Minutes of the CARAVAN PARK BEST VALUE REVIEW COMMITTEE held at the Caravan Park, Swanage on Monday 29th July 2002 at 9.30 a.m.

Present:-

Councillor A.H. Miller Chairman Councillor Mrs C. Gainsborough Councillor J. Roscoe

Also in attendance:-

A.J.Leeson Town Clerk
K. Martyn-Jones General Manager

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Suttle and Trite.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD – 23 JANUARY 2002

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd January 2002 were noted as agreed.

3. **GENERAL ISSUES**

Members considered issues previously raised as part of the Best Value review, in order to identify any developments or matters currently outstanding.

1. Length of Tenure

The General Manager reported that 63 responses had been received regarding the Council's proposal to offer existing caravan owners the opportunity of purchasing an extension of three years to their site licence, making a total of 18 years (subject to condition of caravan) for a charge of around £4,000.

It was noted that a deadline of 31st July 2002 had been set, although the final figures would not be expected until the end of the season, when individual owners were required to have signed up to the new licence agreement.

It was AGREED that:

The decision to proceed with the refurbishment programme would be determined in September 2002, based on the guaranteed responses received at that time.

2. Letting Fees

The General Manager suggested that the proposed fee, to be introduced and charged for the sub-letting of privately owned caravans, be between £200 and £500.

It was stressed that the letting licence fee could only be introduced when a system of barrier entry control was in place.

3. Gas Services

It was reported and noted that all of the Council's fleet and a large number of privately-owned caravan owners had installed changeover valves following the discontinuation of 47kg gas bottles and the introduction and use of 19kg gas bottles only.

4. Staffing

The General Manager confirmed that the review of the existing staff contracts, to fall in line with industry standards, had been met with considerable resistance. In conclusion, proposals to assimilate existing pay rates to fixed salary scale points, as a condition of working variable hours, without enhanced payment, was not considered achievable.

The Chairman stressed the need for the operation of the Park to be competitive, and it was AGREED:-

That the Town Clerk be instructed to examine the options for the possible restructuring of staff requirements in line with revised seasonal operations and to report to a future meeting.

5. Caravan Sales

The General Manager reported that there were currently seven vacant plots on the Park. Many of the plots required redevelopment in order to accommodate the larger models of caravans now being demanded by customers.

The General Manager highlighted the need to use newer models of caravans, bought in part-exchange, as replacements for the Council's ageing hire fleet.

Consideration was given to the introduction of pitch premiums. The General Manager suggested that the Council should monitor the number of sites commanding good sea views and identify those that it would consider as having the greatest potential.

After discussion it was noted and AGREED that:-

The introduction of pitch premiums be deferred until after the 2003 season.

6. Gas Storage

The General Manager highlighted the need to re-locate the gas storage facility and offered various alternative suggestions.

7. Refurbishment & Redevelopment Programme

The General Manager stressed how the financing of the Council's long term refurbishment and redevelopment programme is reliant upon maintaining sales.

It was also stressed that the site fees should be increased annually in line with the additional costs in providing improved grounds maintenance.

The General Manager explained that the Council was now committed to relocating the administration and reception area to the site of the former shop and games room.

It was suggested that the full refurbishment scheme be deferred until after the appointment of a new General Manager.

Details of a proposed card entry system, as part of a club membership scheme, were discussed at length. During the discussion the General Manager outlined plans to reposition the entrance to the swimming pool area and the potential for reducing staff costs. The proposals included use of the fitness suite as the launderette and using the existing launderette site and cellar area as an entrance to the swimming pool.

Entertainment

The General Manager reported that the new format for Bingo was proving popular amongst both the staff and public. It was emphasised that only token prizes were now being awarded.

After a brief discussion it was UNANIMOUSLY AGREED:That any surpluses gained from the Bingo sessions be given to charity.

9. Administration

Following the announcement of the General Manager's resignation, a lengthy discussion ensued regarding the options both in the short-term and long term.

Various options were considered, following which it was noted that this was a matter that required urgent attention by the full Council, at its meeting scheduled for 29th July 2002.

The meeting concluded at 12.40 p.m.