

Minutes of the Meeting of the **GENERAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall on **Wednesday 15th July 2009** at **9.30 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor L Gloyn-Cox

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor B Audley

Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mrs C Gainsborough

Swanage Town Council

Councillor S Poultney

Swanage Town Council

Also present: -

Dr M Ayres

Deputy Town Clerk

Mr G Brookes

Operations Manager

Mrs C Anstey

Administrative Assistant

Mr R Aplin

Prospect Allotment Association
(until 10.20 a.m.)

Mr L Fletcher

James Smith Ltd Funeral Directors
(until 10.30 a.m.)

Mr R Legg

Prospect Allotment Association
(until 10.20 a.m.)

Mr A Lander

Swanage Fisherman's Association
(until 10.30 a.m.)

Public Participation Time

In addition to Members and Officers there were four members of the public present.

MR ALAN CAUSON expressed concern at the summer ban on bonfires.

MR BARNABY QUADDY drew attention to the lengthy allotment waiting list and asked if the Council had done everything in their power to seek alternative land. He was informed that the Council had written to various bodies in this regard but no offers of land had been made. Mr Quaddy also expressed concern that the allotments were being subdivided.

1) **Apologies**

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Pratt (Town Mayor).

2) **Allotment Matters**

Councillor Poultney declared a personal interest in this item under the Model Code of Conduct by reason of being an allotment holder.

a) **Report of meeting with Prospect Allotment Association, 2nd April 2009.**

Further to a constructive meeting between representatives of the Allotment Association and officers of the Town Council on 2nd April 2009, a request was made for the Town Council to put forward a detailed proposal for the Association to put before their A.G.M. due to be held in October 2009. It was RESOLVED:

That a working party be formed, consisting of Councillors Audley, Gloyn-Cox, Poultney and Mrs Gainsborough, to prepare

a proposal to put forward to the Allotment Association.

b) Matters raised by Prospect Allotment Association

It was reported that the Association was satisfied with the way the current bonfire regulations were working and advised that no changes be made. Enquiries were made as to whether the Council had fully explored additional allotment sites and it was AGREED:

That the Town Council write to the National Trust and Durlston Country Park, and also explore the possibility of utilising land to the south of Swanage Bay View Holiday Park.

3) Cemetery Matters

a) Consideration of amendment of cemetery regulations to permit kerbing.

It was reported that contrary to the cemetery rules a number of grave owners had put chippings and/or kerbing on their plots. Officers had written to a number of owners requesting that these items be removed, but in response several were seeking permission to retain kerbing/chippings in situ. The Operations Manager voiced concerns with regard to health and safety in respect of the maintenance of these particular graves.

It was proposed by Councilor Poultney:

That the existing cemetery regulations forbidding the placing of kerbstones and chippings be enforced.

The proposal failed to gain a seconder.

It was RESOLVED:

That officers liaise with members of the Operations Committee and Mr Fletcher of James Smith Funeral Directors to consider the Town Council's policy on chippings and kerb stones and report to a future Policy Meeting.

b) Matters raised by James Smith Funeral Directors

It was reported that a meeting between Mr Fletcher of James Smith Funeral Directors and officers of the Town Council had been arranged for 22nd July 2009 to further discuss the proposed Natural Burial Ground.

The staff of the Operations Department were praised for their excellent work in the upkeep of Godlingston Cemetery.

Mr Legg and Mr Aplin left the meeting at 10.20 a.m.

4) Fishermen's Huts and Jetty

a) Update on funding proposals.

It was noted that a meeting had been held between Mr Lander and officers of the Town Council at which the future management of the fishermen's huts had been discussed. The need for further information prior to any approach being made to the Maritime Fisheries Agency for funding was highlighted.

The Operations Manager provided a summary of a recent structural engineer's report on the condition of the eastern jetty at Peveril Point. Attention was drawn to the need for a further report on proposals for the reconstruction and enhancement of the facility, at an estimated cost of £2,500. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Poultney and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That funding of £2,500, or such other sum to be negotiated by the Operations Manager, be identified for a further report in respect of the replacement of the eastern jetty at Peveril Point.

Mr Fletcher and Mr Lander left the meeting at 10.30 a.m.

5) Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 23rd February 2009

The minutes were noted as agreed.

Further to minute 9) it was reported that a member of the public had voiced their disappointment in being refused permission to erect a stone memorial bench. After a brief discussion it was AGREED:

That the current policy regarding memorial benches be adhered to.

It was further agreed that the member of the public be contacted regarding potential alternatives to a stone memorial seat.

