

Minutes of the Meeting of the **GENERAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 9th AUGUST 2017** at **4.30 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor J Bishop

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Finch

Swanage Town Council

Councillor G Green

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Harris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor G Marsh

Swanage Town Council

Also present: -

Councillor T Morris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor W Trite

Swanage Town Council

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mr G Brookes

Operations Manager

Miss N Clark

Management Support Officer

Miss C Johnston

Operations Department Administration Officer

Mr I Leslie

Dorset Police

Mr M Green

James Smith Funeral Directors

Mr M Jones

Prospect Allotment Association
(Until 5.10 p.m.)

Mrs S Powell

Prospect Allotment Association
(Until 5.10 p.m.)

Mr A Lander

Swanage Fishermen's Association
(Until 5.25 p.m.)

Mr R Marsh

Swanage Fishermen's Association
(Until 5.25 p.m.)

Public Participation Time

There were no members of the public present.

1. Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Lejeune and Poultney.

2. Declarations Of Interest

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with paragraphs 9 – 13 of the Council's Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

The dispensation granted to Councillor Green in respect of Cemetery Matters was noted.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 19th April 2017

4. a) Matters raised by the Allotment Association

- i) **Signage** - it was reported that the new signage for the lower allotment car park had yet to be erected.
- ii) **Water pipe** – the Operations Manager would be arranging for the water pipe to be buried more deeply in due course.

5. Cemetery Matters

b) **To report the waiving of a memorial fee in extraordinary personal circumstances** – on behalf of the family, Mr Malcolm Green expressed thanks and appreciation to the Town Council.

c) **Matters raised by James Smith Funeral Directors**

- i) **Meadowland burial ground** – Mr Malcom Green gave thanks to the Operations Manager and his team for the improvement works carried out in the meadowland cemetery. Positive feedback had been received about the wild flowers now growing.

6. a) **FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group) – funding opportunities** – it was reported that this matter had been referred to the July Council Meeting for consideration, at which Members had agreed in principle to support the proposed project to extend the western slipway and amenities of the fishermen’s facility at the Boat Park.

8. **Running track on King George’s playing field** – it was reported that discussions with Purbeck Runners were ongoing.

4. Allotment Matters

a) Matters raised by the Allotment Association

i) Allotment road

Concerns had been raised by the Allotment Association following a minor incident involving two cars on a bend in the road, near to the entrance/exit of the allotments. Comments were made about the height of overgrown plants on an allotment plot adjacent to the bend in the road, which may cause poor visibility for road users.

The Operations Manager confirmed that he would liaise with the plot holder to reduce the height of the plants in the interests of safety.

ii) Water pipe

It was reported that the damaged water pipe had been repaired and re-buried, although it was felt that the pipe was too shallow and may be affected by winter weather conditions. The Operations Manager confirmed that he would therefore review the situation.

iii) Car parking

Concerns were raised regarding the limited amount of parking available at the allotments, and the use of the lower parking area by non-allotment holders. A request was therefore made for new signage to be erected to advise that the car park was provided by the Town Council for sole use of allotment holders.

The Operations Manager confirmed that he would also review the car parking area at the top of the allotment track.

iv) Event – Allotment vegetable/flower show on Rabling Green

It was confirmed that the annual show would take place on Rabling Green on Sunday 27th August 2017.

5. Cemetery Matters

a) Pre-purchase of grave spaces by family of deceased – Establishment of a time limit

Consideration was given to a request received from a local family, who had previously moved out of the area, to purchase a grave plot next to a family member's grave in Godlingston Cemetery. The family member had been interred in May 2016.

A discussion ensued during which it was reported that at present, although there was no set time limit, it was requested that the purchase of adjacent plots were made at the time of interment, as a combined purchase rather than a separate purchase at a later date. However, some discretion had been executed in the past of up to six months thereafter. A question was raised as to which family members would be permitted to pre-purchase a grave space.

Concerns were raised that that the time limit currently imposed was not long enough. Members concurred that that an appropriate policy needed be agreed and included in the cemetery regulations, and it was therefore proposed by Councillor Bishop, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

TO RECOMMEND:

That the cemetery regulations be amended to permit the purchase of a neighbouring burial plot by an immediate family member of the deceased, as long as the plot is still available, and that delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk to use his discretion on a case by case basis.

b) Matters raised by James Smith Funeral Directors

Consideration was given to a letter received from James Smith setting out concerns regarding recent delays experienced by members of the public with the registration of deaths in Swanage. This had delayed the arrangement of some funerals and was considered to be unacceptable.

