

Minutes of the Meeting of the **GENERAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall on **Wednesday 19th November 2008** 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

Assistant Town Clerk

Mr G Brookes

Operations Manager

Mrs C Anstey

Administrative Assistant (until 11.00 a.m.)

Mr R Aplin

Prospect Allotment Association (until 10.00 a.m.)

Mr L Fletcher

James Smith Ltd Funeral Directors (until 11.00 a.m.)

Mr R Legg

Prospect Allotment Association (until 10.00 a.m.)

Public Participation Time

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

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Mrs Marsh, Pratt, Trite and Mr A Lander of Swanage Fishermen's Association.

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) **Measures to reduce waiting list - update**

Further to minute 4)a) of the General Operations Committee meeting held on 23rd July 2008, an update was received in respect of the measures being taken to reduce the allotment waiting list, which currently contains 89 names. It was suggested that the Town Council might contact the National Trust and Durlston Country Park regarding the possible supply of additional land.

b) **Bonfire Regulations – Consideration of petition**

Further to minute 4)b) of the General Operations Committee meeting held on 23rd July 2008, Members considered a petition regarding the Council's bonfire regulations. Following representations from the Allotment Association it was proposed by Councillor Audley, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gainsborough and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Council's bonfire regulations be amended to permit burning after 10 a.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays between 1 October and 30 April.

c) Works to eastern allotment boundary

Consideration was given to works to improve the eastern boundary of the allotments with Cauldron Barn Farm. It was noted that some ploholders would have to move their sheds away from the fence line to facilitate the work. The costs of replacing the fence would be met by the owner of Cauldron Barn Farm, but the Council workforce would be required to clear the boundary. It was RESOLVED:

That the works be agreed in principle, subject to a meeting between representatives of the General Operations Committee, the Allotment Association, the Operations Manager and the estate foreman of Cauldron Barn Farm.

d) Update from Prospect Allotment Association

Some concern was expressed that those allotment holders failing to keep their plots in good condition were not receiving warning letters, in line with Council policy. However, it was noted that two tenancy agreements had been terminated on such grounds in the past year.

Mr Legg and Mr Aplin left the meeting at 10.00 a.m.

3) Cemetery Matters

a) Report of Natural Burial Working Party

A report was received from members of the Natural Burial Working Party who had visited Harbour View Woodland & Memorial Gardens and Poole & Wimborne Woodland Burial Ground on 9th September 2008. It was noted that traditional cemeteries in the vicinity of these facilities had seen a substantial decline in demand for grave spaces. Consideration was given to opening part of the land held for a cemetery extension at Godlingston as a natural burial ground. It was noted that greater information was required in respect of the costs of such a scheme, but it was proposed by Councillor Mrs Gainsborough, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the possible opening of a natural burial ground at Godlingston Cemetery be pursued further, and that a report be made to the next meeting of the General Operations Committee.

b) Scattering of ashes on Council-owned land

Following receipt of a request for permission to hold a formal ceremony for the scattering of ashes on the Town Council's land, consideration was given to the formulation of a policy to regulate this activity. It was noted that there were no statutory restrictions on the scattering of ashes and that it is difficult to police. The scattering of ashes is currently permitted on Council land, provided that it is done in a discreet fashion so as to avoid distress to members of the public. It was RESOLVED:

That the Council's existing policy be continued, pending the preparation of draft regulations for discussion at the next meeting of the General Operations Committee.

c) Proposals for cemetery opening hours

Attention was drawn to unsocial behaviour at the cemetery and vandalism of

the chapel earlier in the year. It was proposed that the main cemetery gates be locked between 5.00 p.m. and 8.30 a.m. 365 days a year to curtail the problem. The need to work with the police to address the root of the problem was highlighted. It was proposed by Councillor Poultney and seconded by the Chairman:

That the main cemetery gates be locked between 5.00 p.m. and 8.30 a.m. 365 days a year.

An AMENDMENT was moved by Councillor Audley and seconded by Councillor Mrs Gainsborough:

That the police be requested to take action in respect of anti-social behaviour at the cemetery and the matter be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of the General Operations Committee.

Upon being put to the Meeting, the AMENDMENT was CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Amendment was then put as a SUBSTANTIVE MOTION and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY.

d) Proposed cemetery notice board

It was reported that a new cemetery notice board had been ordered, funded from within existing budgets.

e) Proposals for transfer of grave/memorial rights

Attention was drawn to the need to consider arrangements for the formal transfer of rights in cases where a grave owner has pre-deceased another family member wishing to be interred in that plot. It was RESOLVED:

That a report on the transfer of burial rights be prepared for the next meeting of the General Operations Committee, and that in the meantime officers have delegated authority to deal with any urgent cases.

f) Update from James Smith Funeral Directors

Concern was expressed that the regulations in respect of kerbing and chippings were not being observed in the lawned section of Godlingston Cemetery. It was AGREED:

That officers write to the owners of relevant graves drawing their attention to the need to comply with the cemetery regulations.

