

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY,**
13th MARCH 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: -

Councillor C Finch

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield
Councillor G Marsh
Councillor T Morris
Councillor W Trite
Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council
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Outside Representatives:-

Mr P Sykes
Mr A Tuckey

Swanage Railway
Durlston Country Park

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres
Miss C Johnston
Miss H Lagden
Mr C Milmer

Town Clerk
Operations Department Administration Officer
Tourism Manager, Purbeck District Council
Visitor Services Manager and Business
Development Officer

Public Participation Time

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

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Mr D Rawsthorn (Swanage Railway), Mr M Smith (RNLI) and Mel Norris (Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre).

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 Tourism Committee Meeting held on 21st November 2018

It was noted that a number of matters were ongoing. Further to Minute 5) it was reported that the options and costing for a new website would be deferred until later in the year.

4) Matters arising from Minutes of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 27th February 2019

The Chairman of the Advisory Committee provided an update on discussions at the recent meeting. Particular attention was drawn to the forthcoming installation of RNLI lifejacket lockers close to the Stone Quay. The Tourism Manager agreed to write a news feature about this new facility in due course.

5) Swanage “Plastic Free Town” – consideration of draft action plan

Further to Minute 6) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 13th March 2019, the Visitor Services Manager (VSM) presented an update regarding Swanage becoming an Eco-Town. It was advised that ‘Clean Seas Week’ would be taking place from 4th to 21st April 2019, and particular attention was given to a draft action plan that had been circulated with the agenda papers. It was noted that the Town Council would not be serving anything in plastic at Beach Gardens.

During the ensuing discussion it was acknowledged that it would be good for Swanage to become a plastic free town, and it was noted that the steps set out in the action plan were relatively straightforward to achieve. If adopted by the Town Council then a ‘plastic free’ campaign would be launched later in the year.

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

TO RECOMMEND:

That Swanage Town Council adopts the “Plastic Free Swanage” action plan.

6) Swanage Market – update

The Visitor Services Manager confirmed that the market would be returning weekly, on Fridays, from Friday 19th April until Friday 25th October. This year the market would incorporate an artisan’s quarter for the first time, with those who had participated in ‘Artisans on the Beach’ receiving a 50% discount on pitch fees. It was also reported that local businesses would continue to receive a 50% discount, including the Chamber of Trade so that they could hold a stall to promote local businesses.

A discussion ensued as to how best to promote the market, and ideas were suggested for future changes to the way the market was operated. It was suggested that a farmers market could be trialled in September. It was AGREED:

That the appointment of a Market Working Party
should be discussed at the Annual Council Meeting in
May 2019.

7) Beach Regulations March 2019 – consideration of revised regulations

The Visitor Services Manager introduced draft amendments to the Council’s Beach Regulations, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the regulations needed to be read in conjunction with other elements of the Council’s beach signage which provided a more positive and welcoming image, providing information such as where dogs could be walked during the time that they were banned on Main Beach.

It was agreed that the wording in respect of metal detectors should be clarified, as follows: Metal detectors may only be used before 9am and after 6pm. Their use requires a licence. Licences are free and can be obtained from Swanage Information Centre.

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

TO RECOMMEND:

That the amended Beach Regulations be adopted, as
appended to the end of these Minutes.

Councillor Marsh gave special thanks to the Council for the Sunrise Service held every year at 6 a.m. on the beach.

8) Swanage Value of Tourism Summary 2017

The Visitor Services Manager presented the findings of the Value of Tourism Summary 2017. It was noted that total direct visitor related spending was estimated to be £76.8 million, and that the total number of UK and overseas staying trips had increased year-on-year. Although it was noted that these were estimated figures, they were compiled in accordance with an approved methodology and were found to be a useful tool for students and new businesses when developing a business plan.

