corporate Trustee of the Public Pleasure Grounds Charity, confirms its intention to enter into a lease of Prospect Nursery with Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust for a 6-year term, at a peppercorn rent, and authorises the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to sign the document accordingly.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the lease term should start on the date of it being signed.

144. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

Councillor Trite provided updates on matters that included the following:

- Dorset Council budget - in October 2022 Dorset Council faced a £29 million deficit and by January 2023 this had been reduced to an £8.3 million deficit. The final budget report would be taken to Cabinet on 14th February 2023.
- Tax increase for second homeowners – council will consider whether to take advantage of flexibilities contained in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to initiate an introduction of 100% council tax premium on second homes. It was stated that the earliest this would take effect would be 2024/25, if agreed.
- Planning – the Town Council were compiling a response to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation.
- Warm spaces – it was reported that the six hubs in town were proving successful.

145. **Reports from Council Representatives on Outside Organisations**

(a) **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership**

It was noted that the provisional start date for the 90-day trial service from Swanage to Wareham is 4th April 2023, operating four days per week.

(b) **Pubwatch**

It was reported that recent Pubwatch meetings had not been well attended and therefore it had been decided that the meetings would be held quarterly, with the next meeting scheduled to take place in April.

(c) **Chamber of Trade**

In light of the decision regarding the grant request from the Chamber of Trade under Minute No. 138(b) above, it was reported that the King's Coronation events would be scaled back from initial plans.

(d) **Swanage Community Land Trust**

It was reported that the Swanage Community Land Trust were awaiting a decision on the proposed asset transfer from Dorset Council.

(e) **FareShare Community Larder**

Thanks were given to Dorset Council for the grant of £14,000 to establish the community larder, which between 35 to 40 families had already accessed.

146. **Reporting of delegated matters**

- (a) Further to Minute No. 7 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee held on 9th March 2022, it was reported that the taxi office at Swanage Station had been repossessed on 18th January 2023.

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

- (a) **Future of Swanage-based Ambulance Car – Update** – it was suggested that an FOI request for the latest six months of data regarding response times and staffing levels, be sought, as a comparison to the first half of 2022.
- (b) **A & E Local – Update** – further to Minute No. 99 of the Council Meeting held on 17th October 2022, it was reported that at the DAPTC AGM, the motion regarding increased provision for health care in rural locations was passed with 80% in favour.
- (c) **ATM provision following bank branch closures - Update**– further to Minute No. 103 of the Council Meeting held on 17th October 2022, it was reported that the results of the recently completed business survey had been analysed and the relevant organisation would formulate a recommendation to the banks for ATM provision in Swanage.
- (d) **Family Hub Event at the Children's Centre** – a reminder was given to Members to respond to the invitation to attend an event at the Children's Centre on 24th February 2023, where the plans for the 'Family Hub' would be discussed.
- (e) **Catenary Lights along the seafront** – Members' views were sought as to whether the seafront catenary lights should be timed to go off overnight. No strong views were expressed, and Members were encouraged to contact the Assets and Compliance Manager directly if they wished to discuss the matter.
- (f) **Planning Workshop** – a reminder was given to Members regarding an upcoming planning workshop being held on Wednesday 1st February @ 11 a.m. at the Town Hall.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Harris 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 21 for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

148.

Commercial Property

(a) **Repossession of Taxi Office, Swanage Station - To consider next steps**

Further to Minute No.7 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management meeting held on 9th March 2022, consideration was given to the options set out in a briefing paper circulated prior to the meeting. Following a lengthy discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Rogers and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the matter be referred to a meeting of the Property Panel for further discussion, prior to a recommendation being brought to a future Council Meeting.

(b) **Defence of County Court claim for new tenancy - Update**

Further to Minute No. 60 of the Council Meeting held on 11th July 2022, consideration was given to a briefing note, prepared by the Town Clerk, which detailed the legal process to date, and outlined the next steps. Following a brief discussion, it was AGREED:-

That the Town Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk, in terms of agreeing the next steps in preparing for a potential court hearing, and that the question of longer-term planning for the premises be referred to the Property Panel for consideration.

(c) **Town Hall Annexe – To consider valuer’s report on rent review**

Further to Minute No. 59 of the Council Meeting held on 11th July 2022, consideration was given to valuation advice received in respect of the rent to be charged to Dorset Police in connection with their occupation of the Town Hall Annexe. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council agrees the rental figure of £8,500 per annum in respect of the lease of the Town Hall Annexe to Dorset Police.

(d) **Shore Road Kiosk – proposed transfer of lease**

It was reported that the Swanage Beach Kiosk Company Ltd., lessee of the ice cream kiosk on the corner of Victoria Avenue and Shore Road, is being sold to new owners. The content of a briefing paper circulated prior to the meeting was noted.

The Meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.
