

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall on **FRIDAY 7th NOVEMBER 2014**
at **10.00 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor I Brown

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor Mrs C Bartlett

Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mrs G Marsh

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Wiggins

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-

Mrs C Finch

Swanage & District Chamber of Trade &
Commerce

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway Co. Ltd. and
Swanage & Purbeck Hospitality Association

Also Present: -

Mr G Brookes

Operations Manager

Miss N Clark

Management Support Officer

Mrs C Hooper

Tourist Information Centre Supervisor

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 Mrs Patrick and Bonfield, Ms K Black (Durlston Country Park), PC K Hickman (Dorset Police), Ms H Lagden (PDC), Mr A Power (S&PHA) and Mrs K Delahay (S&PHA).

2) **Declarations Of Interest**

Members were invited to declare their interest under the Code of Conduct as defined by regulations made under section 30 (3) 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 10th July 2014**

6 a) Beach Gardens Tennis Coach Court Fees – request for consideration to waive Court Fees for 12 months - It was reported that at the Council Meeting held on 4th August 2014 it had been agreed that tennis court fees for the coaching of under 18 year olds would be waived for a 12 month pilot period, after which time the Tennis Coach would report back to the Tourism Committee with a review of the youth section, including attendance numbers.

6 b) Beach Gardens Bowling Fees – request from Swanage Bowling Club for consideration to a reduction in Bowling Green Fees – It was reported that a meeting had been held between representatives of the Town Council and Swanage Bowling Club on 14th August 2014. It was further reported that at the Council Meeting held on 18th August 2014 it had been agreed to adhere to the Council's agreed fee structure for Bowls Club Membership for the current financial year,

subject to review once the operational costs for the year had been fully quantified. It was also agreed to authorise ongoing negotiations between the Town Council and Swanage Bowling Club to develop a new charging structure for future years for consideration by the Tourism Committee as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16.

- 7) **Dorset Waste Partnership** - As requested at the previous meeting, the telephone number for queries/complaints regarding commercial waste services, e.g. public litter bins and dog waste bins on the Highways was noted as **01305 221040** and email address: enquiries@dorsetwastepartnership.gov.uk.
- 8) **Swanage Value of Tourism 2013 Data** – There was no update to be given at this time from Purbeck District Council, however, the Tourist Information Centre Supervisor (TIC) reported that she had made contact with Dr Denise Hewlett, Principal Investigator, Broadly Engaging with Tranquillity Project, University of Winchester. Dr Hewlett was a Lecturer on Management Programmes and had consulted with the TIC and used the TIC office whilst gathering information on an areas of tranquillity survey. She was very keen to undertake a survey for the TIC, with the possibility of funding. Dr Hewlett had previously worked in the public sector and with the EU on projects concerned with managing protected areas for recreational, tourism and conservation objectives. Discussions were ongoing and a meeting would be held between Dr Hewlett, the Tourism Committee Chairman and the TIC Supervisor in due course. An invitation to present at a future Tourism Committee meeting would be extended to Dr Hewlett in due course. It was noted that further details of the tranquillity study could be found online at: www.winchester.ac.uk/tranquillity.

Thanks were then given by the TIC Supervisor to the Operations Manager and his team, and they were congratulated for maintaining the town's parks and gardens to a high standard.

Mrs C Finch joined the meeting at 10.10 a.m.

- 9) **Shop Maps** – It was reported that discussions were ongoing between the Chamber of Trade and TIC. Details of locations for the maps and posters to be displayed still needed to be discussed with and approved by the Operations Manager and a further report would be made at a future meeting.
 - 10) **Art & Erosion Project** – There was no update to be given at this time.
 - 11 f) **TIC entry to Green Tourism Awards** – Awaiting grading from Green Tourism, visit being made to the TIC next week.
 - 11 h) **TIC and the Jurassic Coast Quality Business Scheme** – It was reported that the TIC had been in touch with Guy Kerr, Jurassic Coast Community Co-ordinator, who was new to post and who would be working with businesses to move forward with the business scheme. A meeting had been arranged with the TIC and an update would follow at a future meeting.
 - 14 b) **UNESCO World Heritage Website** – There was no update to be given at this time.
- 4) **Matters arising from Minutes of the Beach Management Sub-Committee Meeting held on 15th October 2014**

There were no matters raised, however, brief updates were given by the Chairman on the following:

Beach Recharge – It was reported that an objection had been raised by Natural England to the trial deposit of sand in the bay and that this was on hold at present

pending further discussions between the various interested parties to work towards overcoming this objection.

