

Caravan Park Committee  
Minutes of Meeting Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2002 14.00-16.00  
Swanage Bay View Holiday Park

Facilitator- Cllr Miller                      Mayor

Present: -

Cllr Julia Wheeldon	Swanage Town Council
Cllr Cherry Bartlett	Swanage Town Council
Cllr June Farrow	Swanage Town Council
Cllr Gainsborough	Swanage Town Council
Cllr Gloria Marsh	Swanage Town Council
Cllr Hilary O'Donovan	Swanage Town Council
Cllr Jim Roscoe	Swanage Town Council
Mr Alan Leeson	Town Clerk
Mr Nick Pearce	Manager

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Baume and Councillor Woolley for their inability to attend the meeting.

2) Matters arising from the Public Meeting held 27<sup>th</sup> September 2002.

The council has not ratified any issues raised at this meeting. They are to form the action plan for further meetings. The first phase would be Best Value meetings and then be taken to a Committee meeting.

i) Site fees

A decision has yet to be reached.

ii) Advertising

A new advertising campaign had been introduced for the half term. A change of emphasis for forthcoming events should be adopted with greater advertising around the site, in the T.I.C. and on Council boards.

iii) Line Dancing

The line dancers have been re-assured that the facilities for line dancing are available for the near future. No plans for the refurbishment have been finalised and they can enter into a discussion if so desired. Disappointment was expressed as to the lack of positive directional input from groups during the public meeting.

- iv) Clearance of trees and shrubs.

The Councils policy is to only clear trees and shrubs that represent a danger to persons or property.
- v) Plans

The plans were conceptual with the hope that they would aid debate, however no feedback was received from owners.
- vi) Reduction of Council owned caravans

This is a policy decision in order to release extra plots. The Council will retain a minimum fleet
- vii) The formation of an Owners Committee

The council has previously received correspondence from solicitors advising against this.
- viii) Refurbishment

Discussed in point 3.
- ix) VAT ruling

Mr Leeson informed the council that VAT had been levied on rates and water. Many owners took issue with this. However it was stated that legislation dictates that it is taxable depending upon the method of recharging. It is expected that the standard rate of VAT will apply. This is still awaiting confirmation.
- x) Matter not discussed
- xi) Decking

It was decided that the position with regards to planning permission needed clarifying so that a ruling could be made. Until such time no further work should be undertaken. A visit from the inspector from PDC was expected in the closed season.
- xii) Invoices

It was decided that a new management system for financial controls was needed and should be implemented once the new manager was in position
- xiii) New licence agreements

New licence agreements were to be put on hold and the whole

issue of licence agreements needed further investigation and detailed analysis.

xiv) Sea Views

It is standard practice to charge the same rates for all pitches. The charge of a premium rate for pitches with sea views should be discussed at a future meeting with a view to implementing this for the 2004 season

xv) Invoices

Mr Nicholas' query has been rectified.

xvi) Park Security

A sight security officer has been appointed. Lots of security issues need to be addressed such as inadequate lighting in the park.

xvii) Contractors

The council does have a list of contractors however it is not obliged to make this public. They will however assess the situation. It was stated that DCC's contractors could be used if required.

xviii) Speeding controls within the park

This is a security issue and should be tackled by the manager and security officer.

xix) Car registration numbers

It was noted that owners and guests failed to adhere to the park regulations with regards to signing in. This should be tackled due to potential security and safety repercussions.

xx) Extended Licence

Mr Leeson informed the council that they were only contractually obliged to accept 1 request for the extended licence agreement. Funding for the refurbishment would be found from other sources.

xxi) Swimming Pool

The swimming pool runs on three boilers. Presently 1 boiler has recently been refurbished, 1 is working although not as well as it should be and 1 is failing. A report would be issued to members at a later date.

xxii)

#### Water pump

Complaints with regards to the water supply to certain parts of the caravan park had been investigated and the issue will be addressed. This may involve the rerouting of pipes.

xxiii)

#### Communication

The newsletter to owners has not yet been sent out. It was felt that the priority was to appoint the manager who would then oversee further communications to owners.

3)

#### Refurbishment Scheme & Capital Programme-Review

The member's attention was drawn to the English Tourism Council's Quality Assurance Assessment Report. The timing of the report was said to be unfortunate as it coincided with the 1<sup>st</sup> week of opening for the season and many works had not been completed.

