

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall on **Monday 29th November 2004** at **10.00 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor Mrs C Gainsborough JP Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor Mrs C Bartlett	Swanage Town Council
Councillor Mrs J Farrow	Swanage Town Council
Councillor A H Miller	Town Mayor
Councillor M Pratt	Swanage Town Council
Councillor M Tyrer	Swanage Town Council
Miss A Stockley	Tourist Information Centre
Miss N Elston	Purbeck Tourism Officer
Mr N Brown	Swanage Railway Co. Ltd.
Mrs J Scott	Swanage Museum
Revd J Wood	Association of Churches Together in Swanage
Ms K Black	Durlston Country Park
Mr A Williams	Purbeck Tourism

Also in attendance: Councillor W S Trite.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor C Bright and Mr A Leeson (Town Clerk); Mrs L Fegan (Swanage & Purbeck Holiday Assoc.) and Mr R Johnson (Swanage Pier Trust).

2) **Matters arising from Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Tourism & Environmental Committee were noted and approved, subject to it being recorded that Councillor Miller was present at the meeting and minute no. 5 (paragraph 3) being amended to Mr Brown (not Mr Green).

3) **Tourism Report**

Miss Stockley reported on the following matters:-

- a) Footfall figures at the Information Centre during November were slightly down on the corresponding period in 2003, but were overall very satisfactory.
- b) The sale of "Cards for Good Causes" charity Christmas cards at the Information Centre had once again proved very popular, and trading for these would continue until 18th December.
- c) Delivery of the 2005 Swanage and Purbeck Holiday Guide was expected shortly, and it was hoped that 12,500 copies would be despatched by the end of January.
- d) Bookings for beach bungalows for the 2005 season had commenced on 1st November, and were being well received. Shore Road bungalows were already fully booked for Carnival Week, with limited availability for this period at the Spa.

- e) The Information Centre is open to the public throughout the winter period, and although there are few visitors, staff are busy updating information sheets and preparing new leaflets in readiness for the 2005 season.
- f) Finally, following a visit by the “mystery shopper”, the services provided by the staff at the Information Centre had been awarded “Very Good” or “Excellent” grading in all categories.

Miss Elston reported that the 2005 Guide had now gone to print and should be available for distribution before Christmas. It was noted that this would be the last year that non-inspected establishments would be included in the Guide.

The Purbeck Cycle Way leaflet and Eating Out Guide were currently being prepared and the Website was being updated to include 2005 events.

Having regard to funding requirements it had been decided that the Swanage Heritage Centre would close during the winter period and re-open before Easter.

Finally, Miss Elston reported on changes to the Tourism Management structure, and a meeting that she and the Town Mayor attended at South West Tourism. It was noted that all areas, not only Swanage & Purbeck, were losing hotels to development, and whilst the weekly holiday market had seen a decline, there was an upturn in ‘Days Out’ and educational tourism, with particular mention of Chinese students.

4) Reports from Outside Organisations

a) Swanage Museum

Mrs Jean Scott reported that the Swanage Museum was closed at the present time, but volunteers were taking the opportunity to update records. Preparations were being made for a World War II Exhibition to be staged in March 2005 and targeted at school children between the ages of 7 – 11 years old.

b) Swanage Railway

Mr N Brown reported that in-spite of the inclement weather, October had been a fairly busy month for the Swanage Railway.

As usual the ‘Santa Specials’ were proving popular with advance bookings being well received.

Trains would not be running in January/February 2005 to allow for engineering work to be carried out.

c) St Mary’s Parish Church

Revd John Wood expressed the view that he would like to encourage tourists to visit St Mary’s Parish Church.

Many interesting events were being held in the Church, including events associated with the Jazz and Folk Festivals, and a significant increase in the number of local people attending such events had been noted.

It was suggested that visitors to the area may not be aware that the Church was open every day, (many churches in other areas are locked to deter vandalism) and it was agreed that information regarding St Mary’s Parish Church be included on the schools information sheet.

With reference to Minute No. 7(g) of the Tourism and Environmental Committee held on 27th September 2004, Revd Wood reported that arrangements were in hand for a Flower Festival at the United Reform Church during 2005, and it was unlikely that a Festival could be held at St Mary’s

Parish Church until 2006, bearing in mind the organisational requirements and costs involved.

d) Purbeck Tourism

Mr Tony Williams was disappointed to report that due to a lack of interest the 'Partners in Success' day, run by the Dorset and New Forest Partnership, (scheduled for 10th November 2004) had been cancelled.

He then referred to a television programme, screened the previous evening, which had given excellent publicity to the Jurassic Coast.

5) Any Other Business

Sandpit Field

The Town Mayor reported that due to a conflict of events, it was necessary for the Swanage Jazz Festival to hold its' annual event at Sandpit Field one week later in 2006. (i.e. 15th – 17th July)

It was AGREED:-

That the Tourist Information Centre should notify all accommodation providers of the change of dates.

Finally, the sterling work undertaken by the Swanage Lights Committee was acknowledged, and thanks extended to the volunteers whose work had resulted in splendid festive lights in the town.

Miss Stockley announced that the Committee would again be holding a competition for the best decorated house, and entry forms were available at the Tourist Information Centre.

The Meeting closed at 12.30 p.m.
