

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY,**
9th MARCH 2016 at **10.00 a.m.**

Chairman: -
Councillor M Bonfield Swanage Town Council

Present: -
Councillor C Finch 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
(From 10.25 a.m.)
Councillor M Whitwam Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-
PCSO C Rosenberg Dorset Police
Mr P Sykes Swanage Railway

Also Present: -
Mrs L Burgess Senior Administration & Finance Officer
Miss N Clark Management Support Officer
Miss H Lagden Tourism Manager, Purbeck District Council

There was one member of the public present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matter was raised during Public Participation Time:-

- The RNLI Lifeguard proposal for Swanage beach, and concerns held regarding the possible ‘over-lapping’ with the Town Council’s Beach Wardens’ responsibilities. The Chairman confirmed that the Beach Warden position was a very varied role, all of which would not be covered by a lifeguard. However, discussions were still in early stages between the Council and the RNLI.

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Bonfield assumed the Chair with the full support of Committee Members.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Poultney and Suttle, Mr I Brown (MCA), Mr M Green & Mr D Rawsthorn (Swanage Railway) and Mrs J Lowry (Tourist Information Centre).

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 4th November 2015

5) Review of Tourist Information Centre (TIC) – consideration of future options for the Town Council’s Tourist Information Service – it was reported that the refurbishment of the TIC building was planned to commence in autumn 2016, the TIC

team would be temporarily relocated, and it was anticipated that they would return to the building in spring 2017. It was noted that there was a budget of £110,000 for these works.

4) Matters arising from Minutes of the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on 3rd February 2016

2) Beach management summer season 2016 – Beach Wardens or Lifeguards? – a question was raised as to whether the lifeguards would patrol the whole beach, from the Mowlem to Ulwell Stream, or just part of it. The Chairman confirmed that a meeting had been held between the Town Council and the RNLI to discuss potential service provision and that discussions were ongoing. Comments were made that lifeguards usually patrolled a flagged area only and advised beach users not to swim outside of this area. A further query was raised regarding enforcement of byelaws, and it was confirmed that this was the responsibility of the District Council.

5) Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre and Swanage Pier – invitation to nominate Outside Representatives to serve on the Tourism Committee

Further to Minute No. 13 c) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 4th November 2015, Committee Members were in agreement that Swanage Museum and the Pier should hold seats on the Tourism Committee. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Morris and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre and Swanage Pier be invited to send Outside Representative to future Committee Meetings.

6) Tourist Information Centre (TIC) – consideration of new artwork for stationery

It was explained that it had been identified that there was currently no consistency with the existing TIC ‘branding’, different styles being seen across its paperwork and advertising. It was felt that having a brand was important, particularly when using social media, and the Tourism Manager, after consulting with the TIC Team and Town Clerk, had therefore drafted two new branding options for consideration. These included:

- A square icon suitable for social media
- A general rectangular logo (ideal for badges and general marketing)
- A compliments slip for TIC use (a letterhead would be produced in the same style)
- A logo that could be used generally to promote Swanage without the letter ‘i’ icon

The logo for the letterhead/compliments slip depicted Swanage Beach and Ballard Down, and a question was raised as to whether Ballard Down, or part of it, could also be included on the smaller icons to retain Swanage’s identity on all logos. The Tourism Manager agreed to look into whether this would be possible, as the icons used for social media were small and needed to remain as clear as possible.

Councillor Trite joined the meeting at 10.25 a.m.

Committee Members liked the colours used, and felt that the ‘i’ icon was important for TIC correspondence as it was an internationally recognised sign for ‘tourist information’. Option 1 had a standalone ‘i’ icon, and on Option 2 the ‘i’ was joined/flowed into the picture of the beach, Option 2 being favoured as the preferred logo.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Green and **RESOLVED:**

**TO RECOMMEND:
That the Town Council approve Option 2
of the draft branding options, subject to**

confirmation that Ballard Down can be included on the smaller icons.

7) Private Beach Huts – consideration to allow private beach hut owners to paint the doors of the private beach huts in colours to match the colour scheme of the Shore Road beach huts

Further to Minute No. 6) of the Beach Management Sub-Committee Meeting held on 25th February 2015, and Minute No. 9 b) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 24th June 2015, consideration was given to the painting of the doors of the brown private beach huts to match the colour scheme of the Town Council’s Shore Road beach huts.