The report stated that the club area 'décor is now looking tired and dated' and that the toilets are in need of updating. A decision is needed as to the requirements for the new complex layout with the reception area being an immediate priority. An overall measured survey is required as plans for the whole site are not available. The architect will work from a collection of drawings. It was agreed that the area needed upgrading however priorities need to be assessed along with the available finances for the project.

The interest that people have in the refurbishment was discussed. It is perceived that the caravan owners are apathetic towards the programme, as no feedback forms have been received. The view is that if the owners do not want to use the complex then it should be refurbished to accommodate the people who will use it i.e. Local groups.

Members highlighted the fact winter business needs encouraging so as to increase income during the closed season. This is down to poor advertising. The people of Swanage are not aware of the complex and the facilities it has to offer. The amenities are excellent for weddings and birthdays etc.

Councillor Miller highlighted the problem of block bookings. Bookings for wedding receptions often had to be turned down due to the rooms being used for 1 hour, but the whole period is booked. The council had ratified this policy however it may need to be reviewed. Members stated that if a group has booked the rooms for a period and would only be using the rooms for 1 hour that they should be allowed to let others use the hall and divide the costs between them.

It was requested that this be documented for further discussion. The issue of bar prices was discussed. The prices were seen to be high in comparison to other clubs in Swanage and would have to be reduced in order to compete for the same business. Councillor Miller stated that the committee would need recommendations from the Manager once he has assessed the situation.

The under utilisation of amenities by groups such as the Indoor Bowling Club were discussed. It was stated by Mr Leeson that they would bring their own food and consume it on the premises. This practice should no longer be allowed to continue and they should use the facilities on offer next season.

A wider availability of catering facilities and better use of staff has already been implemented, aided by the relocation of the swimming pool reception area to the bar. This will allow multi-tasking by staff on duty and make more snacks and drinks more readily available to customers.

4)

#### Any other business

Mr Leeson asked to suspend the activities of outside contractors with regards to sales. The motion was moved by Councillor Marsh and seconded by Councillor Wheeldon. The vote in favour was unanimous.

Councillor Miller requested that all members of the public leave the meeting.

Mr Leeson updated the members on the situation regarding Mr Williams. He had been issued with a notice to quit. His solicitors had made representations with regards to the Human Rights Act, however it was hoped that the matter would not be contested any further.

The existing site licences were discussed. New sales will receive new contracts. Many different agreements were now in operation. This issue needs to be addressed so that the same agreement is in operation for all owners. A plan should be drafted and then taken to Best Value meetings and from there to members.

Direction from the Council was requested with regards to site fees. An increase in the site fees was requested and should be expected as the season is being increased by 6 weeks. Mr Pearce expressed his surprise as to the low increases that had previously been applied. The unique selling points of the park were highlighted. No other caravan park in Swanage sells plots. Despite the facilities on offer the same prices were charged as the competition. A Best Value meeting was requested by members to discuss these issues.

The Isle of Purbeck Indoor Bowls Club had requested that they could rent rooms at the Vista complex. This would have to be reviewed once the refurbishment was finalised.

5)

### Staffing

The restructuring of the present staff was discussed. Solicitor's advice with regards to redundancy packages for present had been sought. A 12-week notice period can be invoked. It was expected that this would cost £10,000 including the notice period. This issue needed to be discussed in further detail at a later date with an input from the Manager.

Councillor Bartlett declared an interest in the Caravan Park shop and left the meeting.

Mr Leeson outlined the present situation with regards to Mr and Mrs Lucas. The rent for the shop is £2700 per annum payable in two instalments on the 1<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> August. The original invoices sent out to the Lucas' were incorrect and under solicitor's advice were re-issued. The first instalment was paid in June and the second is still outstanding. The solicitors advised against invoking section 142 to evict them from the shop. Mrs Lucas had been in contact with Mr Leeson and requested that all further representations should be made to her, as she is the leaseholder. She stated that she was in financial dire straits, but was willing to pay immediately £900 out of the £1350 owing paying the balance in instalments. The £900 was paid on the 11<sup>th</sup> November a week later than expected.

Councillor Miller moved that the Council should enter into a discussion with Mrs Lucas with a view to taking the lease back from her, as the deferment of payment is an ongoing problem and not one that will be solved. It was proposed therefore that Councillor Miller, Councillor Roscoe, Mr Leeson and Mr Pearce approach Mrs Lucas to discuss the termination of the contract. Councillor Wheeldon seconded this and the Committee voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

6)

### Date of Next Meeting

The date for the next meeting of the Caravan Park Best Value meeting was set for **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November at 14.00** in the Town Hall

