

Minutes of the **EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of the
Swanage Town Council held via Zoom on **MONDAY,**
29th JUNE 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M.P. Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor C. Finch
Councillor T. Foster
Councillor A. Harris
Councillor D. Monkhouse
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor J. Page
Councillor G. Suttle
Councillor C. Tomes
Councillor W. Trite
Councillor M. Whitwam

Four members of the public attended the Meeting.

Reverend Andrew Corke, Team Vicar, Swanage & Studland Team Ministry, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

It was reported that Reverend Corke would shortly be retiring. Thanks were given to Reverend Corke for his attendance at Council Meetings, and best wishes were extended for a long and happy retirement.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- **Concerns regarding single-use barbecues** – a request had been received from a local resident for consideration to be given to prohibiting the use of disposable barbecues on beaches, heathland and in forests and woods, and attention was drawn to the recent extensive fires in Wareham Forest. It was reported that Dorset Council would be seeking agreement to look at ways to prohibit or control the use of disposable barbecues. Please visit the following link for further information: [Agreement sought to look at ways to prohibit disposable barbecues](#)
- **Removal of Ambulance Car from Swanage** – concerns regarding the funding review/potential withdrawal of the ambulance car, and the adverse impact this could have on response times to medical emergencies, and ‘on the spot’ treatment until an ambulance arrived. A question was raised as to whether South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust had performed a risk assessment regarding such impacts. Attention was also drawn to details of an online petition which currently had 3,457 signatures.

The Town Mayor then welcomed representatives from the Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company to the Meeting, Mr Michael Kean, Managing Director, and Ms Emma Coakley, Public Relations Adviser.

Councillors welcomed the opportunity to undertake a ‘Q&A’ session with Mr Kean and Ms Coakley. Concerns were raised regarding the size of the proposed toll Increases, particularly in view of the current low inflation rates, and the impact these could have on local residents, and a question was posed as to the timescale for a replacement ferry and how it would be funded.

Mr Kean gave an overview of the Ferry Company's toll increase application, the economic impact of the proposals, and on actions and public engagement undertaken to date by the Company, which included discussions with the local Community Liaison Group.

It was noted that the ferry refit works had been undertaken ahead of schedule whilst the ferry service had been suspended earlier in the year, therefore the next scheduled refit would now take place in November 2022.

The Chairman gave thanks to Mr Kean and Ms Coakley for attending the Meeting, for answering Councillors' questions, and for the information provided.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.35 p.m.

261. **APOLOGIES**

(a) **To consider request from Cllr Rogers for leave of absence for a period of 6 months**

Consideration was given to an email received from Cllr Rogers dated 4th June 2020 requesting a leave of absence for six months due to family sickness.

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

That the Town Council authorises the request from
Councillor Rogers for a leave of absence for a period
of six months with effect from 29th June 2020.

It was noted that Councillor Rogers' apologies would be reported to all meetings during this period, although she remained able to attend if she felt able to do so.

262. **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 Nos. 11 (a) & 13 – Councillors Bonfield, Finch, Harris and Trite declared non-pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct by reason of being members of the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust.

Agenda Item No. 11 (b) – Councillor Harris declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a member of the Sustainable Swanage Group.

There were no other declarations to record on this occasion.

263. **MINUTES**

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

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the
Council held on 20th March 2020 be approved as a
correct record and signed.

(b) Proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Trite and RESOLVED
UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the
Council held on 3rd June 2020 be approved as a
correct record and signed.

264. **PLANNING AND CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**

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

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning and Consultation Committee held on 2nd March 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

265. **STATEMENT OF CASH BALANCE**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st March 2020 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).
- (b) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 30th April 2020 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).
- (c) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st May 2020 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

266. **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

In accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Council's Financial Regulations, the following Payment Schedules were submitted for information:

- Payment Schedule 13 a), amounting to £659,548.44
- Payment Schedule 13 b) & 1, amounting to £175,124.54
- Payment Schedule 2, amounting to £122,026.97

267. **UPDATE ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES**

Consideration was given to a briefing note dated June 2020 prepared by the Town Clerk which provided an overview of current expectations regarding the impact of the pandemic on the Council's most significant income streams and its overall financial position.

