

Minutes of the **MONTHLY MEETING** of the Swanage
Town Council held via Zoom on **MONDAY, 26th APRIL 2021**
at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M.P. Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor T. Foster

Councillor A. Harris

Councillor D. Monkhouse

Councillor C. Moreton

Councillor N. Rogers – from 8.00 p.m.

Councillor G.M. Suttle

Councillor C. Tomes

Councillor W. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, nine members of the public, one representative of the Purbeck South Neighbourhood Policing Team, two representatives of the Dorset National Park Team, and two members of the local press attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised:-

- **Purbeck South Neighbourhood Policing Team** – an update was given by Acting Sgt Simon Colvin regarding actions taken in response to reports of irresponsible driving activities being undertaken in Main Beach car park. It was noted that CCTV covered the area and Dorset Police had issued warnings to those responsible.
- **Swanage Paramedic Car** – concerns reiterated regarding the potential withdrawal of funding for the paramedic car, and the adverse impact that the loss of service would have on response times to medical emergencies, and ‘on the spot’ treatment until an ambulance arrived.
 - Further concerns regarding care available for the sizeable number of holiday visitors expected in the Purbeck area this year.
 - Support again sought from the Town Council to save the service.
 - Request for an update to be given regarding the progress made with discussions held with the local MP, the CCG and SWAST.
 - A request made for a meeting to be held with SWAST as a matter of urgency to confirm that retention of the paramedic car would be one of the options on offer.

A presentation/update was then given by Mr Richard Smith and Miss Zoey Ingarfield of the Dorset National Park Team, which included details of a discussion paper titled ‘Youth Engagement, Health and Well-being: The Role of National Parks June 2020’. Latest updates and further information could be found via the following links:

[A National Park for Dorset in the 21st Century \(dorsetnationalpark.com\)](https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com)

[Youth Engagement, Health and Well-being: The Role of National Parks June 2020](#)

Thanks were given by the Chairman to Mr Smith and Miss Ingarfield for the interesting and informative presentation.

Reverend Solveig Sonet, Assistant Curate, Swanage and Studland Team Ministry, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.30 p.m.

167. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for her inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Finch.

168. **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.

Agenda Item No. 10 – Councillors Bonfield, Harris and Trite declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being Members of the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust.

169. **MINUTES**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Foster and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 15th March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

170. **TOURISM COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Roads and Transport Committee held on 23rd March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

171. **GENERAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 31st March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

7. **Capital Projects Sub-Committee**

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

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

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.

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

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.

It was reported that the VMS may be paid for by Dorset Council from central government funding, to assist with post-lockdown traffic management.

172. **PLANNING AND CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Consultation Committee held on 12th April 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

7) **Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas**

c) **Neighbourhood Planning**

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

That a presentation be given on Neighbourhood Planning by Dorset Council's Community Planning Team to the Town Council at the first full Council Meeting to be held after the Annual Council Meeting in May 2021.

173. **STATEMENT OF CASH BALANCE**

(a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st March 2021 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

174. **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 12, amounting to £750,343.06

175. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Bonfield reported that in his capacity of Town Mayor he had attended the following event during the past month:-

- **St Mary's Church, Swanage** - invited to meet with prospective candidates for the vacant Team Vicar post, which had been an enjoyable afternoon.

176. **REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS**

Updates were given on the following matters:-

- **Waste collection services** – it was reported that Dorset Council continued to receive complaints regarding bin collection services. Recent issues resulting from refuse lorry breakdowns were noted.
- **Steps down to the beach at Sheps Hollow** – it was reported that it was possible that the steps would be reopened in time for the summer season. However, a reminder was given for members of the public not to use the steps and to adhere to the advisory signage which was currently in place in the interests of safety.
- **Coronavirus Restart Grant for businesses** – it was reported that the Restart Grant was a one-off grant for business ratepayers which was available from

April 2021, to support reopening safely as Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. Applications for this grant had to be submitted by 30th June 2021.

- **Adult Social Care and Children’s Services** – the budgets for these services had been set at £124.9m and £52.8m respectively for 2021/22, however, these budgets continued to be under pressure.
- **Business Rates** – collection of Business Rates over the year had been good.
- **Council Tax recovery** – a sizeable number of residents had understandably experienced financial difficulties and collection rates were down.
- **Eastern Area Planning Committee (EAPC)** – further to Minute No. 149 of the Council Meeting held on 15th March 2021, and the ‘Q & A’ session held with Dorset Council’s Service Manager for Spatial Planning, Economic Growth and Infrastructure during Public Participation Time at the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 12th April 2021, concerns were again raised regarding the planning application approval process.
- **Draft Dorset Local Plan Public Consultation** – further to Minute No. 149 of the Council Meeting held on 15th March 2021 concerns were again raised regarding the short timescale for this consultation, which had also been held during a period of national lockdown, and the difficulties experienced by some residents which meant that they had been unable to participate. These concerns had been brought to the attention of Dorset Council.

