

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the **GENERAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE** held via ZOOM on **WEDNESDAY 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021** at **4.30 p.m.**

Chairman: - Councillor C Moreton	Swanage Town Council
Present: - Councillor M Bonfield	Swanage Town Council (from 4.45 p.m.)
Councillor C Finch	Swanage Town Council (from 4.45 p.m.)
Councillor A Harris	Swanage Town Council
Councillor D Monkhouse	Swanage Town Council
Councillor C Tomes	Swanage Town Council
Mr A Bennett	Prospect Allotment Association (until 4.45 p.m.)
Mr M Green	James Smith Funeral Directors
Mr M Jones	Prospect Allotment Association (until 4.45 p.m.)
Also present: - Councillor T Foster	Swanage Town Council
Dr M Ayres	Town Clerk (from 4.35 p.m. and until 5.00 p.m.)
Miss C Johnston	Operations Administration Officer
Miss Gail Percival	Operations Manager
Mr R Hildreth	Dorset Waste Services
Mr F Roberts	Swanage Landers

**Public Participation Time**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

**1. Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

**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 Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

It was noted that the minutes had previously been approved as a correct record by full Council and there were no matters raised.

#### **4. Allotment Matters**

##### **a) Allotment inspections**

It was reported that inspections are scheduled to take place this year as normal, with the first inspection in May. Advice had been provided by the National Allotment Association regarding the sending of warning letters about allotment maintenance. As a result, inspection letters had been amended accordingly and a new, shorter, warning process put in place.

A representative from the Prospect Allotment Association requested a revision to current regulations regarding a refund of fees if a plot is relinquished part way through the year, or a reduction in charges for the incoming tenant. The Operations Manager confirmed that no refunds/reductions are given unless in exceptional circumstances, and further to Minute 4.a) of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020, it was reported that advice had been sought from the National Allotment Association which confirmed that this was the standard position for allotment authorities to take.

##### **b) Matters raised by Prospect Allotment Association**

A Prospect Allotment Association representative requested that action be taken regarding the recent thefts and incidents of anti-social behaviour at Prospect Allotments. The Town Clerk confirmed that complaints regarding such matters are taken seriously, and an update will be provided to the Association in due course.

Mr A Bennett and Mr M Jones left the meeting at 4.45 p.m.

#### **5. Cemetery Matters**

##### **a) Godlingston Cemetery extension – update, final plan and timescales**

The Operations Manager provided an update on the tender for the Godlingston Cemetery extension works. The final plan had been circulated to committee members with the agenda papers. The tender had been advertised on Contracts Finder and interested companies have carried out initial site visits. It is anticipated the extension works will start in June and be complete by mid-September.

There will be flexibility in how some areas within the extension could be used in the future dependent upon need. The on-going progress of this project will be reported back at future meetings.

A question was raised as to whether the Council had been working in partnership with Sustainable Swanage regarding the planting plan, to include trees. It was confirmed that wildflower seeds had been planted in the existing Meadowland area some three weeks ago and in respect of a planting plan regarding trees, this would be developed and reported at a later date.

##### **b) Matters raised by James Smith Funeral Directors**

The representative of the Funeral Directors gave thanks for the non-increase of cemetery fees for the new financial year, from April 2021. Warm wishes were sent to a long-serving member of the Operations Department team who had recently received treatment for a medical emergency.

#### **6. Fishermen's Huts and Jetties**

##### **a) Matters raised by Swanage Fishermen's Association**

No matters were raised and it was acknowledged that the Chairman had agreed to meet with the fishermen's hut tenants at a later date.

#### **7. Capital Projects Sub Committee**

##### **a) Matters arising from minutes of recent meetings of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee**

Further to Minute 4.c) of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> February, it was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That improvements to pedestrian access at Journey's End and Day's Park be undertaken, including the installation of lighting, at a cost of up to £60,000, to be funded from the Town Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) reserve.

