

## Policy & Planning Meeting – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011

### Briefing Note

#### **Agenda Item 5) Proposals for Off-shore Wind Farm**

Some concern has recently been expressed regarding the proposals for the West of Wight offshore wind farm and the fact that the Town Council has not yet been invited to participate in any formal consultation. Included in the agenda papers is a copy of Eneco's proposals for the wind farm, and comments sent in from a concerned individual who has made contact with the Swanage and Purbeck Hospitality Association.

Eneco have held two consultation events at the Mowlem Theatre over the last year, to which the Town Council was not formally invited. Their website ([www.navitusbaywindpark.co.uk](http://www.navitusbaywindpark.co.uk)) states that there will soon be formal consultation in which they will be asking people to 'identify any problems you see with this location and any onshore works'. Planning permission will be sought not through local councils but through the Infrastructure Planning Commission (see <http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk>). The Commission's website notes that developers have to submit a Statement of Community Consultation with their application and must also engage with relevant local authorities. It is presumed that this refers to Purbeck District Council as our principal local authority.

#### **Action required:**

To note the current position, register the Town Council's interest via Eneco's website, liaise with Purbeck District Council, and consider inviting a representative of the company to make a public presentation prior to a forthcoming Town Council meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 6) Lengthsman Scheme**

Enclosed with the agenda papers are details of a scheme that has been developed by Dorset County Council to fund local lengthsman to carry out minor highway works at a parish level. Such schemes are now up and running across Dorset, in towns such as Ferndown and Bridport and in the two other town councils in Purbeck at Wareham and Lytchett and Upton. The County Council is offering a contribution of £10,000 per annum for this and the next two financial years to councils operating such a scheme.

The Town Council already undertakes a considerable amount of work on behalf of the County Council for which it receives no re-imburement. This financial year the County Council withdrew £4,000 of funding for weed clearance on the highway, although the Town Council has agreed to continue this work. The Town Council also maintains the verge at Herston and land at Herston Cross and on Court Hill that is in the County's ownership.

In order to acquire this funding the Town Council will have to nominate one of its employees as the local lengthsman who will carry out the majority of the work under the scheme. The time spent on lengthsman work will be recorded in the usual manner

on Town Council timesheets. The Town Council will also be asked to recognise the County's contribution and publicise information about the scheme in its newsletter and website.

The Operations Manager has some reservations regarding the additional work that the County Council may pass to the Town Council under this scheme. However, the nature of the work will be clearly set out in the agreement to be signed by both parties. The scheme will bring in an additional £10,000 to be spent on maintaining the town and will mean that a local response can be organised to address many of the minor issues that if not addressed generate considerable frustration amongst local residents, such as overhanging branches, overgrown verges and blocked ditches.

**Action required:**

To consider entering into an agreement with Dorset County Council to establish a lengthsman scheme for Swanage.

**Agenda Item 7)      Town Square – Potential for Improved Management**

Over many years the Town Square has proved one of the most difficult areas to keep clean and free of rubbish. Arising from the work of the Waste Management Working Party the possibility has been raised of developing a partnership with the owners of the food businesses in that area to better manage the Square and improve its appearance. The land was acquired in the 1890s under the Public Health Act 1875 as a 'public pleasure ground', and the Council must act in accordance with its legal responsibilities under this Act. No formal proposals have yet been made.

**Action required:**

To consider authorising the Waste Management Working Party to further explore this idea and bring forward a recommendation to a future full council meeting.

**Agenda Item 8)      Purbeck Olympic Network Group – Update**

Officers from Purbeck District Council have recently been meeting with their colleagues from Swanage and Wareham Town Councils to explore opportunities for the District arising from next year's Olympic sailing events at Weymouth and Portland. The group was recently widened out to include organisations such as the Hospitality Association.

One of the issues raised has been the possibility of increasing the number of moorings in the bay for summer 2012 to ensure that the town and local businesses can benefit from the greater number of pleasure boats that are likely to be visiting the area. A meeting with representatives of the Crown Estate, who manage the sea bed and licence moorings in the bay, is being held on the morning of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May and a report will be made to councillors under this agenda item.

## **Agenda Item 9) Appointment of Town Crier**

Mrs Jean Gibbs, a local resident, has recently approached the Town Council regarding the possibility of reviving the position of Town Crier. Her interest was kindled following the donation of the previous Town Crier's costumes and bells to a local charity shop. Mrs Gibbs has advertised for expressions of interest in the local press and had a small number of expressions of interest.

Enclosed with the agenda papers is a copy of the agreement that Wareham Town Council has with its Town Crier. The Town Crier is not an employee of the Council, but holds a civic position and is paid an annual honorarium of approximately £200. The Town Council also funds membership of the Town Crier's Guild.

In representing the town in competitions the Town Crier would help to raise awareness of Swanage and help generate a sense of civic pride by attending local events.

### **Action required:**

To determine whether the Town Council wishes to formalise the position of Town Crier and pay an honorarium. If so, to decide on an application process and possible competition to determine who the postholder will be.

## **Agenda Item 11) Swanage in Bloom – Request for Funding**

Mr Godfrey Moles has revived the Swanage in Bloom competition for 2011, after a hiatus last year following the death of Councillor Constance Gainsborough. Swanage will not be entering the Britain in Bloom competition, but there will be judging of local properties within the town. The Council has previously welcomed this and Mr Moles has organised a judging panel from across Dorset. He is seeking funding of £200 for the judges expenses and trophies. The Council has the power to make such a grant under section 137 of the Local Government Act, 1972 and there are adequate funds remaining in the budget.

### **Action required:**

To determine whether to make a grant of £200 towards the costs of organising the Swanage in Bloom competition.