Attention was drawn to a table which summarised the impact of the pandemic and lockdown on the Council's five largest sources of income, namely the precept, car parking, property rental, investment income and beach hut rents. Potential loss of income was projected at £459,125. However, it was reported that this was an ever-changing picture and a more detailed summary would be presented to the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee in July 2020. That Committee would also keep the situation under regular review.

A discussion ensued during which it was confirmed that the Council would be seeking to clawback some of the lost income by making savings where possible. Questions were raised regarding payment of the precept, and about the possibility of increasing car parking charges. It was noted that Dorset Council was legally obliged to pay the precept to the Town Council, and that car parking charges would be increasing from 1st July 2020 as per the Council's agreed Scale of Charges for 2020/21.

Councillors noted the content of the briefing note accordingly.

268. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Bonfield reported that in his capacity of Town Mayor he had attended the following events since the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 20th March 2020:-

- The re-opening of Institute Road following completion of the town centre enhancement works, along with Councillors Suttle and Trite. Thanks and appreciation were extended to Dorset Council, Dorset Highways, and the team that worked so hard to complete the scheme within a couple of weeks of the originally planned completion date, and in time for the reopening of the town's shops and businesses on 19th June 2020.
- An interview with the BBC regarding the Swanage Railway.
- An interview with the BBC regarding the Trevor Chadwick Memorial plans.

- Regular virtual meetings with representatives from Weymouth and Lyme Regis Town Councils, along with the Town Clerk and Visitor Services Manager.

269. **REPORT FROM DORSET COUNCILLORS**

It was reported that Dorset Council continued to be preoccupied with the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic situation, and in particular with sizeable visitor numbers, and visitors' poor behaviour, in other areas of the county.

Updates were given on a number of matters including:-

- **Dorset Council's support for homeless people** – details were provided regarding how the Council had been accommodating rough sleepers and homeless people in hotels in Weymouth during the pandemic, and its plans for helping them move into alternative, more settled accommodation. It was noted that up to nine people may be temporarily housed at the Swanage Youth Hostel.
- **Kings Road East reversal - Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO)** – a number of concerns had been received regarding the six-month 'live' public consultation on the ETRO, which would come to an end on 7th August 2020. All representations received by the Council regarding the trial would be carefully considered prior to any decision being made as to the longer term, and the Council would also be seeking the Town Council's views on the trial. A question was raised as to why the reversal had continued after Institute Road had reopened on 19th June 2020, and it was explained that Councillors had received numerous requests over the years from residents in the south of the town for an alternative/second route to the south to be considered, so that not all traffic had to go down Station Road and Institute Road. If the trial was not successful then traffic flow would be reversed back again.

It was noted that people could register their support or objection to the ETRO by completing an online form:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/roads-highways-maintenance/traffic-management/traffic-regulation-orders/review-and-comment-on-a-traffic-regulation-order.aspx>

270. **REVIEW OF DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS AGREED AT THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 20th MARCH 2020**

Further to Minute No. 239 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 20th March 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note dated June 2020 prepared by the Town Clerk. It was reported that The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 had enabled the Council to delay the annual meeting which was now unlikely to take place in the autumn. Therefore, there was a requirement to review the current delegation arrangements.

It was noted that the Council was now able to hold meetings remotely, and that the majority of Council services were now in an advanced stage of reopening. It therefore seemed an appropriate time to reduce the scope of the Town Clerk's delegated powers.

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

That the delegation arrangements agreed by the Town Council on 20th March 2020 be brought to an end, except as required to enable the Town Clerk to manage the reopening of services and facilities, together with

the Council's response to any future local outbreak of Covid-19.

Further to their declarations of interest under Minute No. 262 Councillors Bonfield, Finch, Harris and Trite remained in the meeting during discussion of the following item, and took part in discussions but did not take part in any decision or vote.