9) Tourism Reports

a) Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer (VSM)

An events in and around Swanage 2019 leaflet prepared by the VSM, was provided to Committee Members for information purposes and the following information was given:

Information Centre

- The Visitor Services Manager confirmed that seasonal staff had been recruited for the 2019 season.
- An accessibility guide was being put together, and an events list had been produced.
- The Information Centre continued to receive excellent google and TripAdvisor reviews.

Awards

- Sarah Tattersall had won a Swanage Community Award for “Service with a Smile” at the Parish Assembly on 11th March 2019.
- The Information Centre had won a Bronze Award at the ‘South West Tourism Awards’ which had been held in Bristol.

Members of staff had visited Salisbury and Bath Visitor Information Centres on the way to the Awards in Bristol. These visits had proved an extremely valuable experience, the team had the opportunity to review the following: market management models, tourism promotion, electronic till systems, brochures and guides, town council communications and newsletters, staffing models, retail options and agency arrangements.

Beach Huts

- The Spa beach huts were closed on the lower levels for the foreseeable future.
- A new method for bookings had proved effective with online sales up by 30%.
- £85,411 taken for beach huts compared to £85,332 for same period last year.
- Stools and a small balcony table would be supplied to upper level huts.
- Branded parasols would be available to hire for beach hut users.

Beach

- The Blue Flag application had been submitted with the results due in May 2019.
- New beach safety signs would be installed in due course.
- A giant deckchair is currently in budget for 2019-20
- An accessibility guide was being produced for the beach and beach gardens.

Beach Gardens

- Seasonal staff had been appointed for the Tea on the Green.

- Was now a ‘plastic free’ zone.
- An Open Day would be held on 6th April 2019, and a voucher would be available in the local press for a free round of putting.

b) Tourism Manager

The Tourism Manager gave updates on the following:

- **visit-dorset.com and social media update** - the site continues to see growth every month and traffic for the past 12 months now stands at 2.3 million visits. The site had the highest ever number of visits for the month of February and by the end of March 2019 it will be the most successful year on record. Followers were reported as: Facebook 22,000; Twitter 35, 000; Instagram 9, 000.
- **Visit-Dorset Member Event Meet the Experts** - An exclusive event for members was held on 7th March at Kingston Maurward House. Over 100 businesses signed up to attend the ‘meet the experts’ event with speakers from a range of specialists including VisitEngland, the Dorset Growth Hub team as well as case studies from successful Dorset tourism businesses. There were various digital and video experts all sharing their top tips for business success with Visit-Dorset members.
- **National Tourism Superstar Finalist** –Visit-Dorset member, Martin Curtis of Jurassic Coast Guides, is one of ten finalists in the Daily Mirror 2019 National Tourism Superstar competition. Each Destination Management Organisation had the opportunity to put forward somebody who they feel goes that extra mile to ensure that visitors have an unforgettable experience. Martin was chosen partly due to his Gold award success at the Dorset Tourism Awards. A PR campaign is being worked on to encourage residents and visitors to vote for Martin and for Dorset.

The team worked with VisitEngland on a promotional video for Martin:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/d2lnvs9o1zreqd8/AACsyxzktfA4iC3quH-E1VXSa?dl=0>

Please place your vote here:

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/travel/uk-ireland/meet-10-fantastic-finalists-2019-14003994>

- **2019 Digital Campaign** – the 2019 marketing campaign launched this month with a variety of placements running across Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The campaign uses creative messages tailored to three core audience segments: families with young children, families with teenage children, and active empty nesters.
- **Visit-Dorset Attractions Festival** - to celebrate English Tourism Week and kick start the visitor season, Visit-Dorset are hosting a brand new Attractions Festival from the 30th March to the 7th April, which aims to showcase the fantastic range of experiences that Dorset boasts. English Tourism Week is an annual event run in association with VisitEngland that seeks to highlight the value of the industry and the wealth of visitor experiences in England. During the Visit-Dorset Attractions Festival, visitors will be able to enjoy a two for one offer and half price offers at over 30 of Dorset’s favourite attractions across the county such as Abbotsbury Swannery, The Royal Signals Museum, Moors Valley Country Park and Lulworth Castle. The event will be hosted online via www.visit-dorset.com with targeted social media campaigns and promotion via local media to raise awareness of the festival.

