

Minutes of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the Swanage
Town Council held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage
on **MONDAY 4TH APRIL 2022** at 5.30 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor A. Harris – Chair

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor M.P. Bonfield
Councillor T. Foster
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor G.M. Suttle
Councillor C. Tomes
Councillor M. Whitwam

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

Three local residents with extensive knowledge of the Burlington Chine area raised serious concerns around the potential future closure of the public conveniences in that location (Item 3 on the agenda). Information was provided regarding recent ground movement and drainage problems, as well as the longer-term history of the site since the 1960s. Key points raised were as follows:

- The site was gifted to the former Urban District Council for the provision of public toilets to address public health concerns in this area arising from a lack of such facilities. Concern was expressed that similar problems would arise if the public toilets were closed.
- A wide range of people make use of the facility, not only beach hut occupiers and clients of local businesses, but also residents and visitors walking in the area, and school groups.
- Closure might cause reputational damage to Swanage as a resort and hence damage the local economy.
- There may be sources of external funding available.

The Chair opened the Council Meeting at 5.50 p.m.

163. **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Finch, Trite and Rogers. Councillor Monkhouse attended the meeting remotely.

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.

Agenda Item No. 5 - Councillor Tomes declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a member of the Regatta and Carnival Committee.

165. **Burlington Chine Public Conveniences – To consider recommendation regarding future operation from General Operations Committee**

Further to Minute No. 3 of the General Operations Committee meeting held on 30th March 2022, consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Operations Manager which provided background information to the following recommendation that had been made by that Committee to full Council:

That Burlington Chine public conveniences be opened for the 2022 season, but that stakeholders be notified of the Council's proposal to close the facility, either following a further breakdown, or at the end of the 2022 season, due to ground instability and the likelihood of further costly drainage works in the future, a final decision to be taken at a future meeting, taking into consideration responses from stakeholders to this proposal.

During the debate, the importance of this facility to the community was acknowledged and attention was drawn to the extensive repair work undertaken over recent years to try to address the drainage problems in this area. A commitment was made to use every reasonable effort to keep the facility open during the forthcoming summer season, but it was acknowledged that the briefing note made clear that this may not be possible if a catastrophic breakdown were to occur.

Attention was drawn to the importance of sharing information with stakeholders and working together to explore all possible funding options. A request was also made for legal advice to clarify whether or not the Council had an obligation to provide facilities in this area.

Further to this debate, Members made it clear that they felt unable to support the Committee's recommendation as worded, and that any Council resolution should not contain reference to the potential closure of the facility. It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Moreton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That Burlington Chine public conveniences be opened for the 2022 season and that all reasonable efforts be made to keep the facility open, pending further consideration at a future meeting, taking into account responses to stakeholder engagement and legal advice received.

166. **HM Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Celebrations - To consider donations towards beacon lighting events**

(a) **National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) Swanage – Banjo Pier, 2nd June 2022**

Consideration was given to a request from NCI Swanage for the Town Council to support its approach to Wessex Water for a Platinum Jubilee Beacon Lighting event to be held on Banjo Pier on 2nd June 2022, and to authorise a donation of up to £100 towards the cost of the event should it go ahead.

A freestanding reusable beacon brazier had been commissioned via a local engineering company and the NCI was seeking sponsorship from a number of local organisations towards the cost of the beacon/event, which was estimated at £700. The beacon could be stored for subsequent use on other royal occasions. It was noted that due to health and safety considerations it had not been possible for the NCI to proceed with its plans for an event to be held at the lookout at Peveril Point, and would instead be decorating the building with bunting and then illuminating it with floodlights over the Jubilee Weekend.

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

That the Town Council supports National Coastwatch Institution Swanage's approach to Wessex Water for a Platinum Jubilee Beacon Lighting event to be held on Banjo Pier on 2nd June 2022, and authorises a donation of up to £100 towards the cost of the event should it go ahead.

(b) **Dorset Council (DC) - Durlston Country Park, 2nd June 2022**

Further to Minute No. 148 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 14th March 2022 the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had met with DC's Chairman, Cllr Pothecary, and representatives of the Lord-Lieutenant's Office, and Durlston Country Park, on 21st March to discuss DC's proposals for a community beacon lighting event to be held at Durlston Country Park on 2nd June 2022.

At the meeting it had been agreed that the Town Council would take part in the event. A bugler and piper had been confirmed, and the Swanage Town Crier had been invited. It was proposed that a reception would be held for invited guests at 8.30 p.m., and that the beacon would be lit at 9.45 p.m.

At the meeting a request had been made for the Town Council to make a financial contribution towards the cost of the event, and it was proposed that a donation of £250 be made.

During the ensuing discussion Members were not in support of providing funds towards the event, and attention was drawn to the fact that donations were being considered for other local community groups and events at the present time.