271. **STEERING GROUP UPDATES**

- (a) **Trevor Chadwick Commemoration – Request for approval for site of statue**
Further to Minute No. 241 (a) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 20th March 2020 an update on actions undertaken to date had been received by email on 19th June 2020 from the Chair of the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust. It was reported that the Trust had been accepted as a member of the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust which would now enable it to obtain charitable status relatively quickly. The email also included a request for the proposed statue to be sited in the Recreation Ground, to the west of the children's play area. It was felt that this would be the most advantageous site as it was level, easily visible, and that children playing was an important aspect of the commemoration. The area would also be landscaped if donations permitted. Thanks were given to the Town Council for its encouragement and support with the project.

During the ensuing debate, the request received considerable support, although concerns were raised regarding the risk of vandalism in this location.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes and seconded by Councillor Moreton:-

That the Town Council gives permission for the Trevor Chadwick Memorial statue to be sited in the Recreation Ground as set out in the email dated 19th June 2020.

Upon being put to the Meeting, SIX Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and ONE Member voted AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

Further to her declaration of interest under Minute No. 262 Councillor Harris remained in the meeting during discussion of the following item, but did not take part in any discussion, decision or vote.

- (b) **Sustainable Swanage**

Mrs Sarah Spurling, Sustainable Swanage Officer, was welcomed to the meeting. Further to Minute No. 193 (f) of the Council Meeting held on 27th January 2020 it was reported that Mrs Spurling had taken up this new post with effect from 1st April 2020 (for two days per week) and, since that time, had been focussing on developing a range of projects and undertaking community engagement regarding these.

Consideration was then given to a briefing note dated June 2020 prepared by the Visitor Services Manager providing updates on actions undertaken by Sustainable Swanage to date, and setting out the following proposals and recommendations which were discussed in turn:-

1. **Sustainable Swanage Update**

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

That the update on actions undertaken by Sustainable Swanage as set out in the VSM's briefing note dated June 2020 be noted by the Town Council.

2. The Downs Nature Reserve

Consideration was given to a proposal for The Downs to be declared a Local Nature Reserve, which included a four-step process which would be initiated by Sustainable Swanage. This included the development of a Management Plan by Council officers, with the support of Sustainable Swanage.

It was proposed by Councillor Foster and seconded by Councillor Trite:-

That agreement be given for Sustainable Swanage to commence the four-step process for the declaration of The Downs as a Local Nature Reserve, as set out in the VSM's briefing note dated June 2020.

Upon being put to the Meeting, NINE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

3. Rabling Road/Prospect Crescent Green Space

Consideration was given to a request for approval in principle for the development of a 'pocket park' on the green space between Rabling Road and Prospect Crescent. It was noted that the potential for this was included in the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy. It was acknowledged that this was currently an under-used area and could be developed into a resource for the community to enjoy.

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

That approval in principle be given to the development of the Rabling Road/Prospect Crescent green space into a 'pocket park', as set out in the VSM's briefing note dated June 2020, and that Sustainable Swanage be requested to work up a detailed proposal outlining the design, cost and a programme of community engagement for further consideration at a future Council Meeting.

4. That Council identifies any further sites for pocket parks and community orchards that may be worthy of consideration

A request was made for the Town Council to submit any further suggestions for pocket parks to the VSM and the Sustainable Swanage Officer for further consideration.

272. WORKING PARTY UPDATES

(a) Town Centre Recovery Plan

It was reported that the impact on Swanage of the Covid-19 pandemic had been significant, both from a health and economic perspective. The town's economy was highly dependent on visitors and it had seen a total collapse of this sector during the crisis. Three meetings of the working party had recently taken place, including outside representatives from local businesses and visitor attractions, to discuss the development of a draft 'recovery plan' for the town now that retail outlets had reopened and the town would be able to carefully welcome visitors once again. In addition, the government was keen to see the tourism industry restart from early July.

Consideration was given to a briefing note dated June 2020 prepared by the VSM. It was explained that the purpose of the document was to explore possible ideas and solutions to enhance the economic viability of the town as it entered the recovery phase of the crisis. A draft action plan had been prepared and covered four areas: promotional activity, businesses, physical items, and beach and other Town Council sites. Attention was drawn to Point A. 2. and the proposed promotion of the 'Green Seafront'.