Summary of Visit-Dorset Tourism Partnership Activity 2018:

Website Development

- Annual web visits at 2.2 million
- Total value of online accommodation bookings made in 2018 £29,892; £5304 made via the Visit-Dorset online booking channel. The remainder is via polling platforms.
- 30% of accommodation on Visit-Dorset is bookable online with 76 providers.

Trade liaison and support

- Dorset Business Twitter Account @VisitDorsetBiz has 1517 followers. The account provides daily promotion of training, marketing and business networking opportunities for Dorset tourism businesses.
- Regular industry e-newsletters are sent to members
- Regular activity updates provided to tourism stakeholders and tourism groups

Marketing & Promotional Campaigns

- Worked with RH Partners on a schedule of social media activity during 2018 to raise the profile of the Visit-Dorset social media channels and encourage greater engagement and interaction with audiences, with a particular focus on gaining followers on the Visit-Dorset Instagram account.
- Commissioned new video content over the summer months for use in 2019 digital campaigns targeting families with young children, teens and older couples. B-roll footage has been produced for VisitEngland
- 25 blogs published including 6 from guest bloggers
- VisitEngland/VisitBritain Destination Workshop in London was attended in November 2018.
- Attendance at TMI annual conference
- Dorset Residents' Week 2018 was promoted. The 13th annual event took place on the 23-29th April 2018. 53 Dorset attractions took part and a total of 4,144 vouchers were used with approx. 8,288 people visiting attractions. £40,000 was generated for the local tourism economy, which is a 16% increase on previous year. A full report is available on the Visit-Dorset Industry site.
- Thomas Hardy Trail reprinted; Visit-Dorset Guide 2019 and Visit-Dorset Attractions map 2019 produced

Press and PR activity highlights

- Assisted 90 media enquiries from freelance journalists, image requests, travel writers, bloggers, and tv/film companies in partnership with Visit-Dorset members. Media included: The Telegraph, The Times, Countryfile, ITV, VisitBritain USA, Handluggage only, The Guardian and the Good Hotel Guide
- Promoted the release of 'On Chesil Beach' working in partnership with Lionsgate Entertainment.
- ITV airtime promotion on This Morning and Loose Women featuring shots from Lulworth Estate, Highlands End Holiday Park, Abbotsbury and West Bay.
- Bournemouth Airport carousel full year promotion advertising

Social Media Collaborations and Competitions:

Regular competitions set up with industry partners and promoted through digital channels with high success rates:

- James Loveridge Photography giveaway of a Dorset landscape canvas and 2019 calendar
- Montacute TV, Radio and Toy Museum, family pass giveaway
- Matt Pinner, giveaway of two Dorset 2019 calendars
- Family weekend ticket to Camp Bestival and one day ticket giveaway.
- Four night break at Greenwood Grange
- 'On Chesil Beach' family break at Moonfleet Manor Hotel
- Weymouth Sealife family ticket giveaway and promotion of the arrival of Sealife's Fairy Penguins.
- Promotion of Dippy at the Dorset County Museum

- Berehayes Farm Cottages 3 night break for 2

Partnership Projects

- ‘Escape the City’ campaign with Camp Bestival. This will be a month long campaign using digital poster sites across 13 sites in London during July highlighting the beauty of Dorset as the perfect place to escape to.
- Worked with Land & Wave on the ‘2018 Dorset Video Project’ with 9 other Dorset companies and local film makers. A short film was produced featuring extreme activities in Dorset’s spectacular landscape to promote new adventures in Dorset.
- Continuation of support to the South West Coast Path team with the Discover England Fund Project, ‘Discover England’s Great Walking Trails’ bid, assisted with the development of a 10 day ‘Walk through Time’ Jurassic Coast itinerary.
- Supported the National Coastal Tourism Academy’s £1 million national, ‘England’s Coast’ project. Ensuring representation on the project board, promotion of business support training and the new coastal ambassador module.
- Visit-Dorset attended the 2018 Dorset Tourism Awards and sponsored the ‘Events and Festivals’ category. New Visit-Dorset video content launched at the event.