Further to Minute 4.c) of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> February, it was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Harris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That an approach be made to Dorset Council requesting the use of an electronic Variable Message Sign (VMS) in the pre-season as a trial and that a budget allocation be made of up to £3,000 for the hire of a VMS for eight weeks in July and August.

In respect of the minutes of the meeting of the sub-committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, it was noted that Councillor Monkhouse should have been recorded as being 'also present' as she is not a member of the sub-committee.

## **8. Waste Management**

### **a) Update from Waste Management Working Party and plans for the summer season**

The Operations Manager reported on the recent meeting of the Waste Management Working Party which had included an update from Swanage Landers regarding their recent activity, discussions on street sweeping routes, weed management plans and information on waste generation rates from the previous year.

A subsequent meeting had been held with the lead councillor of the Working Party, the Operations Manager and Supervisor from Dorset Waste Services to discuss plans for waste collection for the forthcoming summer season, which it is expected will be very busy. This was followed up by an on-site meeting with operational staff from the Town Council and Dorset Waste Services. Dorset Waste Services have agreed to provide ten 40-litre waste bins, to store in a secure location on the seafront. When busy weekends are anticipated, the Town Council will despatch these bins to seafront areas on a Friday and, following emptying on a Monday morning, these will be returned to the storage location. These bins will provide extra capacity for busy periods. It was reported that two 240-litre bins will be provided in two other areas – the lower High Street and Shore Road.

A hand-operated bin compactor has been purchased by the Town Council as a trial, and the effectiveness of this tool will be monitored. It was advised that Council staff will be provided with the key to unlock the chains the bins are secured with and seafront staff will have the necessary training to be able to move full bins and replace them with empty ones situated further along the seafront which should also increase capacity.

### **b) Swanage 2021 service – Robin Hildreth Supervisor, Dorset Waste Services**

Robin Hildreth was welcomed to the meeting and proceeded to provide an overview of street cleansing. Operatives in two teams cover the old Purbeck District Council area. There are two town cleaners - one in Wareham and one in Swanage - and a mechanical sweeper that spends a lot of time in Swanage. There is currently one advertised post for a street cleanser, who has a 7-tonne licence. It was advised that there is one additional waste collection vehicle that has been funded for the summer season, however this is to cover an area from Lyme Regis to the east of the county, and it is hoped the Wareham depot will be

self-sufficient and able to service Swanage without recourse to this. In Swanage, there are three emptying trips allocated per day in busy periods – early morning, midday and late in the afternoon which can be as late as 7.00 p.m.

The question was raised whether there will be enough staff to cover Easter, weekends and the bank holidays, and it was confirmed that cover will be based on staff undertaking overtime on a voluntary basis.

It was advised that Dorset Waste Services' teams from the Wareham depot look after the main areas in Wareham, Corfe Castle, Swanage and Studland.

Another question was raised enquiring if there are any mobile street cleansing staff in Swanage. It was advised that the 7.5 tonne vehicle which empties the litter and dog bins covers Studland, Swanage and Corfe Castle and that two mobile units cover the old Purbeck District Council region, Upton to Tolpuddle and Puddletown. If any areas require sweeping the barrow operative will do so. Robin agreed that Swanage Town Council can inform him if it has any issues and then he can deploy the barrow operative. Illegal fly-tipping culprits depositing black household waste in Heritage Square bins had been identified and contacted in recent weeks. It was questioned if CCTV evidence was useful in identifying culprits, but it was advised that people are aware of the cameras and take care not to show their identity. Fly-tipping does continue to be an ongoing problem.

Thanks were given to Frank Roberts for his recent efforts for Litter Free Purbeck and their litter collections along the A351. Finally, it was noted that 7.30 p.m. is the latest time for bins to be emptied as staff are required to be back at the Wareham depot for 8.00 p.m.

Councillors gave their thanks and appreciation to Dorset Waste Services and Mr Hildreth left the meeting at 5.15 p.m.

## **9. Environmental Matters**

Further to the briefing note supplied with the agenda the following comments were made.