During the ensuing discussion Members were in support of the proposals and noted the draft Town Centre Recovery Plan and Action Plan accordingly. Further updates would be forthcoming as the draft plan progressed.

Following the discussion a query was raised regarding pavement stencils which had been installed around the town, some of which had already become worn. The VSM would undertake a review of the stencils accordingly.

(b) **Affordable Housing – Membership of National Community Land Trust Network**

Further to Minute No. 218 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 24th February 2020, and discussions held at the working party meeting held on 17th February 2020, it was reported that information had now been received from Fiona Astin, Housing Adviser, regarding CLT Network membership. There were three membership levels available. The Start-Up Membership cost £75 and would provide access to two free legal advice lines, and a lawyer who offered legal incorporation and advice packages for set rates.

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

That the Town Council becomes a member of the CLT Network, purchasing the ‘Start-Up’ membership package at a cost of £75.

It was noted that the next meeting of the working party would be held on 1st July 2020.

Further to their declarations of interest under Minute No. 262 Councillors Bonfield, Finch, Harris and Trite remained in the meeting during discussion of the following item, but did not take part in any vote.

273. **TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS OF GRANTS PANEL**

Consideration was given to a briefing note dated June 2020 prepared by the Administration and Communications Manager setting out the recommendations made by the Grants Panel following its meeting on 24th June 2020, which had been held to consider and review in detail grant applications which had been received so far for the 2020/21 financial year. An annual budget of £10,000 had been allocated to the grants and donations budget for 2020/21.

It was reported that a total of £6,900 had been requested, and it was proposed that £2,900 be awarded. It was noted that a number of events had been postponed since the applications had been submitted, and a recommendation had not been able to be made on the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust application due to the involvement of Members of the Grants Panel in this project.

The recommendations were then discussed in turn as follows:-

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

That the sum of £500 be awarded to the 2185 (Wareham & Swanage) Air Training Corps as set out in the table below.

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

That the sum of up to £400 be awarded to the KG5K as set out in the table below.

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

That the sum of £1,000 be awarded to Link Visiting, as set out in the table below.

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

That the sum of £500 be awarded to both the Purbeck Art Weeks Festival and the Purbeck International Chamber Music Festival, as set out in the table below.

Further to their declarations of interest under Minute No. 262 Councillors Bonfield, Finch, Harris and Trite remained in the meeting during discussion of the following item, but did not take part in any vote.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes and seconded by Councillor Moreton:-
That the sum of £1,200 be awarded to the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust to cover the cost of materials to enable a sculptor's maquette to be made.

Upon being put to the Meeting, FIVE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

Councillor Page's internet connection dropped out whilst this vote was taken.

Applicant	Recommended grant	Summary of project	Reason for support
2185 (Wareham & Swanage) Air Training Corps	£500	Registered Charity. Wide range of activities provided to young people aged 12-20. To promote/encourage a practical interest in aviation & the RAF, provide training, foster a spirit of adventure, and develop the qualities of leadership & good citizenship, life skills & capability to face the challenges of modern-day life.	The existing cadet hut in Court Road is 100+ years old and in urgent need of maintenance and repair, including a new fire exit. The Panel is keen for STC to support facilities for the town's young people and recommends that the sum of £500 be approved towards the hut's repair costs. The Panel wishes it to be noted that the Cadets provide invaluable assistance at various events, including car park duties on Carnival Day, and on Remembrance Sunday.
KG5K (King George's monthly event - walk, jog or run of up to 5K)	Up to £400	A free monthly event to promote health and wellbeing & encourage people of all abilities to	Event is volunteer run with no other costs apart from the PLI. The Panel recommends covering the cost of the