6) Operations Manager's Report

The Operations Manager reported on the following issues:

a) RoSPA Playground Safety Inspection Report dated 24th May 2009

A number of items of playground equipment require replacement, having been identified in the RoSPA safety inspection as sub-standard.

b) Recreation Ground Play Area

Two flat swings had been installed at a cost of £10,288.56. Two additional items of play equipment (slide and timber hut) would need to be replaced due to age and general deterioration. Replacement items had been approved and the projected installation time would be between six and eight weeks. Fire damage was sustained to the 'Train' during June 2009 and the structure was removed for safety reasons. Replacement parts had been ordered at a cost of £1,400.

c) Sydenham Road Play Area

The play area at Sydenham Road would require a major upgrade or removal of play equipment at an estimated replacement cost of £35,000. It was proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Operations Department remove all unsafe equipment.

d) King George's Play Area

Phase three of the upgrade and installation of play equipment was ongoing and due for completion on the 27th July 2009.

e) Footpath Repairs

Major repairs had been completed to the paths running through Prince Albert Gardens at a cost of £13,839.80. Access to this area was now suitable for all members of the public and meets statutory access requirements.

f) Downs

Resurfacing works in respect of footpaths on the Downs were due to be completed by the end of July 2009.

g) Tree Works

Various tree works had taken place around the town. A number of trees had been reduced in height and also several dead/decaying trees had been removed.

h) Rubbish Collection – Town Area

Additional Eurobins had been installed at the Mowlem shelter and the Town Square. These were scheduled to be emptied three times a week until the end of September 2009.

i) Public Conveniences

Problems had occurred in a number of public conveniences around the Town. Investigations had shown major defects due to general deterioration and the age of existing sewers. Corrective action would be required at the end of this season and estimated costs stand at £20,000 - £30,000.

The toilets at the new coastguard building at North Beach car park were due to be handed over to the Council on Friday 17th July 2009.

It was reported that the amount of rubbish being dumped in the vicinity of Burlington Chine conveniences was on the increase. The Town Council is working with Purbeck District Council to help resolve the situation.

j) Sandpit Field

Works to install three foul lateral sewer outlets and three mains water connection points had been completed at a total cost of £11,548.00. It was proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Audley and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

TO RECOMMEND:

That representatives of Swanage Town Council and other interested parties meet with the Chamber of Trade, Licensed Victuallers Association and all event organisers to discuss a policy for the use of Council facilities for organised events.

k) Additional Toilets

The additional toilet container for Shore Road would be installed on the 17th July 2009 and removed on the 4th September 2009. A request from the Carnival Committee for the exclusive use of the facilities on the 18th July 2009 for the Half Marathon had been granted in return for a fee of £200.

l) Proposed Designated Public Places Order – Control of Alcohol

Swanage Town Council had completed the erection of signage as instructed by Purbeck District Council.

m) Seating

Additional seating was required to replace seats on the Downs area, at an estimated cost of £10,000. Memorial seating had proved popular: 17 seats having been installed to date. However, the cost of procuring the ‘Lions Head’ seat had increased to £879. It was **RESOLVED:**

To discontinue the ‘Lions Head’ seat.

The cost of procuring the ‘Eastgate’ seat had risen to £492 and replacement slats cost £145.00 per set. It was proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Audley and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Council buy the 'Eastgate' seat in bulk to save cost on delivery charges.

After a brief discussion it was proposed by Council Poultney, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That a budget of £10,000 be made available for the provision of additional seating, subject to the Downs being offered to the public as a location for memorial seating.

n) Shower and Foot Wash Facilities (Beach)

Further to a request having been received for a shower and foot wash facility on the main beach, costings had been obtained to provide a combined unit in the region of £16,000. It was RESOLVED:

That shower and foot wash facilities remain on the Capital Programme unapproved list for future consideration.

o) Greenhouse

The wooden structured greenhouse had recently collapsed due to age and deterioration. For Health and Safety reasons this had now been demolished and cleared from the site. A claim is being investigated with the council's insurers.

p) Allotments

Temporary road repairs using gravel recycled from the path resurfacing at Prince Albert gardens had been completed. A skip had also been provided at the allotments for plot holders' waste.

q) Swanage In Bloom

The Town area had been prepared for the forthcoming regional Judging Day on the 17th July 2009 and the Britain in Bloom competition in the week beginning 3rd August 2009.

r) Personnel Matters

One member of staff would be due for retirement on 25th September 2009. Two additional staff have been employed for beach cleaning duties for the period 6th July to the end of September 2009.

s) Training

Health and Safety training for managers and supervisors, together with risk assessment/fire training and driver training is ongoing.

t) Vandalism

There has been an increase in vandalism in the last three months in various areas of the town. This has included: fire damage to the train in the Recreation Ground Play Area; fires started at King George's Field; tampering with play equipment, including the removal of safety screws and bolts from equipment; numerous acts of vandalism to flowerbeds, hedging and public conveniences.

7) Lengthsman Scheme

Consideration was given to a letter from Mr Rod Turner, Highways Manager of Dorset County Council, dated 1st July 2009, enquiring whether the Town Council would be interested in participating in a 'Lengthsmen Scheme'. This was aimed at encouraging local authorities and other public bodies, such as housing associations, to work together to provide an improved service in respect of matters such as litter picking, verge maintenance and dog mess clearance. It was AGREED:

That the Operations Manager liaise with Dorset County Council regarding the parish lengthsman scheme.

8) Asset Management Plan

It was reported that work on the Asset Management Plan was continuing and that the final draft document would be presented to a future meeting of the full Council.

9) Public Conveniences

The need to address issues regarding the future provision of public conveniences at Herston was highlighted. It was RESOLVED:

That a meeting be arranged with representatives of the Emmanuel Baptist Church.

In respect of the public conveniences at Swanage Railway Station, concern was expressed regarding any proposal for them to be returned to Town Council management.

10) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

There were no items to report.

11) Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 9.30am on Wednesday 11th November 2009.

The Meeting closed at 11.25am.