

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY,**
22nd JUNE 2016 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:-

Mr B Adeney

Swanage Pier Trust

Mr M Norris

Swanage Museum

Mr D Rawsthorn

Swanage Railway

Also Present: -

Councillor G Suttle

Swanage Town Council
(until 10.25 a.m.)

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Miss N Clark

Management Support Officer

Miss C Johnston

Administration Officer

Miss H Lagden

Tourism Manager, Purbeck District Council
(until 10.30 a.m.)

Mr K Sheppard

Lifeguard Manager, RNLI
(until 10.10 a.m.)

There were three 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, PC K Hickman (Dorset Police), Mr R Brummitt (Swanage Museum) and Mr I Brown (MCA).

2) Declarations Of Interest

Members were invited to declare their interests and 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.

Item No. 4) - Councillor Marsh declared an interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being in receipt of a RNLI pension.

There were no other declarations to record on this occasion.

3) Matters arising from Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 6th March 2015

There were no matters raised.

Further to Standing Order No. 12) a) viii it was proposed by the Chairman and AGREED:

That Item 9. on the agenda be brought forward to Item 4., and that Items 4. & 5. be moved to Items 5. & 9. respectively.

4) RNLI Lifeguards – progress report following the launch of service, and update on operational procedures

Mr Kester Sheppard introduced himself to the meeting. Mr Sheppard was the RNLI Lifeguard Manager covering Weymouth, West Dorset & Swanage (from Swanage to Lyme Regis), and gave a brief update on lifeguard operations so far which included:

- There would be two lifeguards on duty each day, and it was anticipated that there would be a team of four lifeguards in the peak season, including some Swanage residents
- The service had commenced on spring bank holiday weekend, it had been a very busy time
- First Aid assistance had been provided, and the team had been first response for the ambulance service
- Positive feedback had been received from members of the public
- The team were now ‘gearing-up’ for the summer season and the priority would be to integrate with the local community/members of the public, beach concession operators, and Town Council staff

The Chairman thanked Mr Sheppard for attending the meeting.

Mr Sheppard left the meeting at 10.10 a.m.

5) ‘Welcome to the Isle of Purbeck’ signage

Further to Minute No. 56. 5) of the Monthly Council Meeting held on 6th July 2015, agreement in principle had been given to provide financial support for this new signage, and it was reported that Purbeck District Council had also agreed to contribute towards the cost.

Further to Minute No. 5) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 4th November 2015, letters had been sent to eight other local parishes to see if they could offer financial assistance, disappointingly only three responses had been received, all three had declined to be involved/assist. A discussion ensued and it was agreed that the signs, which would be sited at Sandbanks Ferry, Wareham Causeway and Wareham By-pass, would make a positive impression and assist in promoting the area. Queries were raised regarding what the funding shortfall would be, and whether there would be a picture on the signs. It was suggested that a picture of an ammonite could be included on the signs.

Following the discussion, at 10.15 a.m. the Chairman invoked Standing Order No.1 p. to briefly suspend the meeting so as to allow Committee Members to address members of the public and to ask questions relevant to Agenda Item 5).

The total cost to produce the new signs would be £3,381.19, and Committee Members were in agreement that a request should be made to the Town Council to approve a budget of up to £3,000 to meet any shortfall in contributions to Dorset County Council to enable the ‘Welcome to the Isle of Purbeck’ signage to proceed. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Marsh and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That under section 137 of the Local

Government Act 1972, the Town Council provides financial support of up to £3,000 towards the cost of providing new 'Welcome to the Isle of Purbeck' signage.

Councillor Suttle left the meeting at 10.25 a.m.

6) Creative Dorset

The Tourism Manager reported that she had attended the Creative Dorset 'Cultural Canapes' event at Blandford Brewery on 15th June 2016. This free event showcased the culture and local food and drink that Dorset had to offer.

It was reported that, after extensive consultation, Creative Dorset had developed a Culture and Tourism strategy, with the aim of creating business to business networking opportunities, and would look at ways of promoting Dorset arts, heritage/history, food & drink, and the natural environment. The 'Dorset Culture and Tourism Action Plan' had been established and would support culture and tourism organisations/businesses, details of which had been provided to Committee Members with the agenda paperwork.