		exercise. Funds required towards the cost of the annual Public Liability Insurance. Event commenced in Sept 2019 and the existing PLI expires in Aug 2020.	PLI this year, up to a maximum of £400, subject to confirmation of the actual cost of policy renewal, and confirmation of the intended date that the event will recommence.
Link Visiting Swanage	£1,000	Registered Charity. 'Community franchise' of Linking Lives UK & a project of S&PDT. Provision of a befriending service in-home to ease loneliness & isolation, having a beneficial effect on mental & physical health. Referrals made by social services, local medical practice & members of the public. Drop-in sessions also held 2 mornings p.w.	Voluntary service offering free help and support to those in need. Also contributes to the local community's health and wellbeing. Founder/Chairman Mr Alan Dominy will be stepping down in due course. The Charity will require greater resource to develop its services further in the future and hopes to be able to appoint a part-time executive officer, the cost of which is estimated at £1,872 p.a. The Panel recommends approval, to safeguard the service in the future.
Purbeck Art Weeks Festival	£500	Registered Charity Purbeck Young Artists Scheme. To assist with the costs of providing art workshops to local schools (drawing, painting, clay & metal working, print & design). To better inform, educate, encourage & inspire young people to be creative.	Offered to all schools in Swanage. Each workshop costs £350 per school, plus the cost of materials and mounting of the exhibition, estimated at a further £100. The schools are not charged for these workshops. Recommended for approval, subject to confirmation being received that the workshops will recommence during the school year 2020/21.
Purbeck Film Festival	£-	Registered Charity. Established annual event across 30 venues in Purbeck. Wide range of film screenings. To promote local interest in films for	Event postponed, new dates yet to be announced. The Panel recommends that the Festival organisers reapply next year.

		entertainment & education, & bring cinema to rural areas.	
Purbeck International Chamber Music Festival	£500	Registered Charity. Established annual event across various venues in Purbeck. Two concerts planned in Swanage (Durlston Castle 3 rd & 5 th Sept). Live musical performances and music related lectures.	Festival days reduced this year, two concerts being held in Swanage. The Panel recommends policy maximum grant of £500, subject to confirmation being received that the events will be going ahead in September 2020.
Swanage Fish Festival	£-	Established annual event attracting 5,000+ visitors to the town to enjoy all things 'fishy', music, & family entertainment. To assist with the costs of event first aid cover, portable toilet hire, & waste collection services.	Event postponed to June 2021. The Panel recommends that the Festival organisers reapply next year.
Swanage Regatta & Carnival Association	£-	Registered Charity. Established annual event. Variety of organised free & paid for events & entertainment for residents and visitors (estimated at 100,000 people over the course of Carnival week). Surplus proceeds distributed to local charities & good causes.	Event postponed to July/August 2021. The Panel recommends that the Carnival organisers reapply next year.
Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust	£-	A project of S&PDT. Towards the costs of commissioning a bronze statue to commemorate & raise awareness of a local resident whose outstanding bravery ahead of WWII helped save	Funding required to cover the cost of materials to enable a sculptor's maquette to be made. Due to the involvement of Members of the Grants Panel in this project, and lack of information provided at

		the lives of 669 refugee children destined for concentration camps. Total cost estimated at £80,000, project completion date summer 2022.	this time, a recommendation could not be made on this application.
Total	£2,900		

Following these discussions, attention was drawn to the Council's Grants and Donations Policy which had been amended in December 2018. This stated that, in order to ensure a wide distribution of funds, grants would usually be awarded for sums of less than £500, and were also available to organisers establishing new festivals and events. The Panel felt that it would be prudent to review the policy at a future meeting in view of the number of regular funding requests the Council received each year.

274. **CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR ERECTION OF ALBERT MEMORIAL AND MINIATURE GLOBE ON PRINCE ALBERT GARDENS**

Further to Minute No. 92 of the Council Meeting held on 16th September 2020 consideration was given to a briefing note dated June 2020 prepared by the Town Clerk setting out the proposals for the erection of the Albert Memorial on Prince Albert Gardens. It was reported that the proposal for the miniature globe to be reconstructed in the 'garden of reflection' had now been withdrawn due to concerns having been raised by Dorset Council's planning department.

Although planning permission had yet to be granted, final approval was being sought from the Town Council by the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust at this stage in order to avoid any delays in the construction of the Memorial, which it is anticipated would commence in November 2020.

The Council's Operations Manager had been consulted and had approved the proposal from a practical perspective, subject to some minor amendments being agreed for the garden layout. The Council would also be consulted in respect of the planting schedule for the garden, and the benches.