A discussion ensued and Members were in agreement that the Town Council needed to make the Registration Service aware of the dissatisfaction with the current level of service. It was further agreed that these concerns should be brought to the attention of the local MP Richard Drax, and County Councillor Tritte would also be requested to raise the matter within DCC.

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Green and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That this matter be referred to the next Monthly Council Meeting being held on 21st August 2017 for further consideration, and that a strongly worded letter be sent to the Registration Service expressing the Council's disappointment with the current level of service being experienced in Swanage.

Mr M Jones and Mrs S Powell left the meeting at 5.10 p.m.

6. Fishermen's Huts and Jetties

a) Matters raised by Swanage Fishermen's Association

Further to the recent meeting between the Town Council, Swanage Fishermen's Association and the FLAG, an enquiry was raised regarding next steps. It was noted that the District Council's Regeneration Manager would contact the Association regarding moving forward with the grant application.

Disappointment was expressed regarding the levying of a charge to occupiers of the fishermen's huts by the Angling Club for keys to access the Club's toilet facilities. This concern was noted.

An enquiry was raised as to whether rings would be reinstalled on the boat park slipway to facilitate the hauling of fishing boats in bad weather. It was agreed that the Operations Manager would liaise with the fishermen to find a solution prior to the onset of winter.

Mr A Lander and Mr R Marsh left the meeting at 5.25 p.m.

7. Waste Management Issue

a) Provision of dog bins and related matters

Consideration was given to a letter received regarding issues being experienced with abandoned dog waste/bags leading to/from Priests Way (off of Benlease Way), and a request made for a new dog waste bin at this location.

A discussion ensued and concerns were again expressed regarding the continuing problem of dog fouling in the town. It was reported that the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) would not be providing any new dog waste bins in the town in the future and had, in fact, reduced the number of its bins from eight to four. It was noted that the Town Council currently provided 65 dog waste bins, however, Members agreed that dog waste was the responsibility of DWP. Suggestions were made that a review of bin locations should be undertaken and reviewed regularly, an up to date map of the locations would be useful (to share on the Council's website and Facebook page), and possible new signage to direct dog owners to the bins.

The Council continued to work in partnership with Dorset Dogs to advise dog owners about best practice, and the Dorset Dogs officer had previously offered to undertake a survey of hot spots in the town for dog waste (in conjunction with the Depot/ Enforcement Officer and DWP), and would be willing to attend these areas to speak to dog owners and provide information and distribute 'goody bags'. It was therefore agreed that officers should make contact with the relevant parties to discuss further.

The Council's Waste Management Working Party would be meeting with DWP in due course and the issues raised would be discussed at that meeting, and reported back to a future Committee Meeting for further consideration.

b) Street litter bins

Concerns had been raised regarding the number and size of street litter bins, which were considered to be inadequate during the summer season, and issues had regularly been experienced with overflowing bins and seagulls. The Chairman reported that this matter would also be raised at the Council's Waste Management Working Party Meeting with DWP, and the outcome reported back to a future Committee Meeting.

8. Tree Charter – to consider becoming a Tree Charter Branch

An overview was given of an initiative for local councils to participate in the Tree Charter by becoming a Charter Branch. As a Charter Branch the Council would join a growing network of people passionate about trees, helping to promote/support the ten principles of the new Tree Charter.

Following a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield and seconded by Councillor Harris:

That the Town Council agrees to become a Tree Charter Branch, subject to further consideration at a future Monthly Council Meeting.

Upon being put to the Meeting, FIVE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition, ONE Member voted AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

9. The Parade railings & Shore Road barriers - how to fund refurbishment / Improvements

Complaints had been received regarding the poor condition of The Parade railings and the Shore Road barriers. The Operations Manager confirmed that a site meeting had been held with representatives from DCC, and that costings would be provided for the refurbishment/replacement of the railings/barriers for consideration at a future Committee Meeting. In view of the sizeable costs anticipated for these works, a question was raised as to whether this work should be on a 'priority' list, or whether it could be deferred to a later date.

The Environment Agency would be giving a presentation regarding coastal change in Swanage at the August Council Meeting, and it was possible that improvements to the railings/barriers could be included in any proposed sea defence scheme. It was therefore agreed that, as further information was required, this matter would be deferred to a future Committee meeting.

10. Anti-vandalism / graffiti campaign – discussion of outline proposals

A meeting had recently been held with PCSO Iain Leslie to discuss regular instances of graffiti seen in the Sandpit Field shelter, and to gain advice/consider the different ways in which to combat vandalism and graffiti in the town.

