

Minutes of the **SPECIAL MEETING** of the Swanage
Town Council held to discuss **POLICY AND RESOURCES**
matters at the Swanage Caravan Park on **FRIDAY, 1st**
FEBRUARY 2002 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor G.A. Baume
Councillor Mrs. C. Gainsborough
Councillor A.H. Miller (Elected Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. H. O'Donovan
Councillor J. Roscoe
Councillor C.R. Sutton
Councillor W.S. Trite

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor, the Clerk invited nominations for the position of Chairman.

It was proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Sutton, and
AGREED:-

That Councillor Miller be appointed as
Chairman of the Meeting.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Mrs. Farrow, Mrs. Marsh, Suttle (Town Mayor), Mrs. Wheeldon (Deputy Town Mayor) and Woolley.

3. **ACCESS TO PEVERIL POINT/DURLSTON BAY**

The Town Clerk referred to the issue raised at the Public Participation session held on 28th January 2002.

A brief explanation of matters affecting the Town Council's position concerning the County Council's consideration to re-open and re-classify the track leading to the foreshore at the northern boundary of Durlston Country Park.

Following a general discussion, the Town Clerk highlighted the Town Council's health and safety responsibilities and the potential increased number of visitors due to the recently acquired World Heritage status.

A consensus view was formed in respect of any influence that the Town Council was able to have upon the County Council's decision as the competent authority.

It was proposed by Councillor Sutton and seconded by Councillor Mrs. O'Donovan:-

That the Town Council does not object to the re-opening of the path at Durlston Country Park, but wishes to highlight concern at the health and safety implications and requests that there should be no public sign if the path is to be re-opened.

An AMENDMENT was moved by Councillor Trite, and seconded by Councillor Roscoe:-

That the words "The Town Council does not object to the" be omitted and replaced by the words "The Town Council fully supports the view expressed

by the Town Clerk concerning”.

Upon being put to the Meeting, FOUR Members voted IN FAVOUR of the AMENDMENT and THREE AGAINST, whereupon the Amendment was declared CARRIED.

Before consideration of the Substantive Motion, it was proposed by Councillor Trite and seconded by Councillor Sutton:-
That an alternative proposal be drafted.

After a further brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Gainsborough, and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Town Council fully supports the views and concern expressed by the Town Clerk and wishes the County Council to consider the matter of health and safety in reaching a decision to re-open the footpath.

In the event that the footpath is to be included on the Definitive Map, the Town Council wishes that it remains unsignposted.

Councillor Trite left the Meeting at 10.30 a.m.

4. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Before consideration of the next item, it was proposed by Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Roscoe, and AGREED:-
That, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded during consideration of the following matters.

5. **SWANAGE CARAVAN PARK**

Further to Minute No. 134 of the Meeting held on 28th January 2002, consideration was given to the recommendations of the Caravan Park Best Value Review Committee.

(a)

Change of Name

After a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Baume, seconded by Councillor Roscoe, and AGREED:-
That the official name of the Park be changed from “Swanage Caravan Park” to “Swanage Bay View Holiday Park”.

(b)

i)

General Issues

Length of Tenure

Members considered the proposal to offer a three year extension to the previous 15 year maximum age limit applied to caravans, upon payment of a one-off fee of £4,000.
It was noted that this should only be applied to the 2002 season and that all monies generated be used to fund capital projects at the Park.

ii)

iii)

iv)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)

g)

h)

v)

Loyalty Bonus

The General Manager explained that within the sales culture that would be developed, any loyalty bonus would be absorbed within the sales purchase price in future.

Lettings

Members considered the implications and financial benefits in reducing the Council's own letting fleet. A further reduction in the administration and servicing costs, by discontinuing the role of a letting agent for private caravan owners, was also acknowledged. It was noted that a licence fee would be charged by the Town Council to permit owner to sub-let. It was also noted that the Park would no longer participate in the "Sun" bookings promotional scheme after 2002.

Length of Season

Members considered comparisons made with other local and nationally operated holiday parks and supported the view that the Council's Park should remain open for 10½ months per annum. It was proposed by Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Baume, and AGREED:-

That the following be agreed:-

Caravan owners be offered an extension to the age of their caravan from 15 years to 18 years upon payment of £4,000 in 2002, subject to satisfactory inspection.