A brief discussion was held, and it was agreed that approval should be given to the painting of the doors only, and not the whole beach hut. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Morris, seconded by Councillor Green and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That approval be given for private beach hut owners to paint the doors of their beach huts in the same colour scheme as the Town Council’s Shore Road beach huts.

8) New Leaflet to promote Swanage and the surrounding areas and attractions – update

Further to Minute No. 6) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 4th November 2016, the Tourism Manager gave an update on the new leaflet. Unfortunately, production had been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. Details of attractions, photographs/images, and print, had been collated, and financial approval had been given for publishing/printing costs. The Tourism Manager would be working with the Chamber of Trade during April to finalise production and publish the leaflet before the start of the main season. An A3-sized map of the local area, highlighting the location of attractions, was also being printed.

It was noted that STC and the Tourism Manager were also working with Swanage Railway, the Pier, Durlston Country Park and the Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre on the production of a new ‘Heritage’ leaflet, which included a visitors’ ‘passport’.

9) Review of feedback – Shore Road Beach Huts

a) ‘Pop-up’ shops

It was reported that, despite the poor weather conditions, the ‘pop-up’ shops had been a success and well supported. Feedback forms had been very positive, although comments had been made that advertising could have been better to increase footfall. Other suggestions made included bringing the start date forward, late night shopping, and whether events could also be held at other times of the year. Members were in agreement that the Town Council should host the ‘pop-up’ shops again this winter, and that planning and advertising should commence at an earlier date. Thanks were given to all concerned in getting this new initiative ‘up and running’ at such short notice.

b) Beach Hut bookings

It was reported that there had been a great deal of new interest in the beach huts for the 2016 season, with 396 bookings already confirmed, 44 of which were for upper level huts. Bookings income to date was £64,785, with a further £14,500 invoiced.

It was noted that approximately 600 feedback sheets had been received during the 2015 season, the majority of which had been very positive. Only a small number of users had commented on the fact that the huts had no windows, and remarks had been made that, during poor weather, the huts had comfortably accommodated up to six people.

A question was raised regarding previous problems experienced with the flag poles in Shore Road, and it was confirmed that the poles had been taken down and safety/

stress-tested. The poles were now back in place, and it was hoped that flags sporting the new logo design would be in situ before the beginning of the main season. A further question was raised as to whether the contractor's 'snagging list' had now been completed.

10) Tourism Reports

Miss Holly Lagden, Tourism Manager, reported that it had been an eventful time for the tourism team since the last Committee meeting, and updates were given on the following matters:-

a) Advertising

The Swanage & Purbeck Holiday Guide had been discontinued and advertising was now undertaken on the website only. It was reported that the majority of businesses had re-advertised on the website, and it had also attracted new advertisers.

b) Swanage and Purbeck Digital Guide

The digital guide was now available for download online, and included links to the Visit Dorset website. Comments were made that the guide was 'inspirational'.

c) Coach and Group Travel

The importance of promoting coach party/activity group bookings in the town was highlighted. There were online guides available on the Visit Dorset website.

d) Dorset Accommodation Charter

The Charter had been launched in January 2016, and feedback so far had been positive. The Charter had been introduced by Visit Dorset as an alternative to star ratings or accreditation, the general feeling had been that Trip Advisor ratings were more important to local businesses than star ratings.

e) South West Growth Fund

A three-day event, 'Showcase South West', had been organised by the South West Tourism Growth Fund programme. The Visit Dorset Tourism Partnership had had the pleasure of hosting tour operators, who specialised in organising excursions to the UK from across the world, and attractions visited locally included Chococo and Cumulus Outdoors. The Partnership were also in the process of bidding for the opportunity to produce a video, and photographs, of Dorset attractions, which could be used to promote Dorset in the future. This was an exciting opportunity and had the potential to create further jobs in the tourism industry locally.

f) Website contract

The Visit Dorset website contract had ended in February 2016. A new three-year contract had been awarded, and the website was in the process of being refreshed.

g) Local Enterprise Partnership

Difficulties had been experienced regarding the contract for the Destination Management Plan. It was hoped that an amicable arrangement could be reached, and a further update would be given at a future meeting.

