

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOURISM
COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall on
Monday 23rd July 2007 at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: -

Councillor C R Bright

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor Mrs C Gainsborough

Swanage Town Council

Councillor L Gloyn-Cox

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Hadley

Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mrs G Marsh

Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mrs A Patrick

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M W Pratt

Swanage Town Council

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Assistant Town Clerk

Mrs L Burgess

Senior Administration Officer

Mrs A Holmes

Tourist Information Centre Manager

Mr D Green

Swanage Railway (until 11.50 a.m.)

Mr A Lander

Swanage Fishermen's Association
(until 11.50 a.m.)

Mr R Marsh

Swanage Bay Users Association
(until 12 noon).

Mr A Power

Swanage and Purbeck Holiday
Accommodation Association (until
11.30 a.m.)

Ms L Robinson

Thomas Ensor and Son (until 9.50
a.m.)

Mrs J Scadden

Swanage Caravan Parks (until 11.50
a.m.)

Mr and Mrs M Slater

Swanage Bay Users Association (until
12 noon)

Mr G Willey

Swanage and District Licensed
Victuallers Association

Public Participation Time

There were no members of the public in attendance.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Ms N Elston, Mr R Johnson, Mr H Murray and Revd J Wood.

2) Market Matters

a) Contractual Agreement - Update

Further to minute 2 of the Swanage Town Market Committee held on 16th April 2007 it was proposed by Councillor Mrs Gainsborough, seconded by Councillor Mrs Marsh and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That consideration of the contractual agreement for Swanage Market be referred to the Finance and Performance Management Committee.

b) Operations Report

Ms Robinson reported that the market had got off to a good start on its re-opening in April, but that it had performed poorly in recent weeks due to the inclement weather. This was in-line with other local markets and it was agreed that in future evidence from comparable markets would be circulated prior to Tourism Committee meetings. It was noted that despite the difficult trading conditions the number of coaches had not declined significantly, 76 having visited this year compared to 82 over the same period in 2006.

It was reported that one stallholder had complained of their pitch being dirty and it was agreed that this be reported to the Town Council's Operations Manager.

Concern was expressed over the need for accurate weather information relating to Swanage and attention was drawn to problems with the web-cam at Peveril Point. It was agreed that this matter be raised with the appropriate officer at Purbeck District Council.

c) Any other matters relating to the market notified prior to the meeting or for future Tourism agendas

It was requested that the identification of new locations for market signs be placed on the agenda of the next Tourism Committee. It was agreed that Ms Robinson would prepare some information prior to the next meeting.

Ms L Robinson left the meeting at 9.50 a.m.

3) Boat Park Matters

a) Update on matters from Boat Park Committee meeting held 9th March 2007

i) Swanage Bay safety improvements - update

The Tourist Information Centre Manager provided an update on progress on the modification of the layout of the 5-knot buoys, improved speed restriction signage on the pier, and the printing of water safety leaflets. It was reported that an application has been made to have the speed restrictions in the bay marked on the Admiralty charts.

ii) Replacement fishermen's jetty – update

It was noted that it had been wrongly reported at the meeting held on 9th March 2007 that a specification and tender document had been prepared, although such documentation had been under preparation at that time. Disappointment was expressed that this documentation was not available as it was understood that the FIGF funding scheme had been extended until September 2007. The possibility of attaining funding from alternative sources was also raised. It was AGREED:

That the existing jetty replacement scheme be pursued and that an e-mail be sent to the District Engineer and the Head of Environmental Services stressing the urgency of the matter.

iii) Jetty – repairs to ladder

It was noted that this matter would be discussed with the Operations Manager.

iv) Boat Park Attendant’s Hut – installation of window

It was reported that the window had been installed and, on behalf of the Swanage Bay Users Association, Mr Marsh thanked the Town Council for implementing this.

b) Policy – letting of two fishermen’s huts

Further to minute 8) of the Boat Park Committee held on 15th September 2006 and minute 4)i) of the Boat Park Committee held on 8th December 2006, clarification was sought in respect of the Town Council’s policy relating to the letting of a second fisherman’s hut to an existing hut tenant. It was AGREED:

That an existing hut tenant may be offered a second hut when there is no other eligible person on the waiting list, on an annually reviewable basis.

c) Any other matters relating to the Boat Park notified prior to the meeting or for future Tourism agendas

The Chairman drew attention to the need to complete the resurfacing of the Boat Park and it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Pratt and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That this matter be referred to the General Operations Committee for consideration, with a view to carrying the work out during the 2007/08 winter season.

The possibility of introducing a concessionary launch pass for local boat owners was raised and the Tourist Information Centre Manager agreed to bring forward proposals for consideration at a future Tourism Committee meeting, prior to the setting of the estimates for 2008/09.

4) Matters arising from the Minutes of the Tourism and Environmental Committee Meeting held on 26th March 2007

It was reported further to minute 5)a) that a warning about feeding the seagulls had been incorporated into the new signs on the parish slipway.

Further to minute 4) the question of whether the Waverley Excursions paddle steamers will return to the pier was raised. It was noted that this was a matter for the Pier Trust.

5) Matters arising from the Draft Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 25th June 2007

It was noted that the wording of the last recommendation under minute 2) should be amended to make clear that the discretion to the Tourist Information Manager to reduce prices for last-minute Beach Hut bookings was granted for the remainder of the 2007 and the 2008 summer seasons.