Enforcement Officer (on the water) – It was reported that Purbeck District Council (PDC) was in the process of budget setting for 2015/16 and that this subject would be raised with them as a matter of urgency to agree the contract details and budget prior to the commencement of next season. It was further reported that the Dorset Police boat would now not be restricted to just Poole Harbour and contact would be made with PDC to discuss how this service could possibly assist the town in the future.

Boat Park – It was confirmed that the boat park was now closed and had been emptied ready for the RNLI boathouse redevelopment works to commence.

5) **Budget Setting 2015/16**

a) **Review of Tourism Budgets**

A brief update was given on the Tourism Budgets for 2015/16 and consideration was given to a request for an increase in the overall budget for advertising and marketing purposes, principally in order to provide funds for a new leaflet which was being developed in conjunction with the Chamber of Trade (see Agenda Item 6 for further details). It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bartlett and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the request for an increase in the Tourism budget for the above purposes be taken forward to the Finance & Performance Management Committee Meeting due to be held on the 8th December 2014 to be considered further during the budget setting process for 2015/16.

b) **Scale of Charges 2015/16**

Consideration was given to the scale of charges for 2015/16. It was noted that, as reported in Matters Arising, the Bowls Club charging structure for 2015/16 had yet to be finalised and discussions were ongoing. It was therefore proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bartlett and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the following scale of charges be taken forward to the Finance & Performance Management Committee Meeting due to be held on the 8th December 2014 to be considered further during the budget setting process for 2015/16.

**Proposed
Fees
2015/16
(including
VAT @
20%)
£/p**

1. **BOAT PARK**

Peveril Boat Park Per Grid (Trailer Included)

Boats and trailers

Up to 13 ft

Summer - 1 May - 31 October	
Season	285.00
Weekly	115.00
Winter - 1 November - 30 April	120.00
Annual 1st May -30 April	405.00

Up to 22 ft

Summer - 1 May - 31 October	
Pontoons (mid-Sept to 30 th April – Minute 12 P&P 15/09/14)	
Season	540.00
Weekly	175.00
Winter - 1 November - 30 April	220.00
Annual 1st May -30 April	760.00
Pontoons (mid Sept to 30 th April - Minute 12 P&P 15/09/14)	440.00

Up to 29 ft

Summer - 1 May - 31 October	
Season	740.00
Weekly	195.00
Winter - 1 November - 30 April	330.00
Annual 1st May -30 April	1,070.00

10% discount on annual ticket if purchased before 30th April**Daily Launch Fees - Throughout the year**

Boats	27.00
Jet Skis	27.00

Residents Permit Holders (25% Discount)**Daily Launch Fees (Boat only - removal of Trailer)**

Boats	20.00
Jet Skis	20.00

Residents Permit Holders (25% Discount)**Trailer Only-per day**

7.00

2. BEACH GARDENS**Tennis**

Singles/Doubles Hourly	8.30
(hourly per court)	
With Club Member	5.10
Schools (per court)	5.70
Children (under 16 years)	3.05
Racket Hire	1.10
Tennis Ball Hire	0.90

Bowls

Club Season - Adults	tba
Club Season - Juniors (under 16)	tba
New Member - (Introductory Season only)	tba
New Member - (Introductory Season only)1st August onwards	tba
Hourly (per person)	4.00
Hourly (under 16 accompanied by an adult)	1.80
Hire of Slips (per pair per game)	2.90
Hire of Woods (per set of 4 per game)	2.90

Putting

Per Round - Adults	3.15
Per Round - Children (under 16)	1.50
Family (2 Adults + 2 Children)	7.50

Basketball Hire

2.50

Pavilion

(Charges include heating, lighting and use of kitchen and equipment)

Per Session (1 section)	22.50
Morning, Afternoon or Evening (2 sections)	31.00

3. BEACH BUNGALOWS

Private Sites	357.50
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4. TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

Advertising Board 3ft x 4ft (Annual)	430.00
Advertising 'A' Boards	230.00
Accommodation Service - Serviced	10%
Accommodation Service - Self-catering	5%

c) Visit-Dorset.com website and the Destination Management System – contribution for the financial year 2015/16

An overview was given of an email received from PDC regarding the Visit-Dorset.com website and the Destination Management System (DMS). A discussion ensued as to whether the Town Council would be prepared to continue with its contribution towards the DMS for 2015/16. It was reported that the website had become increasingly popular and had had 1.7 million visitors to the site over the past year. Consideration was therefore given to the Town Council's annual contribution of £2,500 and it was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Mrs Bartlett and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the continuation of the Town Council's contribution of £2,500 for the Destination Management System be taken forward to the Finance & Performance Management Committee Meeting due to be held on the 8th December 2014 to be considered further during the budget setting process for 2015/16.