Once the Memorial works had been completed it would be gifted to the Council, which would then take on the ongoing repair and maintenance liability. A legal agreement may therefore need to be drawn up to facilitate the construction works, and a specialist adviser appointed to approve the specification.

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

That approval be given to the erection of the Albert Memorial on Prince Albert Gardens as set out in the briefing note dated June 2020:

- To confirm approval for the erection of the Albert Memorial on Prince Albert Gardens, together with the laying out of a garden of reflection, the work to commence following the grant of planning permission.
- To delegate to the Capital Projects Sub-Committee agreement of the specification of the garden layout and the Council's future maintenance obligations.
- To instruct the Town Clerk to agree a suitable legal agreement with Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust to take control of the site for the duration of the construction process.

- To appoint a specialist advisor to agree the specification prior to construction and sign-off the work upon completion, prior to the Memorial and gardens being handed over to the Town Council.

275. **TO AGREE PROCESS FOR FORMULATING A POLICY ON RENTALS AND LICENCE FEES IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Consideration was given to a briefing note dated June 2020 prepared by the Town Clerk. It was reported that the Council had received communication from a number of its commercial tenants and licensees seeking guidance from the Council regarding its policy in respect of rental and licence fee payments, given the extreme impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The difficult financial situation that businesses have been facing have been acknowledged and assurances given that the Council will seek to work with tenants and licensees to identify a way forward which was fair to both parties.

It was therefore recommended that Council appoints a panel to review requests received to date, to consider the stance of other councils, and to work with officers to devise a draft policy to be considered by the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee.

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

That a panel be appointed consisting of Councillors Finch, Foster, Harris, Monkhouse and Suttle, to work with officers to devise a policy in respect of licence fees, rentals and other commercial income, to be considered by the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee prior to agreement by full Council at a future Council Meeting.

276. **CONSIDERATION OF REPORT FROM VISITOR SERVICES MANAGER (VSM) REGARDING PROPOSALS FOR SUMMER 2020**

Consideration was given to a briefing note dated June 2020 prepared by the VSM setting out proposals for tourism operations for the forthcoming summer season. An update was provided regarding existing services, and it was noted that the Information Centre and the beach huts would be reopening to the public on 4th July. Visitor numbers were increasing and the VSM was therefore keen to have appropriate staffing levels in place to cope with the increase in demand and provide a high level of customer service and support. It was further intended to reopen Beach Gardens with effect from 11th July as there had been a growing demand for these facilities.

It was noted that an original budget allocation for the financial year 2020/21 had been approved for three seasonal staff members to allow 7-day opening at the Information Centre. However, it was reported that this provided a basic service only and did not provide cover for staff annual leave or sickness.

During the ensuing discussion comments were made that it would be important to have a full complement of staff from 4th July, and for the summer season, and it was noted that local accommodation providers had advised that many enquiries were being received. Further comments were made that the Council's green spaces and beach would need to be managed closely and advice and information provided to visitors accordingly.

The following recommendations contained in the briefing note were therefore considered in turn:

1. **Raising of the Blue Flag**

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

That the Town Council authorises the raising of the Blue Flag with effect from 4th July 2020.

2. **Small scale events for summer 2020**

It was AGREED:

That determination of requests for small-scale events to be held on Town-Council owned land during July and August 2020 be delegated to the Visitor Services Manager, in consultation with the Events Working Party, subject to adherence to government guidance for public events, and submission of the required documentation at the appropriate time.

3. **Recruitment of two staff members for Beach Gardens**

4. **Recruitment of two additional seasonal staff members on flexible hours for the Swanage Information Centre at a cost of approximately £7,000**

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

That the Town Council authorises the recruitment of two staff members for Beach Gardens and two additional seasonal staff members for the Swanage Information Centre, as set out in the VSM's briefing note dated June 2020.

It was noted that plans were now underway regarding the reopening of the Town Hall offices: a 'return to work' Risk Assessment had been completed, a new Perspex screen had been ordered for the reception area, and it was anticipated that some services would return during July 2020.

