

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY,**
21st JUNE 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 W Trite

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-

PCSO I Leslie

Swanage Neighbourhood Policing Team

Mr M Norris

Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre

Mr D Rawsthorn

Swanage Railway

Mr A Tuckey

Durlston Country Park

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Miss N Clark

Management Support Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services Manager & Business
Development Officer

There were two members of the public present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor Poultney, Miss L Bruce & Mr C Hornsby (RNLI Lifeguard Supervisors), Mr R Brummitt (Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre), Mr R Johnson (Swanage Pier Trust), and Miss H Lagden (Tourism Manager, PDC).

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 8th March 2017**

9) **Tourism Reports – Beach - #2 Minute Beach Clean station board and new/improved beach signage**

It was reported that the #2 minute Beach Clean station board had arrived and would be in situ on the seafront imminently. The new beach signage had not been installed as yet. However, temporary signage was now in situ to make people aware that lifeguards were on patrol on Swanage beach. The wording/format of the new

signs was being developed by the Operations Manager and the Visitor Services Manager (VSM) and, once approved, would be installed in time for the 2018 season.

4) National Trust – invitation to nominate Outside Representative to serve on the Tourism Committee

An invitation had been extended to Mr Laurie Clark, General Manager, National Trust, Purbeck Office, to attend the Tourism Committee Meeting. Mr Clark had been unable to attend the meeting, however, he had advised that he would very much like to attend future meetings of the Committee, and asked whether a member of his team could attend future Beach Management Advisory Committee Meetings.

The Town Council was keen to work in partnership with local organisations and attractions, and Committee Members were in agreement that the National Trust should hold seats on the Tourism and Beach Management Advisory Committees.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Marsh and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the National Trust be invited to send
Outside Representatives to future Tourism
and Beach Management Advisory Committee
Meetings.

5) Heritage Group – update on plans for the future

There were no further updates to give at this time.

6) Tourism Reports

a) ‘The essential visitors’ guide to SWANAGE’ leaflet – update

It was reported that the leaflet had been distributed to local holiday parks, Tourist Information Centres, and group travel shows. The main marketing drive would be programmed to encourage off peak visitors to the area.

b) Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and Beach Gardens (BG) – update

The VSM was pleased to report that a new Visitor Services Assistant Manager had been appointed, and was settling in well. A new Visitor Services Assistant would be starting next week.

The TIC team continued to streamline and enhance administration functions, and was driving forward with customer service improvements, which had had a very positive effect on the TIC’s Trip Advisor customer service score. New external signage was nearing completion, and there was also an improved range of goods available for sale. The new map had not been installed as yet.

Councillor Whitwam left the room at 10.20 a.m.

The BG Open Day on 1st April 2017 had been very successful, with attendees from the day returning regularly for putting, and coffee at ‘Tea on the Green’. BG was now fully staffed and open seven days per week.

Updates were also given on the following:

- **Boat Park (BP)** – repair/improvement works would need to be undertaken at the BP later this year, however, the slipway was open and launch facilities were available.
- **Spa Retreats** – six new high quality beach huts would be delivered on 17th July 2017. The huts would include insulation, double glazing and window blinds. Promotional activities would commence imminently.
- **Beach Hut Hire** – the hiring of huts was going well, and the new online availability calendar and booking system had been very successful. An online

payment system was planned for later in the year.

- **Blue Flag and Seaside Award** – the VSM was proud to announce that for the 16th consecutive year Central Beach had again received the Blue Flag and Seaside Award, which confirmed that the beach met the highest environmental standards.

c) **Events for summer 2017**

Updates were given on the recent Swanage Fish Festival, and the N1SCO European Stand Up Paddleboard Championships 2017, which had been well attended. Feedback had been received regarding the quality and excellent organisation of the events. Drone video footage of the Paddleboard Championships would follow, which could be used as a tourism promotional tool in the future.

It was reported that 90 contestants had taken part in the paddleboard championships, with some having travelled from as far as Japan, Germany and Italy to be involved. A Swanage resident had taken third place in the veteran ladies category, having never competed before! It was hoped that further paddleboard events would be held in the future.

The second Purbeck Pirate Festival would be held on 1st-2nd July, followed by the Jazz Festival 14th-16th July, and Swanage Regatta and Carnival Week 29th July-5th August.

Councillor Whitwam returned to the meeting at 10.30 a.m.

d) **Visit Dorset Tourism Partnership – update**

It was reported that the Visit Dorset corporate website had been launched on 20th June 2017. The revamped site included a number of new exciting features, and would continue to expand over the coming months. The VSM encouraged everyone to take a look, and to provide any feedback to PDC's Tourism Manager. Please visit: www.visit-dorset.com/trade

Further updates were given on behalf of the Tourism Manager as follows:

- **Visit Dorset website performance for STC attractions over the past year:**
 - Swanage Beach 27,438 views
 - Beach Huts 11,880 views
 - Town Hall as a wedding venue 1,328 views

The VSM advised that he would be reviewing these statistics in greater detail.