6) New Leaflet to promote Swanage and the surrounding areas and attractions – Update

It was reported that the leaflet was now a 'work in progress' and discussions were ongoing between the TIC and the Chamber of Trade. It was felt that there had been a lack of promotion of the town during the winter months and the theme for the new leaflet would be 'Swanage through the Seasons' to encourage visitors to shop, eat and holiday in the town all year round. Each business sector would be covered, and the leaflet would include articles on events, local history, geology, art and 'quirky' shops. A photographer and printer had been identified and a draft copy of the leaflet would be available in due course.

A discussion ensued regarding previous promotional/marketing material which had been available in the town, and whether this could be resurrected, including car stickers, badges and plaques. The possibility of a Swanage flag was also raised.

It was therefore agreed that representatives from the TIC and the Chamber of Trade would meet to discuss the possible design and production of new car stickers. It was further agreed that the TIC would make contact with Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre and undertake research into the possibility of a Swanage flag and new 'pin' badges, including design and regulations.

The findings of the above discussions and research would be reported back to a future Committee meeting. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Wiggins and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Tourist Information Centre would research and discuss the possibility of new promotional material and a Swanage flag with the Chamber of Trade and Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre and report back at a future meeting for further consideration by the Committee.

7) **Swanage Market – Feedback on 2014 Season**

Consideration was given to a letter received from the Chamber of Trade with regard to changing the day of the Swanage Market. Chamber of Trade Members had commented that the town had been quieter on a Friday this season, whereas in the past it was felt that Friday had always been a good trading day.

A discussion ensued regarding coach trips to the town and whether these had been affected by the change in market day. It was reported that Mondays and Fridays were the quietest days for coach trips. It was also felt that tourists would be more likely to attend and purchase items from a market during weekdays (Monday – Thursday), as Fridays and Saturdays were the busiest ‘changeover’ days for local hotels and holiday accommodation. The general consensus was that Tuesdays or Wednesdays would be the better days for a market in Swanage in the future. The possibility of a winter market (2015/16) at a town centre location was also discussed,

The Chairman confirmed that the contract with the market provider had been agreed for a 2-year period (2014/15) on a Friday and that the day could therefore not be changed for 2015. Friday had been chosen in view of other markets being held around Dorset and Devon on other days of the week. It was further confirmed by the Chairman that the above comments would be included and taken into consideration during any future Tender process.

8) **Tourism Reports**

There was no update to be given from Purbeck District Council (PDC) at this time.

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

a) Shore Road Beach Huts

The Tourist Information Centre (TIC) was looking forward to the opening of the new beach huts. Positive comments had been received from local residents and visitors about the huts and the coloured lighting. Congratulations had also been given to the Town Council for investing in the town and improving facilities.

b) Tourist Information Centre Sales for the year 2014/15

It was reported that, despite the seafront stabilisation works, agency ticket sales and retail sales had been on budget for this season.

c) Dorset Tourism Awards 2014

The TIC was delighted to report that it had achieved a Bronze Award at the Second Annual Dorset Tourism Awards ceremony, held in the Tank Museum, Bovington on 16th October 2014. Congratulations were also given to Studland Stables, Bradle Farmhouse and Swanage Railway who had also received Bronze Awards, South Lytchett Manor Caravan and Camping Park who had received Gold and Silver Awards, and Bovington Tank Museum who had received a Gold Award. Local businesses were encouraged to enter the Awards next year and the TIC would be actively promoting this. It was noted that the Award’s organisers also provided free courses e.g. social media and other training opportunities to Award winners.

d) Visit England – ‘Twitter Central’

It was reported that Visit England had invited the TIC to their ‘Twitter Central’ to present details of a trial undertaken with other towns to promote tourism via Twitter. A destination platform had been created for the towns in conjunction with the local TIC and businesses. The TIC felt that, if used correctly, this was a good opportunity for the town, Visit England had been encouraging more use of Twitter and this had been useful in getting important messages and information out to the public quickly. The TIC would be following this up and would report details at a future Committee meeting for further discussion.

e) Beach Day 2015

A sea awareness and beach safety day was being organised for 2015 and it was hoped to have the event on the same day as the Chamber of Trade’s new Fish

Festival, possibly in June. Details to follow at a future meeting.

f) Future Events – Planning Ahead

It was reported that event and stall bookings were being received for 2015. The TIC requested event planners to ‘think ahead’ and to put their requests in to the TIC in writing at the earliest opportunity. This would help to avoid a ‘clash’ of events and would enable the TIC and PDC to promote and market the events accordingly.

Everybody was therefore encouraged to advise the TIC of any event dates for 2015 before the end of December 2014.