Comments were also made by the Dorset Councillor present that it would not be necessary for the Council to make a donation as DC would be able to cover the cost of its event from within existing budgets.

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

That the Town Council supports Dorset Council's Platinum Jubilee Beacon Lighting event at Durlston Country Park on 2nd June 2022, but will not make a financial contribution towards the event costs.

Details of the event, when finalised, would be widely publicised, and the local community would be encouraged to join in the celebration and bring a picnic along with them to the park.

167. **Grants Panel – To consider recommendations**

Consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Administration and Communications Manager setting out the recommendations made by the Grants Panel following its meeting on 30th March 2022, which had been held to consider and review in detail Swanage Town Council Grant Applications received for the 2022/23 financial year. An annual budget of £10,000 had been allocated to the grants and donations budget for the year.

A total of £2,500 had been requested, and it was proposed that £1,250 be awarded. The balance of £8,750 would be available for applications received throughout the remainder of the financial year. It was noted that the Council would be increasing awareness of its grant scheme with local charitable/community groups.

The Grants Panel's recommendations were discussed in turn and Members were in support of the recommendations made. However, a discussion was held regarding the current Grant Policy and Guidelines (adopted in February 2021), which some Members felt were, at times, restrictive, and a request was made for consideration to be given to a review of the policy.

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

That the Town Council approves the recommendations of the Grants Panel as set out in Appendix 1 of the briefing note dated April 2022 and the table below, totalling £1,250, and that a review of the Grant Policy and Guidelines be undertaken at a future meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee.

Swanage Jazz Festival	£250
The Swanage Platinum Jubilee Group	£1,000

168. **Parish Slipway – To consider extension of measures to restrict vehicular access**

Further to Minute No. 186(b) of the Council Meeting held on 26th April 2021, consideration was given to extending a trial restriction of vehicular access to the Parish Slipway by leaving in place a concrete block that had formed part of the seasonal sea defences. It was noted that this arrangement had been introduced following reports raising health and safety concerns regarding vehicles using the slipway. Access would be maintained for dinghies, canoes, and smaller vessels.

It was reported that the trial had been successful, with only one concern raised by a member of the public regarding loss of access. In light of this, it was proposed that the trial be extended for a further 12-month period and that arrangements be made to again retain a concrete block in place at the top of the slipway.

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

To extend the trial period to restrict vehicular access to the Parish Slipway through the positioning of a concrete block for a further 12 months.

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

- (a) **Swanage Town Council Community Awards 2022** – the Awards Panel had arranged to meet on Friday 8th April to confirm the award categories for 2021/22 and the deadline for nominations. The awards would be launched at the Parish Assembly on Monday 11th April, and be presented at the Annual Council Meeting on Monday 23rd May 2022.

Exclusion of Press and Public

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Foster 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 8 and 9 for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

170. **Peeveril Point Boat Park – To consider suspension of Financial Regulation 11.11 to award contract for emergency repairs to jetty.**

Councillor Suttle declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by reason of having a distant family connection with one of the contractors invited to submit an estimate for this work and did not take part in any discussion, decision, or vote on this matter.

Further to Minute No. 7 of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee meeting held on 9th March 2022 and Minute No. 151 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 14th March 2022, the Operations Manager provided an update regarding the procurement of urgent repair works to the eastern/middle jetty at Peveril Boat Park. It was noted that when the agenda for this meeting had been prepared it had been anticipated that the Council would have been in a position to award a contract for a comprehensive urgent repair programme. However, it was reported that that was no longer the case, principally due to the time required to obtain an MMO licence for the full repair works.

It was noted that smaller-scale interim repairs would still be required prior to the summer season and that the full programme of works would have to be addressed later in the year. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED:

That delegated authority be given to Council Officers to award a contract for urgent interim repairs to the eastern/middle jetty at Peveril Boat Park, within the budget agreed under Minute No. 151(b) of the Council Meeting held on 14th March 2022.

171. **Seafront Stabilisation and Enhancement Project Phase 2 – To consider report on quotations received for a feasibility study in respect of ground stabilisation and redevelopment of seafront locations, and appoint a consultant**

Consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Operations Manager, providing a progress report on the appointment of a consultant to carry out a feasibility study in respect of ground stabilisation and redevelopment of seafront land, between Sandpit Field and Cliff Cottage. Further to Minute No. 13 of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee meeting held on 19th January 2022, five suitably qualified organisations had been invited to provide a quotation in respect of the above study and two compliant responses had been received. Officers were currently seeking references and reviewing the submissions.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Suttle, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That a budget of up to £10,000 be agreed to engage a suitably qualified consultant to undertake a feasibility study in respect of ground stabilisation and redevelopment of seafront locations at Shore Road, Swanage, and that the appointment of the consultant be delegated to officers, based on the criteria set out within the specification.

The meeting concluded at 6.35 p.m.
