

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE**  
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY,**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> NOVEMBER 2017** at **10.00 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Finch

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor G Green

Swanage Town Council

Councillor G Marsh

Swanage Town Council

Councillor T Morris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-

Mr M Norris

Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre

Mr D Rawsthorn

Swanage Railway

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Miss N Clark

Acting Administration and Communications  
Manager

Miss C Johnston

Operations Department Administration  
Officer

Miss H Lagden

Tourism Manager, PDC

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services Manager and Business  
Development Officer

Ms S Tattersall

Acting Visitor Services Assistant Manager

Mr M Boo

Tour de Coast Project – until 10.40 a.m.

**Public Participation Time**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Bishop and Trite.

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.

3) **Matters arising from Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017**

There were no matters raised.

4) **Matters arising from the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017**

It was reported that the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting had been held

in the newly refurbished Tourist Information Centre and had been well attended. Updates were given on the following:

- A National Trust representative had been welcomed onto the Committee.
- A presentation had been given by the Environment Agency on the future management of coastal change in Swanage.
- Swanage RNLI Lifeguard Service – it was recommended that the lifeguards should return in 2018 at the same location on Main Beach.
- Five knot enforcement in the bay – it had been two years since there had been any enforcement by the District Council of the Pleasure Boat Byelaws. Concerns were again raised regarding safety in the bay, and the District Council, having responsibility for the byelaws, would be approached to explore options for the 2018 season.

Thanks were given to the TIC Team for the warm welcome and hospitality.

**5) Tour de Coast Daymark Project – presentation from Mr Marcial Boo**

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Mr Marcial Boo to the meeting.

Mr Boo gave a presentation on the Daymark Project. It was explained that the UK Charity Tour de Coast was proposing to install 100 Daymarks in special places around Britain's coast. It was noted that Daymarks had been 18<sup>th</sup> Century navigational aids so that sailors had known where they were in the daytime.

An invitation had been extended to the Town Council to consider becoming part of this new national 'tourism network'. The Charity would also be applying for sponsorship and grant funding during 2018.

The Daymarks had been designed by the Royal College of Art, would be durable and weatherproof, and cost circa £6,500 to make, transport and install. The Daymarks would be numbered 1 to 100, and Swanage, if installed, would be No. '7'. A buried 'iBeacon' near the structure would 'push' information to nearby mobile phones, and a mobile app would also be available. It was hoped that the Daymarks would assist in the promotion and development of coastal tourism.

A copy of the presentation slides was provided to Committee Members, and a 'question and answer' session ensued. During the discussion the general consensus was that agreement in principle should be given to the installation of a Daymark, however, Members felt that further information was required, and potential suitable locations explored, before a final decision could be made.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Morris:-

That support in principle be given to the installation of a Daymark in the Swanage area, subject to further information being obtained, and suitable locations explored, for consideration at a future meeting.

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

Committee Members thanked Mr Boo for the informative presentation, and Mr Boo left the meeting at 10.40 a.m.

**6) Beach Gardens – consideration of kiosk improvements**

Consideration was given to a Briefing Note prepared by the Visitor Services Manager setting out proposals for improvements to the Beach Gardens Kiosk for the 2018 season. The total estimated cost of the works would be £3,000, and would include essential electrical improvements, changes to the internal layout of the kiosk, which would provide

a small indoor seating area, and the installation of Wi-Fi.

It was reported that positive feedback had been received from customers regarding the improvements made during the 2017 season, and it was anticipated that these further enhancements would build on this and generate additional income for the Town Council.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Marsh, seconded by Councillor Green and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That a budget of up to £3,000 be approved to enable the Visitor Services Manager to undertake improvements to the Beach Gardens Kiosk, as laid out in the works specification included in the Briefing Note.

#### **7) Tourist Information Centre (TIC) – Retail Policy**

Consideration was given to a Briefing Note prepared by the Visitor Services Manager which provided an update on the TIC's retail operations and existing stock. A review was being undertaken of the TIC's current retail offerings and agency services to ensure that the arrangements continued to provide value for money for the Town Council. It was felt that the TIC should be used to promote local high quality products, and continue to develop and expand its range of goods to complement its visitor information services in 2018/19.