7) Dorset Ambassador Scheme in Swanage

The Tourism Manager provided Dorset Ambassador information cards to Committee Members at the meeting.

It was reported that the Dorset Ambassador Scheme provided information and facts about what was on offer to visitors across Dorset, and offered a free online training programme to support front of house staff in tourism businesses, which would enhance customer service skills, and knowledge of Dorset and the town/area they worked in. The National Coastal Tourism Academy had developed the training with support from the Visit Dorset Tourism Partnership, and certificates would be awarded for modules which were successfully completed, which could be included as a qualification on CV's.

To register for free you could visit: www.dorsetambassador.co.uk, and a pin badge was available from the Visit Dorset Tourism Team which displayed the logo 'I'm a Dorset Ambassador'. Details of this noteworthy initiative would also be publicised locally by the Tourism Manager on the Swanage Facebook page.

8) New leaflet to promote Swanage and the surrounding areas and attractions – Update

A brief update was given by the Tourism Manager. The text had now been drafted and it was hoped that the new leaflet would be completed by August 2016.

It was reported that the Tourism Manager was delighted to be in discussions with Mr Tony Kerins, a local professional illustrator, about the possibility of an illustrated map of the local area. The District Council's graphic design team were currently working on a draft copy, and discussions were ongoing with Mr Kerins regarding the design and conditions of use of the map. It was hoped that the map would be available for the summer season and would be displayed at local TICs and transport stations.

It was confirmed that the new Swanage TIC branding had now been launched.

Miss H Lagden left the meeting at 10.30 a.m.

9) Shore Road Flagpoles – consideration of flags to be flown

It was reported that seven flagpoles had been erected in Shore Road as part of the seafront stabilisation scheme. Unfortunately, a structural defect had been identified and the poles had been taken down and safety/stress-tested. The poles were now back in place and ready to use. The flying of flags was heavily regulated, and the Town Clerk referred Committee Members to the Department for Communities and Local

Government's 'Plain English Guide to Flying Flags'. A discussion ensued and suggestions were made which included the following:

- To reinstate the Town Council's public conveniences location flag
- International flags to welcome overseas visitors
- Rudesheim - town twinning crest
- To erect flags for specific events/special occasions, e.g. Armed Forces weekend, the Union Jack
- Environmental award flags, e.g. Blue Flag and Seaside Award
- The Dorset flag
- A competition to design a Swanage flag, e.g. involve local schools
- To undertake a review of tourism statistics to identify which nationalities were the most frequent visitors to Swanage
- The Town Council's Communications Working Party to discuss the possibility/design of a 'local' flag

Following the discussion, at 10.37 a.m. the Chairman invoked Standing Order No.1 p. to briefly suspend the meeting so as to allow members of the public to address the Committee with information relevant to Agenda Item 9).

Committee Members felt that further research needed to be undertaken before a decision could be made, and it was therefore proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That delegated authority be given to Councillors Finch and Bonfield to research and consider options for flag flying in Shore Road and, subject to confirmation of flag flying regulations, formulate a proposal for further consideration at a future Council Meeting, to be achieved within existing budgets.

10) Tourism Reports

There were no further updates to be given at this time.

11) Updates from Outside Representatives
Swanage Railway

It was reported that after last year's record breaking passenger numbers (217,080), figures were holding up well this year despite the poor weather, and an early Easter. Updates were also given on the following:

- April Steam Gala – saw the first timetabled passenger trains, between Norden and the River Frome bridge, Wareham, since the branch was closed in 1972
- South West Trains – ran a special diesel train from Salisbury on 20th April 2016
- Annual Diesel Gala and Beer Festival in May which attracted over 4,000 passengers
- The Railway had succeeded in gaining a grant of £75k from a recent Department of Transport Heritage and Community Rail Tourism Innovation Competition, the funds would help finance main line safety and communication equipment, and upgrade of five carriages to main line standard
- The new level crossing at Norden was now commissioned/in operation
- The first rail tour of the year arrived from Derby on 11th June 2016 with 450 passengers, with three further tours planned for 28th June, 14th July and 24th September