Revenue generated by the proposals in a) above be used for the funding of capital projects at the Park and that all other general revenue surpluses be allocated to finance debt reduction and other Council services.

A revised form of contract be agreed with the Council's solicitors and introduced during 2002.

The loyalty bonus scheme be discontinued.

The Council's letting fleet be reduced in number to 15.

A private lettings licence fee be introduced at a rate to be determined by the Caravan Park Best Value Review Committee.

The Council to cease to participate in the "Sun" bookings promotional scheme after 2002.

Enquiries be made and a planning application to extend the Park's annual occupation licence be submitted, as appropriate.

Gas Services

The General Manager highlighted the issues affecting the future

provision of gas services by the Council.
Members acknowledged the cost benefits in extending the existing use of private contractors for the purpose of the initial gas service connection, setup and testing.

It was noted that the Council's staff would continue to deliver gas bottles and that all bottles to be used in future were to be 19kg size and new change over units fitted to all caravans.

It was AGREED:-

To adopt the changes in policy for the provision of gas services.

vi)

Staff

The General Manager explained proposals for staffing, following the recent resignation of a full-time permanent postholder.

Members noted the potential benefits in the servicing of letting caravans, and AGREED:-

To appoint two seasonal full-time employees on the terms and conditions, as outlined.

vii)

Vista Complex

The General Manager presented outline proposals for improving the reception area and main buildings.

After discussion, the following matters were AGREED in principle, subject to budget approval:-

a)

The existing Games Room be converted to a main reception and administration office.

b)

The existing reception area, offices, kitchen, cloakroom, and stage be converted into a two-tier function hall with a terraced bar, and small stage in the lower section.

It was FURTHER AGREED:-

a)

That the machines in the Games Room be removed after Whitsun 2002 and three 5p play AWP machines be re-located in the skittle alley.

b)

A proposal to change the classification of the current full on-premises liquor licence be changed to a club licence be pursued.

c)

A scheme of club membership be introduced for 1st April 2003/04.

d)

A press release be issued in February 2002, publicising the Council's proposals and seeking assistance for the drawing of artist impressions and inviting competition entries for the naming of the new bar and function hall.

viii)

Caravan Sales

The General Manager outlined proposals for the trading of both new and second-hand caravans.

It was AGREED:-

- a) That the General Manager be permitted to negotiate and purchase second-hand caravans, prior to their disposal off the Park.
- b) A range of demonstration caravans be acquired with 365 day credit approval.

ix) **Bar and Catering Function**

Members noted the recommendation of the Caravan Park Best Value Review Committee, and AGREED:-

That the bar and catering function be retained in-house.

x) **Charges 2002/03**

The Town Clerk provided comparison prices for room hire, and, during a lengthy debate, it was noted that “free use” had been granted for a number of events and to specific organisations. Members highlighted a potential legal issue concerning the Swanage Regatta and Carnival Committee’s use for “Bingo” sessions.

It was AGREED:-

- a) That all applications for free use of the function rooms at the Vista Complex be made to and approved by the Town Council.
- b) The Town Clerk and General Manager obtain clarification, as licensees, of any legal issues arising from the use of the premises for “Bingo” sessions.
- c) The General Manager be granted delegated authority to negotiate room hire rates and charges for providers of health and fitness activities.
- d) The proposed charges as submitted for 2002/03 be adopted.

xi) **Park Maintenance**

The General Manager outlined the perceived difficulties in obtaining “five star” status without making significant changes in the maintenance arrangements for the Park.

In agreeing the revised staffing arrangements at vi) above, it was proposed that the Park’s staff, supplemented occasionally by the Operations staff, undertake the full grounds maintenance duties. It was noted that the Operations Manager provides and maintains vehicles, plant and equipment on behalf of the Park.

Following discussion, it was AGREED:-

That the Town Clerk, Operations Manager and General Manager review staffing, vehicle, plant and equipment requirements prior to the Special Meeting of the Council to discuss Capital Budget on 25th February 2002.

xii)

Newsletter

Members considered that the proposal to introduce a regular Park newsletter was a good idea.

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