Further to Minute No. 167 of the Council Meeting held on 28th January 2019, it was further noted that Dorset Police had now put 'on hold' plans for the improvement works to the joint Town Council/Police reception area.

277. **TO APPROVE A CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2020/21 AND 2021/22**

Schedules of meetings for the years 2020/21 and 2021/22 were submitted for consideration. Attention was drawn to the following points:-

- Meeting calendars had been provided covering a 2-year period.
- Monthly Council Meetings had 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.
- The Annual Council Meeting (Election of Mayor) would be held on 14th September 2020 and it was anticipated that this would be held at the Swanage Bandstand. This meeting would also include the presentation of the Swanage Town Council Community Awards.

During the ensuing discussion support was voiced for approving meetings for a two-year period, which would assist councillors and officers alike when arranging future diary commitments. However, concerns were raised about the reduction in the number of Council Meetings (three over the next twelve months), and whether this should be implemented on a trial basis only and then reviewed. It was confirmed that interim extraordinary meetings could be called if necessary.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes and seconded by Councillor Foster:-

That the schedule of meetings for 2020/21 only be approved on a trial basis, for one year only, the outcome of which to be reviewed at a future Council Meeting.

Upon being put to the Meeting, TEN Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

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

- (a) **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership** – Councillor Trite was pleased to report that the PCRП was the first Community Rail Partnership wholly on the South Western Railway network to achieve the Department for Transport's coveted accreditation status.
It was anticipated that the Swanage to Wareham trial service would return in 2021.

279. **REPORTING OF DELEGATED MATTERS**

Further to Minute No. 270 above, a copy of the Town Clerk's 'Delegated Decision Log' dated from 20th March 2020 to 22nd June 2020 was circulated for information purposes. A copy of the log would also be attached at the end of these minutes as a formal record of delegated decisions made during this period.

The Town Council wished to record its sincere thanks to the Town Clerk, officers and all Town Council staff for all their hard work during these unprecedented times.

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

- (a) **Removal of Ambulance Car from Swanage – Update** – further to Minute No. 247 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 20th March 2020 it was reported that no additional information had been received. It was agreed that confirmation should therefore be sought from the South Western Ambulance Service Foundation Trust and the Dorset NHS CCG that the Town Council would be consulted prior to any decision being made regarding the potential withdrawal of the ambulance car service.
- (b) **Institute Road improvements – Update** – as noted in the update given under Minute No. 268 above, Institute Road had successfully reopened on 19th June 2020, and the public consultation on the Kings Road East ETRO would be open until 7th August 2020.
- (c) **A & E Local – Update** – further to Minute No. 248 (c) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 20th March 2020 it was reported that no further update had been received. A request was therefore made for contact to be made with Dorset Council's Health Scrutiny Committee accordingly.
- (d) **Sandbanks Ferry Application for Toll Increase – Update** – further to Minute No. 250 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 20th March 2020, and discussions held during Public Participation Time, it was formally noted that the Town Council had submitted a letter of objection to the Ferry Company's toll application to the Department for Transport dated 23rd April 2020. The Company had subsequently responded to the Town Council, and the Town Mayor, the Chairman of the Roads and Transport Committee, and the Town Clerk had met with representatives from the Ferry Company via Zoom on 26th June 2020 to discuss the Company's request for the Council to withdraw its call for a public inquiry to be held. An overview of discussions held at the meeting was provided, which would also be discussed and considered further under Agenda Item 21 (see Minute No. 281 below).

It was noted that the DfT had confirmed to the Town Council that it was still in the process of reviewing all information relating to the application and had not yet reached a decision regarding the holding of a public inquiry. Consequently, there was no rush for the Town Council to review its request.

A question was raised as to whether costs could be awarded against the Council if it acted as an objector and a public inquiry approved the toll application. The DfT had explained that although an inspector could award costs in favour of the Ferry Company, the Council could withdraw its objection to the application at any stage prior to the opening of a public inquiry.