10) Updates from Outside Representatives

Durlston Country Park

It was reported that the events programme for the summer had been finalised and events included were:

- Saturday 16th March – a drop in consultation day on the Durlston Pleasure Grounds Project between 11.a.m and 3 p.m.
- Friday 12th April Durlston Pleasure Grounds Project public launch between 11.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.
- Thursday 13th June between 10.30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. Durlston Pleasure Grounds Project VIP Launch
- Work was ongoing to secure funding for the Durlston shuttle bus.
- The new ‘Everyone Needs a Shed!’ community project, and the lift-share scheme which would help local residents who needed transport to travel to Durlston, would both be launched in mid-May – date to be confirmed shortly.
- British Sign Language tours had been devised and a visual story was being developed for visitors with autism.

Swanage Railway

An update regarding events was provided as follows:

- **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership (PCRP)** - South Western Railway (SWR) had provided necessary funding for Swanage Railway, through the PCRP, to employ a dedicated Community Rail Partnership Officer, Kelly Marshall.
- **Project Wareham** - plans were still in progress for the Railway’s own DMU to operate the Wareham to Swanage service.
- **SWR Summer Saturday Specials** – the railway was keen for SWR to repeat last year’s series of special trains, from Salisbury, Yeovil, Dorchester and Weymouth to Corfe Castle.
- **Flying Scotsman** - the Flying Scotsman, courtesy of the National Railway Museum, York, would be operating 5 services per day for 5 days from 22nd - 26th March. It would then be on display in Corfe Castle Station for a further 15 days from 27th March - 10th April.
- **Rail Tours to Swanage** – these would take place on the following Sundays: 28th July, and 4th, 11th and 18th of August. Swanage Sunday Specials are operated by UK Railtours. Thursday 12th September – The Swanage Belle -

London (Victoria), Staines, Woking and Basingstoke to Swanage. Thursday 26th September - Cathedrals Express operated by Steam Dreams -London (Victoria), Egham, Woking and Basingstoke to Bournemouth, Corfe Castle and Swanage.

- **City Cruises Poole** - Sea Train Adventure between 1st April and 31st October.
- **Dorset Pass** - new sightseeing smart-card, sponsored by City Cruises, would be launched on 1st May. Attractions who wished to participate in the smart-card promotion should e-mail: poolesales@citycruises.com
- **Special Events:**
 - 9th May – Diesel Gala Preview Day (mixed steam and diesel locos).
 - 10th to 12th May - Diesel Gala and Beer Festival 2019.
 - 6th - 8th September – Classic Transport Rally, Harmans Cross.
 - 11th to 13th October - Autumn Steam Gala 2019.
 - 30th November – 24th December – Santa Specials and seasonal trains.

11) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

a) Sandbanks Ferry - update

At a recent meeting between the Ferry Company and representatives from local principal authorities, town and parish councils, it was reported that remedial works to the ferry would soon be completed and that the ferry would return to a normal service prior to the end of March 2019. An application for a future increase in tolls could not be made until December 2019, and it was anticipated that local councils would receive further information in due course. The meeting had been positive in tone, and it was likely that further update meetings would be held in the months ahead.

b) Road signage

It was requested that the matter of improvement and replacement of pedestrian signage around the town should be placed on the agenda of a future meeting.

Councillor Trite left the meeting at 11.25 a.m.

10) Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting would be confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2019.

The meeting closed at 11.30 a.m.