9) Updates from Outside Representatives

Swanage Railway

An update and details of planned events in 2015 had been provided and circulated with the Agenda papers. It was reported that 196,296 passengers had travelled on the railway up to 31st October 2014, which was a small increase on the same period in 2013, and 200,000 passengers would be exceeded again this year by a comfortable margin. Santa Special bookings were coming in at a good rate. Congratulations were given to Swanage Railway on achieving their Bronze award in the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year category at this year’s Dorset Tourism Awards.

It was reported that Swanage Railway and PDC, along with representatives from other local tourist attractions, attended a special meeting with Portland Port who were keen to find destinations for their cruise liner passengers. Ground Handling Agents, operating coach tours for cruise liner guests, were seen and interest generated for both the Railway and Purbeck, being close to Portland and cruise guests only having limited time ashore. It was hoped that contacts made would result in additional visitors from Portland to Purbeck. The Agents also dealt with the larger cruise liners visiting Southampton Docks.

It was noted that The Poole Attractions Group (Poole Tourism Management Board) of which the Railway was a member, would be attending a number of Coach and Group Travel Trade Shows around England, which were primarily aimed at assisting the 2016 season and beyond.

It was further reported that the Railway hoped to have appropriate exhibitions and commemorations at each of its stations for Armed Forces Weekend/Purbeck at War on 27th & 28th June 2015. Full details to be provided at a future meeting.

Swanage & Purbeck Hospitality Association

Concerns were raised regarding the planned exploratory drilling and possible implications on tourism potential and holiday traffic.

It was reported that there had been a suggestion made that there would be bank branch closures in Swanage, however this could not be substantiated. It was noted however that HSBC Bank would be refurbishing their premises in Swanage in due course.

It was reported that BT Openreach fibre optic was scheduled to be operational at Locarno Road exchange during March 2015 and should be capable of supporting FTTC (Fibre-to-Cabinet) and FTTP (Fibre-to-Premises) the latter being much faster.

The question was raised as to whether there would be any media event to commemorate completion of the Seafront Stabilisation and Beach Huts Scheme, and it was confirmed by the Chairman that the ‘snagging list’ was underway and an event was planned for Spring 2015. Concerns were raised regarding the delay in the planned beach recharge and the possible implications on the town's resilience.

Swanage & District Chamber of Trade & Commerce

An update was given regarding the planned Fish Festival in 2015. The first meeting had been held on 27th October 2014. There had been 48 attendees from a variety of trades, and ideas were put forward for the event including displays on the heritage of the town’s fishing industry, an environmental beach day, food stalls, charity involvement, activities for children and fishing skills e.g. lobster pot making. The

general consensus was to hold the event in June to encourage tourists into the town. The confirmed date would be advised in due course.

Switch on Swanage

A tombola stall and raffle would be held on Saturday 29th November 2014 at Swanage Railway Station. Raffle tickets would be available from the TIC, Phoenix Wines and at the stall on the day. The Christmas lights would be switched on at 4.30 p.m.

Swanage & Purbeck Rotary Club

The Rotary Club Christmas Market would be held on Saturday 6th December 2014 in Station Road and Commercial Lane commencing at 10.00 a.m.

Swanage Maritime & Coastguard Agency

Thanks and praise were given to all the Emergency Services. It was reported that pressure had been seen on local budgets recently and a reduction in staff had been made across the Police, Fire, Coastguard and Ambulance Services, which had also placed pressure on local volunteers working in these services. Concerns were raised as to how this might impact on tourism in the future. It was noted that the Fire Service would be ‘first responders’ in the future and a discussion ensued as to how important it is for residents to work as a community to assist the town’s dedicated team of volunteers.

10) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

- a) **Private Beach Hut Sites – Policy on Waiting List** – waiting list arrangements to be formalised, full details would be given at the next Committee meeting.
- b) **Beach Gardens Putting Loyalty Card** – It was reported that the trial undertaken this season had been well received by local residents and visitors alike. The card was stamped each time a round of putting was paid for and when eight stamps had been collected a free round of putting was given. Comments had been received from other towns who had loyalty schemes in place that sales had been increased. It was noted that the putting loyalty card would therefore continue in 2015.
- c) **Swanage & Purbeck Holiday Guide 2015** - concerns were raised at a reported reduction in advertising in the 2015 edition of the Guide. It would appear that more people were undertaking online searches instead. Nevertheless, the Guide was still popular and demand had been high in 2014. The question was therefore raised that if this guide was to disappear in the future then should the town consider its own ‘Swanage Guide’. It was also reported that the Visit-dorset.com website had recently won the ‘Best Website Content’ Award at New Mind|tellUs Knowledge Exchange.

15) Provisional Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Monday 2nd March 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

The Meeting closed at 11.10 a.m.