- (e) **Mercers' Company** – it was reported that the Mercers' Company had been in contact with the Operations Manager and had offered to carry out a building survey on the Town Hall facade, at no cost to the Council. The survey would highlight whether any conservation work would be required on the building, and a report would follow in due course.
- (f) **Dorset Waste Partnership - waste collection services in Swanage** – it was reported that the Operations Manager had arranged to meet with representatives from DWP on 15th July 2020 to discuss current and future street cleansing arrangements. It was reported that a 'litter crusher' would be acquired on a trial basis to assist in increasing bin capacity. Members raised concerns regarding the significant amount of increased waste seen recently around the town, and in the sea.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Finch, 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 items 21 to 24 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

281. **SANDBANKS FERRY – CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM BOURNEMOUTH-SWANAGE MOTOR ROAD AND FERRY COMPANY DATED 11th MAY 2020**

Further to Minute No. 280 (d) above, consideration was given to a letter received from the Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company dated 11th May 2020, which had been received in response to the Town Council's letter of objection to the Department for Transport regarding the Ferry Company's application for an Order to increase the tolls for the use of the Sandbanks to Shell Bay ferry. The letter set out the Company's response to the Council's concerns, and it included a request for the Council to reconsider its objection to the application and withdraw its call for a public inquiry to be held.

The Town Clerk reported on potential next steps and relevant legal considerations. A discussion ensued during which concerns were again raised regarding the size of the proposed toll increases and the impact these could have on local residents, and Members were in agreement that further information would be required before they could make a decision on this matter.

During the debate Councillor Finch wished it to be noted that she had previously engaged with the Ferry Company through the Community Liaison Group as a representative of Swanage & District Chamber of Trade, not as a town councillor.

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

That the Town Council defers its decision on how to respond to the letter from the Ferry Company, dated 11th May 2020, pending further information being obtained from Dorset Council and the Department for Transport.

282. **POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF LAND ADJACENT TO PURBECK BUSINESS CENTRE – TO CONSIDER NEXT STEPS**

Further to Minute No. 207 of the Council Meeting held on 27th January 2020 it was reported that informal discussions had taken place with Dorset Council regarding the potential acquisition of land adjoining Purbeck Business Centre, during which representatives from Dorset Council had expressed an initial interest in pursuing this in partnership with the Town Council.

It was noted that before any acquisition took place a risk assessment would need to be completed regarding ground conditions at the site, along with a more substantial business case.

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

That the Town Council agrees to enter into formal discussions with Dorset Council regarding potential joint acquisition of the site adjacent to the Purbeck Business Centre, subject to approval of a business case and assessment of the risks related to the ground conditions.

283. **FISHERMEN’S JETTY IMPROVEMENT WORKS – TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM END OF DEFECTS PERIOD MEETING HELD ON 15th MAY 2020**

Further to Minute No. 56 of the Council Meeting held on 24th June 2019, and Minute No. 4 a) of the Capital Projects Sub-committee Meeting held on 3rd June 2020, an overview was provided regarding discussions held further to the end of defects period site inspection held on 15th May 2020. This had been attended by representatives of the Town Council, Dorset Property, the structural engineers (Smith Foster) and the contractors (TMS).

Significant problems had been identified with the fenders fixed to the side of the new fishermen’s jetty at Swanage Boat Park, and it was noted that the matter needed to be rectified urgently to prevent further damage. Consequently, an order had been placed with the contractors in the sum of £17,356.

A similar defect had been identified in respect of fenders on the eastern boat park jetty and the Operations Manager had accepted a quote and placed an order for remedial works to be undertaken in the sum of £4,347, due to the time sensitive nature of the repairs.

Further to legal and professional advice received, it was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Harris and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk and the Operations Manager, in consultation with the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor, to enter into negotiations with relevant parties to satisfactorily resolve the defects identified in the new fishermen’s jetty and minimise costs to the Council.

It was further **RESOLVED:-**

That approval be given to the expenditure incurred to rectify the defects in both jetties.

284. **PERSONNEL MATTER - UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 253 of the Council Meeting held on 20th March 2020 an update was provided by the Town Clerk on an ongoing personnel matter. It was anticipated that this matter would now be finalised by September 2020 and a further update would be given at that time.

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

That delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Chairman of the Personnel Committee to act in this matter if required prior to the next Council Meeting.

The meeting concluded at 9.55 p.m.