177. **FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

(a) **Annual Council Meeting**

It was reported that the Town Council was currently awaiting the decision of the High Court as to whether local authorities, including town and parish councils, could continue to hold their meetings remotely, or whether the regulations introduced last year to enable this would come to an end on Thursday 6th May 2021. It was hoped that the Council would be able to continue with virtual meetings.

During the ensuing discussion Members felt that it was too early to make any formal plans for the Annual Council Meeting. However, if it was ruled that face to face meetings would return with effect from 7th May 2021 then alternative venues to the Town Hall would be considered for the meeting to ensure that appropriate Covid-19 measures could be put in place to keep attendees safe. Comments were made that, in the interest of fairness, consideration should also be given to the option of attendance at meetings by Zoom for those who were unable to attend in person.

It was noted that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council was proposed for 10th May 2021 when it was anticipated that the outcome of the Court case would be known.

(b) **Swanage Annual Parish Assembly**

It was reported that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the regulations regarding Parish Assemblies had been suspended and the Swanage Annual Parish Assembly had not been held in 2020.

However, recent advice had been received from the National Association of Local Councils that consideration should be given to the possibility of holding a small-scale meeting in due course. It was noted that the Swanage Town Council Community Awards 2020 had not yet been presented to the award winners and the Parish Assembly could provide the opportunity for these to be given out.

A brief discussion ensued during which it was agreed that a decision regarding this matter should be deferred to the proposed Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 10th May 2021 when the outcome of the above legal case should be known.

(c) **Draft Meetings Schedule 2021/22**

It was reported that a draft schedule of meetings for 2021/22 had been provided to enable Councillors to review the proposed meeting dates and hold an ‘in principle’ discussion prior to formal consideration of the schedule at the Annual Council Meeting being held in May 2021. It was noted that Monthly Council Meetings had again been scheduled in on a 6-weekly basis (as much as possible). This would allow staff resources to focus on committee meeting cycles and provide additional time between meetings to implement decisions.

A brief discussion ensued during which a request was made for the meetings of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee Meeting to revert back to being held on a Wednesday, and that the dates of these did not clash with Dorset Council’s Eastern Area Planning Committee Meetings. It was confirmed that the draft schedule would be amended accordingly.

Further to their declarations under Minute No. 168 Councillors Bonfield, Harris and Trite remained in the Meeting during consideration of the following item, but did not take part in any discussion or vote.

178. **TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PLANS FOR THE TREVOR CHADWICK MEMORIAL**

Further to Minute No. 271 (a) of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2020 consideration was given to a letter received from the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust dated 20th April 2021, which included copies of the proposed plans for the Trevor Chadwick Memorial, and computer-generated imagery of what the Memorial would look like once erected in the Recreation Ground if the plans were approved.

A discussion ensued during which comments were made that the Trust should be commended for the elegant design of the Memorial which was fitting for the recognition of Mr Chadwick who had been instrumental in helping save hundreds of children’s lives.

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

That the Town Council approves the plans for the Trevor Chadwick Memorial as submitted with the letter dated 20th April 2021 from the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust, and grants consent for its construction on Town Council land, subject to appropriate agreements being put in place and ongoing professional advice.

179. **TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM SWANAGE AND PURBECK (S&PDT) DEVELOPMENT TRUST TO USE FORMER ST MARK’S PLAYGROUND IN CONJUNCTION WITH YOUTH PROVISION AT HERSTON VILLAGE HALL**

Consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Town Clerk which set out the details of a request received from the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust to use the former St Mark’s playground in conjunction with youth provision at Herston Village Hall. Together with its work at The Centre in Chapel Lane, the Trust’s intention was to recruit additional youth workers, increase the number of evenings for the Youth Club, and promote the reopening to build interest and membership. The Trust had enquired whether it would be able to use the playground for informal sports activities such as basketball, football and badminton. It was noted that the Trust had offered to take on the caretaking responsibilities of the playground for a period of two years.

It was explained that the former St Mark’s School playing field, playground and access road was in the ownership of Dorset Council (DC), however, the Town Council had expressed an interest in taking on the management of these since 2014 and Heads of

Terms were agreed for a 21-year lease in February 2018. A draft lease was now in the final stages of preparation and it was anticipated that this would be completed by 30th June 2021. Dorset Council had raised no objection to the use of the playground for this purpose prior to the lease being signed and had agreed grant funding of £6,100 for the Club's activities at Herston.