During the discussion concerns were raised that other local businesses sold the same/a similar range of goods, and it was felt that careful consideration needed to be given to this request. A suggestion was made that a working party should be formed which could review the TIC's proposed Retail Policy in greater detail, and present its findings to a future Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee Meeting. It was therefore **AGREED:**

That a working party be appointed, consisting of Councillors Bonfield, Finch and Green, and relevant members of the Tourist Information Centre Team, to review the TIC's proposed Retail Policy in greater detail, and present its findings to a future Policy, Finance and Performance Management Meeting for further consideration.

#### **8) Events**

##### **a) Update on 2017 season**

The Visitor Services Manager gave a brief report on the more than 30 events that had been held on Town Council property over the last 12 months. A number of these were new to the town, including the Paddleboard Championships. A meeting would be held with event organisers in early December to encourage networking and build relationships.

##### **b) Provisional requests for 2018**

A schedule was presented to the Committee listing requests from event organisers for permission to use Town Council property during 2018. This had been divided into two sections, the first listing new events, and the second setting out the full programme of events that had been notified so far.

The Visitor Services Manager reported that if the Committee gave provisional approval to these requests, final consent would not be granted until officers had received an event plan, risk assessment, user agreement and proof of insurance, which were required at least 6 weeks in advance of each event.

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

That the requests from event organisers for permission to use Council land during 2018, as set

out in the schedule prepared by the Visitor Services Manager, be approved, subject to submission of the required documentation at the appropriate time.

**c) Concessionary use of Swanage Town Council's car parks**

Further to recent discussions regarding the support provided by the Town Council to event organisers, consideration was given to the regularisation of car parking arrangements. It was noted that over the years ad-hoc agreements had been put in place, and there was a need to ensure that all event organisers were treated equitably.

Consideration was given to a schedule of parking requests received from event organisers during 2017.

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

That all event organisers that request free car parking be offered a maximum of 6 free parking spaces in the Town Council's car parks.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

That delegated authority be granted to the Visitor Services Manager to authorise free use of the section of Broad Road car park immediately to the south of Prince Albert Gardens in relation to events held at that location.

**9) Heritage Group – update on plans for the future**

An update was provided following a recent meeting of the Heritage Group, the membership of which consisted of representatives of the Pier, Durlston Country Park, Swanage Railway and Swanage Museum, together with the Visitor Services Manager and Tourism Manager. It was noted that the Visitor Services Manager had agreed to chair the meetings. The principal topic under discussion had been the funding of a new tear-off map for the town, but it had been agreed that future meetings would focus on the wider question of how best to market Swanage as a visitor destination.

**10) Budget Setting 2018/19 – The Shore Beach Huts.**

**a) Review of Tourism Budgets**

A brief update was given on the Tourism Budgets for 2017/18, relating to the TIC, Beach Huts, Boat Park and Beach Gardens, together with provisional estimates for 2018/19. Proposals for advertising and promotion, IT improvements, stock purchasing and commission payments were considered. It was proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the draft estimates for 2018/19 be taken forward to the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee for further consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2018/19.

**b) The Shore Beach Huts - consideration of enhancements**

Consideration was given to the possibility of making budget provision for improvements to the doors and locks of the Shore Road Beach Huts during the winter of 2018/19. The potential to carry out this work on a rolling programme over a number of years was noted.

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

That the Visitor Services Manager and Operations

Manager be requested to work up a more detailed proposal for consideration by the Seafront Enhancement Working Party.

**c) Beach Wi-Fi**

The Visitor Services Manager introduced the possibility of installing free Wi-Fi along Shore Road, which could be accessed from the Council's beach huts. It was noted that this facility was available in some nearby seaside towns. The TIC already had free public Wi-Fi and it was suggested that this could be better promoted, alongside other businesses that offered this service. It was AGREED:

That the possible introduction of beach Wi-Fi be referred to the Seafront Enhancement Working Party, together with the beach hut enhancements.

**d) Scale of Charges 2018/19 – Recommendation to Estimates Meeting**

Consideration was given to the draft scale of charges for the Boat Park, Beach Gardens and TIC for 2018/19, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Green and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the draft scale of charges for 2018/19 be taken forward to the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee for further consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2018/19.

