

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **TUESDAY 29th MARCH**
2022 at 10.00 a.m.

Chair: -

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor T Foster

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Harris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Moreton

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Ms K Black

Durlston Country Park

Mr P Milford

Swanage Railway

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Also Present: -

Councillor W Trite

Swanage Town Council

Mrs E Evans

Management Support Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services Manager and Business
Development Officer

Public Participation Time

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

Councillor Tomes welcomed all attendees and introductions were provided.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor M Bonfield, Mr I Brown (Coastguard Rescue Officer), Ms H Lagden (Tourism Manager, Visit Dorset), Mr M Norris (Swanage Museum and Heritage Centre), Mr R Pullman (RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager), Mr K Sheppard (RNLI Lead Lifeguard Supervisor) and Mr K Wingfield-Bennett (Trustee, Mowlem Theatre).

2) Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

3) Matters arising from the notes of the informal Meeting of the Tourism Committee held on 16th November 2021

There were no matters raised.

4) Presentation from representatives of the Mowlem Theatre, Swanage

It was noted that this item would be deferred to a future meeting.

5) Tourism marketing plan

a) Marketing Working Party - update

It was reported that the Marketing working party had met recently and discussed promotional campaigns for the town, with the intention of increasing visitor numbers during the off-peak season. Three campaign topics had been suggested: ‘Swanage Events,’ ‘Christmas in Swanage’ and, the larger of the campaigns, ‘Walking in Swanage’. It was envisaged that the ‘Walking in Swanage’ campaign would focus on the period between January and April 2023 and would encourage the involvement of other local organisations/businesses to increase winter trade. A suggestion was made for national walking/outdoor activity publications to be contacted to assist with out of area promotion. It was noted that this campaign encompassed other council aspirations such as sustainable travel and tourism. An update would be provided to a future meeting.

6) **Tourism Reports**

a) **Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer**

A verbal update was provided which included:

- **Recruitment** – it was reported there remained vacancies for a Visitor Services Assistant, Seafront Advisor and Boat Park attendant.
- **Information Centre** – Staffing proposal to open seven days per week year-round but not confirmed.
- **Beach Huts** – Busy with early bookings.
- **Beach Gardens** – Saturday 2nd April open day, free putting, and tennis events.
- **Boat Park** – In demand with 42 applicants on the waiting list.
- **Market** – Good facility, reports of a slow winter trade but additional stalls in April.

b) **Tourism Manager**

The information provided by the Tourism Manager, prior to the meeting, was noted. This included links to the Visit Dorset annual report, sustainable tourism business support and the English Tourism Week launch news report.

A discussion ensued around the possibility of producing a ‘Children’s guide to Swanage,’ the production of up to date ‘tear away’ maps for visitors and the effective use of social media. It was reported that the suggestions would be referred to the working party for further discussion.

7) **Updates from Partner Organisations**

Swanage Railway

- It was reported that the 90-day trial service to Wareham would not operate this year as planned. It was noted this was due to the current commercial environment, including Covid recovery, uncertain passenger numbers, and a significant increase in the cost of coal. It was hoped that this service would be implemented in 2023.
- The focus would remain on the Heritage service, dining car and a number of special events running throughout the year which included the Diesel Gala, Roads and Rail event and ‘Beastly times on the Swanage line’.

Durlston Country Park

- It was reported that the car parks had been close to full over the Mothering Sunday weekend.
- The Purbeck Parkrun had started at Durlston on Saturday 26th March and had been well attended. It was noted as the second hilliest Parkrun in the country.
- A Queens’s Platinum Jubilee Beacon Lighting Event would be held in Durlston Country Park on Thursday 2nd June.
- Additional signage had been installed in a nearby caravan park to direct walkers.
- It was currently unlikely that the Durlston Bus service would operate this season due to a £5,000 shortfall in funding. The deadline for the application to the bus

company was 14th April, and the VSM and representatives of Durlston Country Park would liaise prior to that date.

- It was suggested that a meeting of the Community Bus Working Party be scheduled to discuss wider options.

Swanage Pier

- Improvement works were continuing on the Pier.
- The sailing season had been delayed until 9th April.
- City Cruises would return to provide a service to Poole Quay.
- A bird watching boat service would operate from May to June, and on 1st July.
- The Paddle Steamer Waverley would operate during September/October.

8) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

a) To note dates of Beach Management Advisory Committee meetings - 27th April 2022 and 8th June 2022

The dates for the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meetings were noted.

b) To note a new website for Purbeck Heaths

Attendees were encouraged to visit the new website and to review the Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

9) Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting had provisionally been scheduled for 5th July 2022 at 10.00 a.m., but would be confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2022.

The Chair thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 11.00 a.m.