6) Tourism Report

The Tourist Information Centre Manager reported on the following matters:-

a) Tourist Information Centre

Footfall figures continue to decrease, although telephone and e-mail enquiries remain constant. New ways of attracting visitors to the TIC are being explored: theatre gift vouchers are now sold and the possibility of acting as an agent for airport hotels and car parks is being explored.

b) Jazz Festival

The Jazz Festival was again very successful this year, although as the festival organisers distributed the tickets directly this has had a negative impact on footfall income to the TIC.

c) Destination Management System

The system is working well, although one problem remains in linking with accommodation providers' frontdesk systems. This is currently being addressed at a regional level.

7) Tourism Committee Priorities – Update

Further to minute 4) of the Tourism Committee meeting held on 25th June 2007, consideration was given to a number of the identified priorities.

a) Seafront Stabilisation Scheme

The urgent need for work to stabilise the seafront land was highlighted and consideration was given to an article from Seaford Town Council's newsletter describing a scheme that had been implemented there.

The importance of considering the introduction of a profit-making element, such as the development of new beach hut sites, to help offset the cost of the scheme was noted. Attention was drawn to the need for a feasibility study to consider a range of options.

After further discussion it was proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Mrs Patrick and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

To RECOMMEND:

That the seafront stabilisation project be retained by the Tourism Committee, with the aim of developing an aesthetically acceptable scheme.

It was further **RESOLVED:**

That initial enquiries be made of Purbeck District Council Planning Department.

b) Toilet Opening Times

Consideration was given to the existing opening hours of the public toilets operated by Swanage Town Council. It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Hadley:

To RECOMMEND:

That the Tourist Information Centre Manager be given delegated authority to agree with the Operations Manager extended opening hours for the Town Council's public toilets as and when required.

Upon being put to the Meeting SIX Members voted IN FAVOUR of the PROPOSITION and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the PROPOSITION was declared CARRIED.

Mr A Power left the Meeting at 11.30 a.m.

After a lengthy discussion of possible extended opening hours it was noted that there was a need to consider further the impact of vandalism and possible contractual implications. It was AGREED:

That the matter of Toilet Opening Times be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Tourism Committee.

c) Liaison with Event Organisers

It was reported that a list of event organisers has been drawn up and it was AGREED:

That the Chairman of the Tourism Committee and the Tourist Information Centre Manager be given delegated authority to meet with event organisers to discuss matters related to the operation of events on Town Council property.

d) 2012 Olympics

It was reported that contact details have been acquired for Team South West and the Dorset Working Group, who are co-ordinating Olympic events in this area. It was acknowledged that it is important that there is feedback from regional meetings either through the District Tourism Officer or the Tourist Information Centre Manager.

e) Information Gathering/Market Research

Brief consideration was given to the Purbeck Visitor Survey, 2006. It was AGREED:

That this matter, together with results from the last two surveys, be deferred for consideration to the next meeting of the Tourism Committee.

8) Any other matters relating to Tourism notified prior to the meeting

There were no items to report.

9) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

The need to address control over visitor moorings in the bay was noted.

The possibility of upgrading the front row of the Spa Bungalows to 'luxury' status was raised and the Tourist Information Centre Manager agreed to prepare proposals for the next meeting of the Committee.

The importance of considering key target segments at future meetings was highlighted.

A request from Wareham and Swanage Rugby Club for a promotional event on Swanage Beach during August or September was raised. It was AGREED:

That the request be put to the next Policy and Planning Meeting of the Town Council.

It was reported that the judging for Swanage in Bloom had taken place on 10th July and that the results would be made known in September. The important part played by children from Swanage First School was warmly recorded.

Members were informed of a recent request to place a red arrows simulator on the seafront during carnival week. Members agreed that this request had not been received in sufficient time to be considered for this year's event.

Members were also informed of a request for funding for events commemorating the artist Francis Newberry, due to take place in April 2008, which would be referred to a future Council meeting.

10) Exclusion of Press and Public

Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gainsborough and
RESOLVED:

That, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following matters.

Mr D Green, Mr A Lander and Mrs J Scadden left the Meeting at 11.50 a.m.

11) Boat Concessions – The Stone Quay

The Chairman reminded those present of the confidential nature of this item.

Councillor Mrs Patrick declared a personal interest in this item under the Model Code of Conduct by reason of a close relative being employed by an existing boat operator.

Two applications for boat concessions to operate from the Stone Quay were briefly discussed.

Mr R Marsh and Mr and Mrs M Slater left the Meeting at 12.00 noon.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Gainsborough and seconded by Councillor Mrs Patrick:

**To RECOMMEND:
That the Town Council does not give
consent for a fourth concession to
operate from the Stone Quay.**

Upon being put to the Meeting FIVE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the PROPOSITION and there were TWO ABSTENTIONS, whereupon the PROPOSITION was declared CARRIED.

It was then proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Mrs Patrick and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To RECOMMEND:

That the Town Clerk have delegated authority to discuss with both applicants the possibility of operating a third concession from the Stone Quay, giving consideration of the weather and the size of boats.

The Meeting closed at 12.05 p.m.