**11) Tourism Reports**

**a) Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer**

The VSM reported on his first twelve months in the role, he was pleased with progress and customer service improvements made to date. Updates were given on the achievements and actions that the Visitor Services Team had implemented in 2017, which included:

- **TIC building** - the Team had moved into the newly refurbished building in April 2017, which had been re-launched as the 'Swanage Information Centre'.
- **Dorset Tourism Awards 2017** – the Team had won 'Gold' in the Visitor Information Service of the Year' category. Congratulations were extended to the Team for this significant achievement. The District Council's TIC Team had won 'Silver', and Swanage Railway had achieved 'Silver' in the 'Large Attraction' category.
- **Green Tourism Awards** - the TIC had achieved a 'Bronze' award.
- **Beach Huts** – income was up 15% compared to 2016/17 (as at November 2017). The beach hut webpages had been redesigned to be more 'user-friendly'. A successful 'win a beach hut' competition had been held, which had been 'boosted' on Facebook to reach a wider audience, with over 800 email addresses being collated for future beach hut marketing use. A new IT system was being secured to enable online selection and payment for customers in 2018/19.
- **Events** – in excess of 30 events had been supported by the Town Council in 2017.
- **Boat Park** – a new online payment system was being procured to manage boat park administration and enable online payments. A waiting list was held, in excess of available spaces.
- **Beach Gardens** – new signage had been installed around the site and at Battlegate, and new leaflets had been designed and published.
- **Artisans on the beach** – this event would run from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 7<sup>th</sup> January 2018 from 'The Shore' beach huts, and would include a 'Santa's Grotto' this year.

- **Staffing** – the team had a number of new members who were settling in well, and the VSM introduced Sarah Tattersall to the Committee. Sarah was undertaking the role of Acting Assistant Visitor Services Manager at the present time, following the recent departure of Sarah Lovett to pastures new.
- **Tourism Manager** – thanks were given to Holly Lagden, Tourism Manager, for her invaluable support throughout the year.

## b) Tourism Manager

The Tourism Manager gave updates on the following:

- **Visit Dorset** – the new website launched in February 2017 was performing well, circa 600 businesses across Dorset had become members, and received over six million page views per annum.
- **VisitDorsetBiz Twitter account** – currently followed by 900+ businesses.
- **Marketing activities planned and Visit Dorset Instagram, Facebook and Twitter** – social media channels now had 55,000+ followers.
- **Dorset Tourism Awards 2017** – congratulations were again given to the Swanage and Purbeck Teams on their awards.
- **Projects planned for 2018** – including an extension to the work undertaken with the South West Coast Path, creating itineraries, and new coastal path projects including a new app, with themes around ‘Timeless Coast’ and ‘Walk through time’.
- **Discover Purbeck and Swanage Information Centres** – job ‘shadowing’, team building and training sessions were planned.
- **Swanage Chamber of Trade AGM** – attendance at the recent AGM to introduce the role of Tourism Manager, and how the District and Town Councils jointly promote tourism in Swanage and Dorset.
- **PurbXperience magazine** – continued to provide editorial information to the publishers.
- **Howard’s End filming in Swanage** – promotion of the filming and the connection to Swanage on Visit Dorset and via Social Media.

## 12) Updates from Outside Representatives

### **Swanage Railway**

It was reported that it had been a ‘mixed’ season. The trial service to Wareham had been successful and 13,000+ passengers had been transported, which had exceeded expectations. The Railway were now considering the 2018 Wareham service.

Christmas train services would commence soon, and it was noted that the Christmas luncheon trains had already sold out, and the ‘Santa Specials’ were 80+% full.

Details were given about the Portland Port Cruise Event, where good contacts had been made, and Railway representatives continued to attend trade shows to promote Swanage and the Isle of Purbeck and its attractions. It was reported that the new ‘The essential visitor’s guide to SWANAGE’ leaflet had been a useful marketing tool.

### **Swanage Jazz Festival**

It was reported that fundraising had been successful, a new promoter had been found, and the festival would be going ahead in 2018.

### **Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre**

It was reported that it had been a reasonable year, with income up circa 3% on the previous year. An automatic visitor counting system would be in place next season.

### **Proposals for a combined TIC and Museum & Heritage Centre**

Advice was being received from the Heritage Lottery Fund Development Manager, South West Team, and a grant bid would be submitted to the HLF Resilient Heritage Funding stream in due course. Mr Martin Cooke, Director of Heritage & Leisure (project development specialists), would be attending the next working party meeting in December

to progress funding discussions.

**13) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

a) **Proposals for a combined TIC and Museum & Heritage Centre – update** – there were no further updates to be given.

b) **Town Council Public Toilet refurbishment programme** – in light of the public toilet refurbishment scheme, it was agreed that details of the proposed closures over the winter months, and the alternative toilet facilities available, should be well publicised on the Council’s website and Facebook page.

**14) Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 12.05 p.m.

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