

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall on **Monday 13th June 2011 at 10.00 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor Mrs A Patrick

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor Mrs Bartlett

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor I Brown

Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mrs Marsh

Swanage Town Council

Councillor W S Trite (Town Mayor)

Swanage Town Council (From 10.30 a.m.)

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Wiggins

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-

Mrs K Delahay

STRATA

Mr R Johnson

Swanage Pier and Boat Park Users Group
Representative

Ms J Lane

Swanage & Purbeck Hospitality Association

Mr A Lander

Swanage Fishermen's Association

Mr G Willey

Swanage & District L.V.A.

Revd J Wood

Association of Churches Together

Also Present: -

Mrs C Anstey

Administration Assistant

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mrs C Hooper

Tourist Information Centre Supervisor

Ms H Lagden

Purbeck Tourism Officer

Public Participation Time

There was one member of the public present.

MR B. DELAHAY gave a brief outline of an iPod application for Swanage that he was in the early stages of designing. It was noted that any publicity to aid the tourism industry in Swanage would be welcomed by the Town Council.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Mr B Barker (Swanage & District Chamber of Trade & Commerce), Ms L Robinson (Thomas Ensor & Son) and Mr M Payne (Swanage Railway Co. Ltd.).

2) Market Matters

a) Operations Report from Ensors

In the absence of a representative from Ensors, the Chairman gave a report received by e-mail:

‘Although retailing in general is suffering from a downturn in public spending, Ensors can report a good start to the 2011 market season. Figures to date are slightly down on last year, but this could be attributed to Easter being later this year

and the market has in effect lost one market day compared to 2010. The market tolls have been held the same as last year, and Ensors are continuing with widespread advertising. A website for Ensors has now been set up, which has information for both the public and market traders'.

Given that it had not been possible for a representative of Ensors to attend recent Tourism Committee Meetings it was AGREED:

That the Chairman and Town Clerk meet with Ensors.

b) Market Venue

Concern was expressed that with the market being situated in Main Beach Car Park, after visiting the market the public would not necessarily be drawn into the town. It was questioned if it would be more beneficial to hold the market somewhere more central, for example, Shore Road. After a brief discussion it was reported that areas like Shore Road and the Pier would not be acceptable, due to exposure in adverse weather conditions and the logistics in setting up market stalls.

It was acknowledged that the town could benefit from something on a smaller scale, for example themed markets, and that this was something for future consideration both by the Town Council and the Hospitality Association.

3) Boat Park Matters

It was reported that numbers in the Boat Park were up on last year, and the waiting list had been reduced. Concerns had been raised with the condition and security of the Boat Park. It was noted that the working party comprising of the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Wiggins and representatives from the Angling Club and Fishermen's Association should meet to take this matter forward with possible improvements being made in the autumn.

4) Matters arising from Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 7th February 2011

The minutes were noted as agreed.

5) Beach Management Sub-Committee

a) Urgent Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th June 2011

It was reported that Purbeck District Council would no longer be funding and managing the installation and removal of the safe bathing zone buoys. It was highlighted that the safe bathing zone was necessary for Swanage beach to retain the Blue Flag for 2011. It was noted that due to the late notification for the withdrawal of funding from Purbeck District Council, this facility had not been included in the Town Council's budget for 2011/12. Due to the importance of this facility it was highlighted that the Town Council must ensure that the buoys are put in place as soon as possible. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Brown and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That matters be delegated to the Chairman, Councillor Trite and officers of the Town Council to put a plan in place and report to the Policy and Planning meeting due to be held 20th June 2011.

b) Beach Wardens' Hut

It was reported that the Town Council's beach wardens currently use a small beach hut on the seafront, and a small area in the T.I.C. for any basic first aid assistance and lost children. It was suggested that with an improved base on the seafront, with easy access both from the pavement and beach, the services of the beach wardens could be greatly enhanced. It was also suggested that with improved facilities, a beach flag system could be introduced and possible links with H.M. Coastguard would further enhance safety on Swanage Beach. The potential for sponsorship to fund the project was also discussed. It was proposed by Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bartlett and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That Councillors Brown and Mrs Patrick, together with the Town Council's Operations Manager and Tourist Information Centre Supervisor look at proposals for a new and improved beach wardens' hut, together with sponsorship.