An initial risk assessment of the site and its proposed use had been undertaken in conjunction with the Council's Operations Manager which had identified some remedial works which were required to the fencing, gates and boundary kerbing. It was noted that these costs would fall to the Town Council.

During the discussion Members welcomed the proposed provision of youth services in Herston, which at present were sadly lacking, and that it would be fantastic to see the town's young people enjoying the former playground once again. It was proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council confirms that it is willing to support the use of the former St Mark's School playground, off of Jubilee Road, by S&PDT as outdoor space for youth club provision at Herston Village Hall, and commits funds of up to £6,000 to undertake works to the fencing and kerbing.

Members agreed to defer the decision about a longer-term caretaking arrangement until such time as the lease had been completed.

Councillor Rogers joined the Meeting at 8.00 p.m.

180. **BEACH GARDENS – TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM SWANAGE TENNIS CLUB FOR A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION FROM SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL TOWARDS THE COST OF INSTALLING AN ARTIFICIAL SURFACE ON COURT 3**

Consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the Town Clerk which set out details of a request received from the Swanage Tennis Club in the summer of 2020 about the possibility of converting court 3 at Beach Gardens to an artificial surface, and included discussions and actions taken to date.

It was reported that in January 2021 the Town Council had approved its capital programme for the 2021/22 financial year and had set aside an allocation of £24,000 for this work, £18,000 of which would be paid by the Tennis Club and third-party funders.

In order to make progress with the project the Club were seeking a firm commitment from the Town Council to make a £6,000 contribution towards the capital costs. The possibility of making the payment from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) reserve had been raised, and a response was awaited from Dorset Council as to whether or not this was an acceptable use of such funds.

If the Council confirmed its capital funding commitment, the next step would be to appoint a specialist adviser to prepare the specification, carry out the tender process, and oversee the contract. The current estimated cost for this work was £5,000, although additional quotes were being sought. In total this would therefore mean that the Council's contribution towards the project would be £11,000.

During the discussion support was mooted for the project and comments made that the Tennis Club was an active club with a wide membership across the local community. The Council's commitment to encouraging participation in sport to boost residents' health and wellbeing was also remarked upon. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council confirms its commitment to install an artificial surface on tennis court 3 at Beach Gardens and contribute up to £6,000 towards the capital costs.

It was FURTHER AGREED:

To appoint a specialist adviser to prepare the specification, carry out the tender process and oversee the contract, at a cost of up to £5,000.

181. **NHS, SOCIAL CARE AND FRONTLINE WORKERS' DAY 5TH JULY 2021**

Consideration was given to an email received from Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, Pageantmaster dated March 2021 regarding the NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day event which was being held on 5th July 2021.

Civic leaders, chairmen and leaders of councils large and small, throughout the UK, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, were being encouraged to register for the event and lead their local communities in remembrance and tribute to those within the NHS, Social Care and key workers, along with members of the public who had sadly lost their lives due to the current Coronavirus pandemic. The event also provided an opportunity to celebrate all frontline workers.

It was planned that flags would be raised at 10.00 a.m., a two-minute silence would be held at 11.00 a.m., and at 1.00 p.m. there would be a 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of the NHS, Social Care and those that work on the Frontline'.

It was explained that this action of grateful thanks had never been undertaken before and it was proposed that this would become an annual event on the 5th of July which was the NHS's 'Birthday'.

During the ensuing discussion Members expressed their unanimous support of taking part in the event as a Council, and it was therefore proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council takes part in the NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day event on 5th July 2021 and confirms its involvement on the registration page of the event's website.

182. **SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY AWARDS 2020-21 – UPDATE**

As detailed in Minute Nos. 177 (a) and (b) above, due to the Covid-19 pandemic it had not been possible to hold the Annual Parish Assembly in 2020 at which the Swanage Town Council Community Awards would have been presented to the 2020 award winners. As it was now possible that face-to-face meetings could be commencing once again in the near future, a question was raised as to whether the awards ceremony could now go ahead.

During the ensuing discussion Members were in agreement that the awards should be presented in person, and that if arrangements did not change and the Annual Meeting was held online then the presentation ceremony should be deferred until this could be done.

A request was then made for the Council to consider an additional 'Special Award' which was proposed to recognise the hard work and dedication to the local community which had been tirelessly undertaken over the past year by a number of services. A budget of up to £200 was requested to cover the costs of the award and engraving.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Swanage Town Council Community Awards 2020 be presented to award winners prior to commencement of the Annual Council Meeting being held in May 2021 providing that the meeting can be held face-to-face.

It was further proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Suttle and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a budget of up to a maximum of £200 be
authorised towards the cost of an additional ‘Special
Award’.