A question was raised regarding the potential reorganisation of local government, and the future of tourism functions in Purbeck if Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole were to merge operations. The Tourism Manager reported that the Councils would be looking to improve partnership working, and were committed to continuing with tourism services in the area.

Tourist Information Centre:-

a) Blue Flag and Seaside Award

The application had been submitted and results were due in May 2016.

b) Events

A varied programme of educational and beach and seaside awareness activities were being planned for 2016, including a Beach Clean and Environment Day in May.

c) **Beach Gardens**

Beach Gardens would reopen again in time for Easter, from Friday 25th March 2016.

11) **Updates from Outside Representatives**

Swanage Railway

2015 had been a great success for the railway, passenger numbers to 31st December totalled 217,080, and had been its best ever year. Updates were given on the following:

- Purbeck Mineral & Mining Museum – visitor numbers continued to increase.
- Five new rail tours to Swanage were planned for 2016.
- Project Wareham.
- Coastal Communities Fund – the railway would be hosting a visit from the CCF on 10th March 2016. The CCF had granted £1.47m towards Project Wareham.
- Bournemouth Tourism Awards 2016 – the railway had been a finalist in the ‘Great time out award’ category.

A handout giving full details of the above updates was provided at the meeting.

Chamber of Trade

It was reported that the festive window display competition had been warmly received, and very successful. Preparations for the 2nd Swanage Fish Festival were now underway, and would be held from 10th to 12th June this year.

Maritime Coastguard Agency

It was reported that Swanage MCA had launched an "Arrive at Five" campaign, its aim was to highlight and promote safety and the five knot speed limit in the bay. More information could be found on the Swanage Coastguard blog page at:

<http://swanagecoastguard.blogspot.co.uk> Comments were made that this was an important initiative and thanks were given to the Coastguard Team.

It was further reported that an order would be placed for three new defibrillator devices, and a new cabinet for the Coastguard Station, this week. These devices would be sited in Station Road, the Swanage School, and Swanage Industrial Estate. Further devices would be procured when funding allowed. Committee Members congratulated the Team on their sterling efforts, and for raising funds in such a short timescale.

12) **Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas**

a) **‘Welcome to the Isle of Purbeck’ signage** – further to Minute No. 13 b) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 4th November 2015, it was confirmed that eight neighbouring town/parish councils had been approached for possible funding assistance, although no responses had been received to date. A further update would therefore be given at a future meeting. A query was raised as to where the signs would be sited, and it was confirmed that the proposed locations were Sandbanks Ferry, Wareham By-pass and Wareham Causeway.

b) **Information Postcards – consideration of a new postcard to invite comments and suggestions from visitors to Swanage** – further to Minute No. 9) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 4th November 2015, the Tourism Manager reported that she had made contact with Bognor Regis Town Council, and gave an overview of her findings. A discussion was held and comments made that if such an initiative went ahead it should not be ‘Town Council-focussed’ and that it should be more ‘event-based’ and run in conjunction with e.g. the Swanage & Purbeck Hospitality Association and the town’s Heritage Groups. Further comments were made that the TIC should be fully staffed, and a more robust complaints procedure put in place, before such a scheme was considered. It was therefore agreed that a decision on this item would be deferred until later in the year. A question was raised as to whether it would be a ‘backward step’ to have such a postcard when more use was being made of Facebook, Twitter and the Town Council and Visit Dorset websites.

c) **Exploration of the introduction of electric vehicle charging points into Town Council car parks** – further to Minute No. 5 a) of the Transport Committee Meeting held on 10th February 2016, comments were made that there were no charging points in the Purbeck area, and it was felt that the use of electric vehicles would increase in the future. A query was raised as to whether this subject should be considered at a future Tourism Committee Meeting, or whether it should form part of the Town Centre Redevelopment Working Party discussions. This matter would therefore be referred to Members of the Working Party for consideration.

13) **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be confirmed in due course

The meeting closed at 11.15 a.m.