PCSO Leslie gave details of a successful project in Corfe Castle whereby a shelter in a play area, which had previously been the subject of vandalism and graffiti, had been transformed by a local artist with a mural of Corfe Castle, and trees made of handprints. A local school had been tasked with creating ideas/a design for the mural, which once completed coated with anti-graffiti paint.

A discussion ensued during which Members agreed that a similar project could be undertaken for the Sandpit Field shelter, and that local schools should be invited to take part in the creation of a design/artwork for the shelter. A suggestion was made that each school could be tasked with a topic, e.g. Jurassic, quarrying, fishing, Victorian. PCSO Leslie also reported that some builders' merchants operated 'community project' sponsorship schemes and would consider providing the anti-graffiti paint, which could be expensive.

It was proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Communications Working Party be authorised to discuss the establishment of a graffiti strategy, the details to be reported back to a future Committee Meeting.

11. Operations Manager's report

• **Health & Safety report**

The Operations Manager provided an update on health and safety at work and was pleased to report that during the last quarter there had been no reported incidents of slips and trips causing injury, nor for RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences). Tool box talks continue on a daily and weekly basis. Fire safety drills and testing are

undertaken continuously for all council buildings and all risk assessments are currently being renewed and updated. Thanks were given to the emergency services for their assistance during carnival week.

- **Boat Park contracted works**
The tender documents for the Boat Park stabilisation works are awaited and will be brought to Council in due course. A recommendation will be required from the relevant working party to proceed to the tender stage.
- **Public Toilet refurbishment schemes**
Upgrades are due for King George's & Mermond Place, with improvements to facilities at the Town Hall and Beach Gardens to introduce disabled access. The Operations Manager has a meeting with Dorset County Council next week to agree the final draft proposals prior to presentation to the working party, for approval to proceed to tender.
- **Bowling Green upgrade**
The closing date for tenders for installation of the artificial bowling green is Monday 14th August 2017.
- **Tourist Information Centre buildings works upgrade**
A number of minor works remain to be addressed prior to the release of the retention fee. This will take place after an inspection, currently planned for September.
- **Heritage Toilets**
The toilets currently have a leaking roof. The building belongs to Purbeck District Council who will be carrying out a condition survey in the near future.
- **Seawall defences**
The coping stones at the parish slipway are to be re-set. The Operations Manager is waiting for the contract.
- **Electrical safety checks**
Electrical checks on council owned property are on-going under the IEE regulations. Portable appliance testing has been completed.
- **Emergency tree works**
Two holme oak trees at Godlingston Cemetery have been cut down due to inclement weather causing splitting in the tree bases. Both trees were in danger of falling. The cost of these works was £1,800.
- **Dog Fouling**
Despite signage and additional dog fouling patrols, dog mess continues to be a problem, particularly in Northbrook Cemetery and at King George's Playing Field. Some signage has been removed from the fence at Northbrook cemetery.
- **General public areas**
A clean-up is currently ongoing after the carnival in preparation for RNLI week. Sandpit Field is in a rather poor condition due to all the events held there recently.
- **Vandalism**
Acts of vandalism are carried out daily at King George's Field and Mermond Place. Broken bottles and broken glass are seen in both areas regularly. The shelter on Sandpit field suffers constant graffiti attacks and also damage has been caused to its wall surround. Safety railings around the Skate Park have been damaged and a ladder at the children's play area

at King George's has been ripped off and smashed. This is after repairs already carried out. Graffiti has appeared at both Shore Road and King George's toilets, several door cubicle latches were broken at King George's and Battlegate toilets have had their doors kicked in. Toilet hand driers have also been broken. There have also been more snapped off door retaining hooks at Shore Road beach huts as well as small surface fire damage to the huts. There has been damage made to the basketball court fencing at Beach Gardens and two benches on The Downs have been damaged. Damage has appeared at the clock shelter and Shore Road seating has been smashed and suffered graffiti attacks. There has also been damage to the bench at Prospect Crescent and three damaged/smashed seats at the bandstand. The public conveniences have suffered broken hand driers, broken locks and sixty bolts snapped off. Councillor Green requested the costs of the results of the vandalism.

Congratulations were given to the council workforce for their sterling work prior to carnival week.

Councillor Trite joined the meeting at 6.15 p.m.

12. Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

- a) **Staff request to wear shorts in the summer months** - the Operations Manager agreed to review the matter.
- b) **Memorial benches** – a request was made to review the material of Town Council memorial benches. The Town Clerk confirmed this would be an agenda item at the next meeting to review the existing policy.

Thanks were given to the Operations Manager and his Team for the first class condition of the town's public spaces.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 22nd November 2017 at 4.30 p.m.

The Meeting closed at 6.20 p.m.