183. **TO NOTE REPORT ON RE-OPENING SWANAGE AFTER LOCKDOWN**

Further to Minute 161 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 15th March 2021 a report had been prepared by the Visitor Services Manager regarding the re-opening of Council services post-lockdown, which had been provided for information purposes. It was anticipated that the town would experience large visitor numbers this summer and three Seafront Advisors had been recruited early in April 2021 to ensure that the town was ready to meet this demand.

Beach Gardens had re-opened for putting, tennis and the kiosk from 2nd April, and the Swanage Information Centre and the beach huts had re-opened from 12th April.

It was noted that officers were working with Dorset Council regarding the possibility of funding for increased beach patrols using the Town Council’s Seafront Advisors, and also up to four ‘Volunteer Ambassadors’ to act as welcome hosts in the town during the summer, although these discussions were still in early stages.

Councillors noted the details of the report and had no further comments to make at this time.

184. **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

(a) **Swanage Regatta and Carnival Committee** – Councillor Tomes reported that, due to the uncertainty surrounding future Covid-19 measures and social distancing requirements for the staging of large-scale events, the decision had sadly been made to cancel the Swanage Regatta and Carnival planned for 2021. However, it was anticipated that the event would return in 2022.

(b) **Sustainable Swanage Group** – Councillor Harris reported that the Group’s online Open Meetings continued to be held on a regular basis, and that the next one would take place on Tuesday 27th April 2021. Details of the meetings could be found on the Group’s website and Facebook page. Projects were being progressed, including The Downs Local Nature Reserve, other areas as identified in the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy, and a new proposal to create a ‘green corridor’ in the town.

185. **REPORTING OF DELEGATED MATTERS**

There were no delegated matters to report at the present time.

186. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

(a) **Removal of Paramedic Car from Swanage – Update** – further to Minute Nos. 152 and 161 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 15th March 2021, and concerns again raised during Public Participation Time, it was reported that a request had been sent to the CCG and South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST) for a meeting to discuss funding, breakdown of costs of the service, and to find out whether retention of the car was an option being put forward.

Details of a letter received from Richard Drax MP were also discussed and it was agreed that the Council should continue to lobby Mr Drax regarding its concerns about the possible removal of the car. Councillor Suttle as Dorset Councillor advised that he would request an urgent meeting with Mr Drax.

Councillors were in agreement that the Council needed to work with the CCG

and SWAST to find a solution to save the car and improve the ambulance service in the area.

Thanks and appreciation were again expressed to Councillor Monkhouse for the continued work/research undertaken regarding this matter.

- (b) **A & E Local – Update** - further to Minute No. 161 (d) of the Council Meeting held on 15th March 2021 there was no further update to give at this time.
- (c) **Wellbeing Swanage – Update** – further to Minute No. 161 (e) of the Council Meeting held on 15th March 2021 it was reported that the group continued to work on formalising the structure of the project and that it was now ‘gathering pace’.
- (d) **Parish Slipway – restriction of launching** – it was reported that concerns had been raised regarding vehicles using the slipway and, in the interests of health and safety, a trial was being undertaken to restrict vehicular access by leaving a concrete block that had formed part of the seasonal sea defences in place at the top of the slipway. Access would still be possible for dinghies, canoes and smaller vessels.
- (e) **Dorset Police Operating Model – Letter to Stakeholders March 2021** – a letter had been received dated 24th March 2021 advising that, after a review encompassing wide internal and external consultation, Dorset Police had taken the opportunity to revise its operational structure. The model would be built around the creation of two Local Police Areas which were coterminous with Dorset Council and BCP Council boundaries. The changes to the structure would be launched during April 2021 and further information and engagement would be forthcoming. Councillors noted the contents of the letter accordingly.
- (f) **Dorset National Park** – a request was made for this matter to be placed on a future Council Meeting agenda.
- (g) **National Association of Local Councils (NALC)** – it was reported that NALC would be hosting the first Coastal Communities Meeting on 27th April 2021 and an invitation to the meeting was extended to all Councillors.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Rogers 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 item 19 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

187. **RENTS AND LICENCES PANEL – TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION REGARDING NEXT STEPS FOLLOWING SERVICE OF OBJECTION TO SECTION 26 NOTICE**

Further to Minute No. 166 of the Council Meeting held on 15th March 2021, consideration was given to a briefing note which set out actions taken in this matter to date, and a recommendation from the Rents and Licences Panel.

Following careful deliberation, it was proposed by Councillor Monkhouse, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To accept the recommendation of the Rents and Licences Panel to present the lessee with draft terms of an agreement on a without prejudice basis and grant delegated authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Rents and Licences Panel, to progress the matter.

The meeting concluded at 8.45 p.m.