### **a) Tree Planting /Wildflower areas**

The Operations Manager reported that 28 trees had been planted in recent weeks and that wildflower seeds had been sown in 4 locations. The question was raised whether grassed areas on the Downs would be cut or left to grow. The Operations Manager advised that the Downs would be cut as last year with short grass paths and longer grass areas. A management plan will be developed over the summer with regard to the public consultation and the feedback from the wildlife surveys taking place this summer. Therefore, the interim plan is currently the same as last year but will be developed and may change next year.

### **b) Provision of cycle racks**

Sustainable Swanage will be carrying out an audit of potential suitable locations and information will be given at a future meeting.

### **c) Downs Local Nature Reserve update**

Further to the presentation at the recent public meeting, grass cutting will be on the same basis as last year and a management plan will be developed over the summer.

### **d) Energy Audits**

Green Energy Consulting Limited recently undertook energy audits of all Town Council sites (Town Hall, Depot, Visitor Information Centre, Beach Gardens, beach huts and public conveniences). The subsequent report will include suggestions for those areas best suited to introducing renewable energy sources.

## **10. Dorset Council proposals to ban disposable BBQ's and camp fires at country Parks and at council land that is deemed to be a high fire risk**

Further to the supporting papers provided, it was reported that the Operations Manager will be attending a Dorset Council meeting regarding the use of disposable

barbecues and campfires/wildfires. Further information will be reported back at the next meeting.

A question was raised enquiring what other areas are doing with regard to the provision of dedicated barbecue areas, and it was advised that the possibility of electrical barbecues will be looked into. However, this may be expensive and requires an electrical supply in an appropriate area. A suggestion was made to make barbecue friendly areas with a user-friendly dustbin for disposal. It was also noted that due to the fire risk being so great barbecues should not be permitted in certain locations and barbecues on the beach should also not be permitted.

## **11. Health & Safety**

### **a) Report since November 2020**

The contents of a briefing note circulated prior to the meeting were noted, as follows:

- RIDDOR – no reportable incidents
- Incidents and accidents – One non-reportable incident reported at the Depot.
- A consultant from the Council’s external health and safety advisors had met with the Operations Manager in October and undertaken an annual progress report. Only one high-priority action point had been raised and this had been addressed. Other action points were being prioritised and addressed accordingly.
- Covid -19 continues to require regular reviews of risk assessments as well as a range of revised working arrangements.
- A range of staff training had been undertaken and further courses were scheduled for later in the spring.

## **12. Operations Manager’s Update**

The Operations Manager reported on the following matters:

- All of the staff on the operations team have returned to the depot with Covid secure systems in place to include amongst other adjustments, split start/finish times and breaks.
- From the 1<sup>st</sup> April there will be two operatives dedicated to beach/seafront litter picking and cleaning each morning. Overall, the team are planning for a busy summer season.
- The removal and replacement of the seafront catenary lighting is scheduled to commence on the 19<sup>th</sup> April.
- Following a restructure of the Operations Department, recruitment will shortly commence for a Grounds and Estates Manager and also a Multi-Trade Operative.

It was requested that councillors’ best wishes be passed on to a member of the Operations Department team for a speedy recovery from recent ill-health.

## **13. Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

- a) A request was made to consider placing benches in shady locations in council parks.
- b) Swanage Landers reported they had not been litter picking in Swanage recently but had collected in other areas including over 110 bags of litter from the A351. It was reported that the waste picked up included face masks, takeaway containers, industrial waste and letters and envelopes. A Chapter 8 training course had been arranged by the Town Council on 17<sup>th</sup> May. It was reported that there is a fair amount of waste that comes out of the back of dustcarts. After the street collections it ends up being street litter that is dispersed from lorries. It was agreed this would be put on the agenda of the next

meeting of the Waste Management Working Party. The Operations Manager agreed to refer the matter to Dorset Waste Services.

Appreciation was given to the Operations Manager and team and to Frank Roberts of Swanage Landers.

**14. Date of next meeting**

Date to be confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2021.

The meeting closed at 5.45 p.m.

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