- The ‘70’s Musical Express’ on 18th June 2016 – capacity increased from 160 – 180 seats and a good time was had by all
- Location filming for BBC’s ‘Full Steam Ahead’ TV series, and discussions still ongoing for a major film production, which was being filmed in the area in July 2016

Swanage Museum and Heritage Centre

It was reported that the museum had been refurbished over the winter months, larger stocks of goods could now be held, and cash takings had increased. However, more space was required and the museum was in preliminary discussions with the Town Council regarding the proposals for a combined TIC and Museum & Heritage Centre building on the old shelter site in Shore Road. It was noted that visitor numbers had also increased by 70% to the end of May 2016.

A small working group had arranged visits to a number of visitor centres and museums across the County, and a report on these visits, along with proposals for the future, was being compiled. The group would also be visiting the new Kimmeridge Fossil Museum when it opened, which was planned for October 2016, and a suggestion made that Town Councillors may also like to consider a visit. The new museum had received sizeable Heritage Lottery Funding, and it was noted that funds were still available for this type of project.

It was reported that a structural survey had been instructed on the wall below the Santa Fe Amusement Park to inform discussions about the future use of the old shelter site, and a request was made for this matter to be a standing item on future Tourism Committee agendas.

It was further reported that the new ‘Heritage Passport’ had now been launched. If holders visited all four heritage attractions they received a small gift and were entered into a prize draw.

Swanage Pier

It was reported that the Pier was excited about the launch of the new ‘Heritage Passport’, although feedback had been received that visitors had been under the impression that the cost of the passport (20p) also gave holders free entrance to the attractions.

The Pier was on track with its Heritage Lottery Funding Bid for November 2016, and had also launched a ‘crowd funding’ appeal to raise £48k in 30 days. Comments were made that the Pier had won ‘Pier of the Year’ in 2012 and that it was vitally important that funding was sourced for the much needed repairs. A fuller report would be given at the next Committee Meeting.

Plans for the Pirate Festival were going well, there would be free entrance to the Pier during the Festival, 29th to 31st July 2016, and Festival goers were encouraged to wear pirate outfits.

Swanage & District Chamber of Trade & Commerce (COT)

It was reported that the Swanage & District COT had linked up with the Dorset COT which enabled the local COT members to benefit from a wider range of services and training. Sadly member numbers were reduced and the COT Chairman was continuing discussions to join forces with the Swanage & Purbeck Hospitality Association.

12) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

- a) Tourist Information Centre (TIC) building refurbishment – update** – it was reported that the TIC building was in need of substantial repairs and would be vacated at the end of the season. The TIC Team would be temporarily relocated to the Town Hall at that time, and it was anticipated that they would return to the building in spring 2017. It was noted that there was a budget of £110k for the works, which would see the building improved, and remain structurally sound. Dorset Works had been appointed to project manage the development. It was noted that

proposals for a combined TIC and Museum & Heritage Centre building on the old shelter site were being explored, although discussions were in early stages, and any plans could take at least five years to come to fruition.

- b) **Recruitment – Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer** – it was reported that the TIC had been without a manager for almost a year. Two new posts for the TIC had now been created, a Tourist Information Centre Supervisor, who would oversee the day to day running of the TIC office/services, and a Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer who would have a wider remit, including management of the TIC and the Town Council’s leisure services, to maximise opportunities to promote the town, and would be the first point of contact for event organisers and any filming requests. Adverts for the roles would be posted in early July 2016, and it was hoped that the successful applicants would be appointed in the autumn. An update would be given at the next meeting.
- c) **Main Beach** - thanks were given to the Operations Manager and his team for the quick response to complaints received recently regarding the condition of the beach following the cliff stabilisation works at the Pines Hotel.
- d) **Combined TIC and Museum & Heritage Centre** – the request to include updates on the proposals for a combined TIC and Museum & Heritage Centre on future agendas was agreed.
- e) **Brown Tourist Signage** – a request was made for consideration to be given to new signage in the town directing visitors to the TIC.

13) **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 2nd November 2016 at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 11.15 a.m.