6) Preparing Swanage for 2012 – Consideration of steps to ensure that Swanage is at its best for visitors in Olympic year

a) Condition of telephone kiosks

Consideration was given to a report expressing concern regarding the poor condition of the telephone boxes in the town. A proposal by B.T. for the town to adopt a telephone box was also noted. The importance of retaining the telephone boxes for their intended use was highlighted, notably the difficulty of obtaining a mobile signal in Swanage and its surrounding areas and as an English icon for visitors from overseas in Olympic year. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Patrick, seconded by Councillor Brown and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That Councillors Brown and Trite, together with officers of the Town Council form a strong response to B.T. highlighting the need to retain and maintain telephone boxes in the town for public use.

b) Rubbish in the Town

Consideration was given to an e-mail and comments, highlighting areas in the town that are blighted by overflowing bins and unsightly wheelie bins. It was highlighted that the District Council and Dorset Waste Partnership are ultimately responsible for waste disposal.

It was noted that education of the public may assist in addressing the problem with the possibility of notices placed at strategic points asking the public to please take rubbish home. Consideration could also be given to following the lead of other resorts in the area, and removing bins altogether. Despite initial problems, this had led to people taking their rubbish away and the situation had improved. This matter was being considered further by the Waste Management working party.

c) 'A' Boards

The increasing number of 'A' Boards on the pavements of the town was discussed. Attention was drawn to the difficulties these caused for pedestrians, wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs. After a brief discussion it was noted that the enforcement of 'A' Boards was the responsibility of Dorset County Council and it

was suggested that a way forward would be for contact to be made with local businesses asking for their co-operation in this matter.

d) Introduction of Flags

It was suggested that with the Olympics coming to Weymouth, it would be a warm welcome for visitors to the town to be greeted with a show of international flags, which could become a feature of the town and fly county flags through the year. It was AGREED:

That Councillors Bonfield and Mrs Bartlett take this idea forward and report to a future Tourism Committee Meeting.

7) Tourism Reports

Mrs C Hooper, Swanage Tourist Information Centre Supervisor, reported on the following matters:-

(a) Blue Flag

There had been a good start to the year and Swanage had been successful in retaining the Blue Flag for another year together with its Quality Coast award.

(b) Bathing Waters Profile

A bathing waters profile can now be accessed through the Town Council's website, which enables the public to be fully informed when choosing a safe and clean destination for their holidays. Several officers had also signed up to an alert system set up by 'Surfers Against Sewage' to act as a warning system for adverse conditions in the bay.

(c) Tourist Information

Beach hut bookings were being well received, and huts were in use very early in the season this year.

Ms H Lagdon, Purbeck Tourism Officer, reported on the following matters:-

(a) PDC Website

The Visit-Dorset website is really starting to perform with 30,400 unique visits in April 2011. During the last financial year it achieved 255,000 visits in only its second year since launching. Visit-Dorset is being updated at the end of this year bringing further improvements.

(b) TIC Update

During the last financial year, Swanage and Purbeck TIC's generated £35,936 of accommodation bookings to the local economy. Purbeck Information and Heritage Centre are still working on a project to move into the library in Wareham, and a report is being prepared to go to a Purbeck District Council policy group in August.

(c) The Map and Guide

Purbeck District Council Members had opted not to provide the budget for the shortfall in advertising funds for the Map & Guide this year due to financial restraints. Negotiations have taken place to seek further options but as yet no decision has been made as to whether the Map and Guide will be produced this year.

Ms K Delahay, STRATA reported on the following matter:-

a) Purbeck Art Weeks

Purbeck Art Weeks had been well received. Ticket sales for future dates were promising.

8) Swanage and Purbeck Hospitality Association – Update

The Hospitality Association representative reported that:

- The AGM held on 1st April 2011 had been well received.
- The membership is expanding, two recent additions being Swanage & District L.V.A and the Tank Museum.
- A £500 donation has been given to ‘Heroes Haven’.
- Over 250 places had been booked for the second walking festival to be held, next year’s festival was already in the planning stages.
- A Michaelmas Festival was being planned for Shore Road later in the year.

9) Durlston Project - Update

In the absence of a representative from Durlston Country Park, the Town Clerk reported that the Heritage Lottery project was making progress and the Head Ranger would be invited to a future Council meeting to report further on how the project is developing.

10) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

The representative of Swanage Hospitality Association requested that consideration be given to moving the time of future Tourism meetings to be more convenient for hoteliers and B and B proprietors.

11) Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Monday 7th November 2011.

The Meeting closed at 11.45 a.m.