

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Swanage Town
Council held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **MONDAY,**
8th DECEMBER 2008 at 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M. Pratt – Chairman

Councillor B. Audley
Councillor C. Bright (until 8.55 p.m.)
Councillor Mrs C. Gainsborough
Councillor L. Gloyn-Cox
Councillor M. Hadley
Councillor Mrs G. Marsh
Councillor Mrs. A. Patrick
Councillor S. Poultney
Councillor W. Trite
Councillor M. Whitwam

Public Participation Time

In addition to officers there were two members of the public present.

1. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Suttle.

2. **FEES AND CHARGES - VAT**

Following the unscheduled reduction in the standard rate of VAT from 17.5% to 15% with effect from 1st December 2008, proposals affecting the setting of fees and charges for 2009/10 were highlighted.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted that whilst the majority of the Council's fees and charges for 2009/10 would be set at the annual Estimates Meeting, the fees for some areas of operation e.g. beach hut bookings, are set up to a year in advance in order to meet publicity and advertising schedules. In such circumstances, and in line with other local authorities providing beach huts, it was suggested that the letting price remains as published. An assessment of the impact of any revenue gained could be made and taken into account when the fees for the 2010 season are considered.

An analysis of the current fees and charges had highlighted some changes in the treatment of VAT, particularly relating to charges for the provision of headstones at the cemetery, and these would be taken into account at the annual Estimates Meeting when the fees and charges are determined for 2009/10.

It was proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the proposed treatment of the reduction of VAT to 15% relating to the Council's schedule of fees and charges be approved with effect from 1st December 2008.

Having regard to the VAT issue and a range of other matters, the Clerk highlighted the need to re-schedule the date of the annual Estimates Meeting.

Following discussion, during which some concern was expressed at the

deferral of the Meeting, it was proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by Councillor Mrs. Gainsborough:-

That the annual Estimates Meeting 2009/10 be held at a date to be determined towards the end of January 2009.

Upon being put to the Meeting, NINE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, ONE Member VOTED AGAINST, AND THERE WAS one abstention. The Proposition was declared CARRIED.

3. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

(a) **Battlegate Wall**

Information was requested as to whether the wall to the south of Battlegate footpath was being repaired as part of the ongoing works at Shore Road.

4. **ASSET MANAGEMENT – TO CONSIDER FUTURE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Further to minute 7) of the meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 19th November 2008, Members gave consideration to a schedule of property owned or occupied by the Town Council. This excluded the Holiday Park which is already the subject of a detailed Options Appraisal. Attention was drawn to the empowering communities agenda being pursued by central government, and the possibilities of a development trust being formed within Swanage. The requirement to draw up an asset management plan and to make adequate provision for capital works was also highlighted.

Detailed consideration was given to the following assets:

a) **Beach Gardens**

The possible leasing of the sports facilities to the Swanage Bowls and Tennis Clubs was considered and it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bright and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That a meeting be held between the Town Clerk, Chairman of the Tourism Committee and representatives of the Swanage Bowls and Tennis Clubs on Monday 15th December 2008, to discuss a potential lease of the sporting facilities and possible management of the putting green.

b) **Land south of Holiday Park**

A number of potential options were identified, including redeveloping the former Household Recycling Centre for car parking, granting the land to Dorset County Council, and selling or leasing the land for grazing. It was RESOLVED:

That all of the identified options in respect of the land south of the Holiday Park be explored further.

c) **Public Conveniences**

It was noted that the Town Council does not have a statutory duty to supply public conveniences and that a needs analysis is required for each site. It was also noted that the possibility of charging for improved facilities should be explored further, together with the Community Toilet Scheme implemented by Richmond-Upon-Thames Borough Council. Attention was drawn to the possibility of seeking a private contractor to charge for use in return for capital

investment. It was AGREED:

That the various options for the future of public toilet provision be explored further.

d) **Fishermen's Huts**

It was RESOLVED:

That the fishermen's huts be retained, but that enquiries be made of the Swanage Fishermen's Association and Swanage Angling Club regarding possible future management arrangements.

e) **Downs and Peveril Point**

It was RESOLVED:

That the leasing of the vacant buildings on Peveril Point Road be pursued.

f) **King George's Field**

Problems relating to the provision of a new pavilion were noted. The need to develop a sinking fund to keep the equipment in the play area and skate park in good condition in years to come was highlighted.

g) **White House, Tourist Information Centre**

Attention was drawn to the need to clarify the form of the seafront stabilisation scheme prior to developing future options for the existing Tourist Information Centre building. It was AGREED:

That the District Engineer be consulted to progress proposals for the Seafront Stabilisation Scheme.

Councillor Bright left the Meeting at 8.55 p.m.

h) **Sandpit Field**

Concerns were raised regarding the cost to the Council of rubbish collection following events on Sandpit Field and the Seafront during the summer months.

It was AGREED:

That the issue of rubbish collection from Sandpit Field and the seafront following summer events be explored through a meeting of the Tourism Committee Chairman with event organisers.

i) **Town Hall**

It was reported that a historic buildings consultant had expressed doubt that the building could be brought up to the standard required to meet the demands of the community. It was noted that the Mercers Company might be a source of funding, but that this was thought to be unlikely whilst the building remained in local authority hands. The potential sale of the building for use as a hotel was acknowledged.

The Meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.