- **Discover Purbeck Information Centre** – there was a new Centre Manager in post, Mr Simon Campbell, who was looking forward to meeting the Committee at a future meeting. Training, mentoring, and sharing of staff, would be undertaken between Purbeck and Swanage TICs, to ensure that the same high quality customer service standards were consistent across the two offices.
- **The Enid Blyton trail** – an update given on articles published so far, to encourage more visits to Swanage and Purbeck.
- **The 12th Annual Dorset Residents' Week** - this had proved to be the most successful promotion to date, bringing in 3,461 vouchers, and 6,922 people to Dorset attractions. The attractions reporting the greatest take-up were Athelhampton House and Swanage Railway, who both recorded a total of 376 vouchers received.

7) **Updates from Outside Representatives**

Swanage Railway

It was reported that circa 6,000 visitors had attended the Strictly Bulleid Spring Steam Gala, being the Railway's best ever gala to date. Visitor numbers continued to grow, and

were up 12-13% year on year. The two-year trial rail service, reconnecting Swanage to Wareham and the mainline, had commenced on 13th June 2017, five days per week, four journeys per day. A feature on the Railway had appeared on the BBC One Show, and further filming had been undertaken at Corfe for the Enid Blyton Trail, which would be broadcast soon.

It was noted that the ‘Dunkirk’ film premiere would be held in London on 21st July 2017, and the Railway would undertake promotional activity on its website/social media in due course.

The Railway was proud to announce that it had been awarded the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service, and had attended a royal garden party. The Committee congratulated the Railway on this significant achievement, and also wished to extend congratulations to the thousands of volunteers who had given their time free of charge over the years.

Jazz Festival

This would be the last festival under the current management team. However, it was reported that a new team of London-based musicians had confirmed that they would wish to continue the festival, in a similar format, and an announcement would be made during the festival in July.

Swanage Museum and Heritage Centre

The Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South West had visited the Museum on 31st May 2017. Favourable feedback had been received, and advice given, which would be discussed at the next Museum Working Group Meeting being held on 26th June 2017.

Durlston Country Park

A new photography exhibition had opened on 20th June 2017 showcasing the works of pioneering photographer Helen Muspratt, whose studio opened in Swanage in 1928.

The Durlston Bus Service had commenced, this would be a half-hourly service, connecting the town’s car parks and heritage attractions.

The Park would be hosting circa 200 events this year, including a number of new dementia friendly events and a ‘memory’ café. Filming for a 10-part BBC wildlife show would also be undertaken and would showcase Swanage.

The Park’s Heritage Lottery Fundraising had reached £160,000, out of the £180,000 required. The HLF Bid was in the final stages, and all being well would be submitted in August 2017.

Swanage Neighbourhood Policing Team

The Team were preparing for the busy summer season, and a comment made that events that had taken place so far this year had been very well organised.

8) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

a) Proposals for a combined TIC and Museum & Heritage Centre – update – a further update would be available after the Museum Working Group Meeting being held on 26th June 2017.

b) Disability Access Improvements, and c) Accreditations for Swanage – it was agreed to include both items on the agenda of the next Committee Meeting. The Town Council was keen to make Swanage known for being disabled friendly, improvements to its toilet blocks were planned, and consideration would be given to matted access to the beach in due course. However, it was felt that further consideration needed to be given to where efforts should be focussed in the future, and a question was raised as to whether the Town Council, in conjunction with local attractions/organisations, could put together a pack to promote the town/its facilities.

d) Beach Recharge – an overview was given of the Swanage Coastal Change Forum Meeting held in May 2017. It was reported that the trial to deposit sand in the bay as a means to recharge the beach did not go ahead due to objections made by Natural England. However, SCCF anticipated that partner agencies would be able to develop proposals in coming months, led by the Environment Agency. The Channel Coast

Observatory was monitoring sand levels on the beach, which would support future funding bids, and a proper survey of the seabed would be undertaken in due course.

- e) **Wessex Water** – it was reported that a meeting had been held with a representative from Wessex Water to discuss planned improvements to the Swanage Sewage Works, and the discharges of screened sewage that had occurred from Peveril Point in May 2017, and in August 2016. It was noted that although these occurrences had not led to a downgrading of the ‘excellent’ classification of water quality at Swanage beach, any future incidents needed to be very carefully managed in terms of both environmental impacts and communications with the public.
- f) **Seagulls** – it was reported that increasingly aggressive behaviour had been seen, and a plea had again been made by the Town Council for members of the public to refrain from feeding the seagulls. An article had been posted on the Council’s website and Facebook page accordingly. A question was raised as to whether A5 copies of the Council’s seagull and Doggy Do Code signs could be installed in the beach huts, and displayed in local food businesses’ premises. The VSM confirmed that he was currently looking at ways to get these messages across. Comments were raised regarding recent issues seen with litter in the town, and it was reported that a meeting between the Town Council’s Waste Management Working Party and Dorset Waste Partnership would be held in early July to discuss these matters. The outcome of this meeting would be reported to the Operations Committee at its meeting in August.
- g) **‘Welcome to the Isle of Purbeck’ signage** – a proof of the design for the new signs was presented to Committee Members, which was favourably received. Congratulations and thanks were given to Mr D Norman and Mr L Fletcher who had championed this worthwhile initiative

9) **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 22nd November 2017, at the Town Hall at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.15 a.m.