The possibility of regulating the scattering of ashes at Godlingston Cemetery was also raised and it was AGREED:

That a report be provided to the next meeting of the General Operations Committee.

Attention was also drawn to the need to regulate the planting of memorial trees at Godlingston Cemetery.

Mr Fletcher left the meeting at 11.00 a.m.

4) Fishermen's Huts and Jetty

a) Funding of Fishermen's Jetty - Update

It was noted that grant funding was potentially available from the European Fisheries Fund, and that the Town Council had agreed to seek assistance with grant applications from the Projects Officer at Purbeck District Council.

b) Regulations for public use of Jetty

Following a complaint from a boat owner Members were invited to consider revising the regulations for use of the jetties by the public. After careful consideration of representations made by the Chairman of the Swanage Fishermen's Association, it was proposed by Councillor Audley, seconded by Councillor Poultney and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Boat Park regulations be amended as follows: 'Landing at the jetties is permitted free of charge for the non-commercial dropping off and/or collection of passengers for no longer than 10 minutes. The skipper is to remain on board throughout that time and regulation 2.7 applies'.

5) Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 23rd July 2008

The Minutes were noted as agreed.

6) Operations Manager's Report

The Operations Manager reported on the following issues:

a) Urgent repairs

The need to address the list of urgent repairs discussed under item 3)d) at the Policy and Planning Meeting held on 13th October 2008 was highlighted. It was noted that there was a lead-in time of 6 to 12 weeks before work could be commenced.

b) Tennis Courts

Complaints had been made about the surface of the tennis courts and that these had been investigated.

c) Station Buildings

Safety caging had now been erected to protect the public from the risk of falling masonry from the surface of the buildings.

d) Shore Road Toilets

Safety fencing had been erected alongside the building as the fascia and guttering had fallen away from the building and the roof tiles were slipping off.

e) Beach Gardens Pavilion

Attention was drawn to the poor condition of the building.

f) Grounds Maintenance

Further to minute 7)b) of the General Operations Committee meeting held on 23rd July 2008 it was noted that the tree works had been carried out along the railway line in King George's Playing Field. The planting of flowers for the 2009 season was also underway.

g) Coastguard Building, North Beach Car Park

Building of the Coastguard Building is progressing well and the handover date of the new public conveniences is anticipated as being the second week of January.

h) Head Count etc.

The department had recently lost two members of staff that had yet to be replaced, the weather observer and boat park attendant.

Further to item 6)a) above, it was noted that an item had been placed on the Policy and Planning Agenda for the following day, Thursday 20th November, to discuss urgent items arising from the General Operations Committee. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the Town Council give urgent consideration to funding repairs to Shore Road Toilets, Beach Gardens Pavilion and the Recreation Ground Play Area, and to fencing and paving works required to ensure completion of the Big Lottery-funded extension of King George's Play Area.

It was further proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That a full evening Council meeting be held in the near future to discuss options for the future management of the Town Council's assets.

As a result of the retirement of the Boat Park attendant guidance was sought in respect of the future of the facility and the possible recruitment of a new member of staff. It was Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the option of leasing out the Boat Park to a private operator be explored.

7) Receipt of Draft Asset Management Plan Summary

Further to minute 9 of the General Operations Committee meeting held on 23rd July 2008, consideration was given to a draft schedule of assets detailing the risk, surplus/deficit contribution to the Council's accounts in 2007/08, and the cost of urgent repairs and future upgrade/refurbishment works. It was agreed that this schedule be developed further and referred to the evening Council meeting to be called further to item 6), above.

8) Adoption of Tree Management Policy

Consideration was given to a draft Tree Policy, based on that prepared for the District Council by their Tree Officer. It was proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by the Chairman and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the Tree Policy be adopted.

9) Rotary Club 50th Anniversary Seat

Members considered a request from a past president of the Rotary Club of Swanage and Purbeck to place a Rotary-Club designed memorial seat in the Rotary Club garden at Shore Road. It was noted that this would be contrary to the

Council's agreed policy in respect of the design of public seating. It was proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Audley and RESOLVED:

That no exception be made to the Council's existing policy in respect of the design of public seating.

10) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

It was noted that Dorset County Council had provided a quotation in respect of supplying a new bus shelter outside of the Cost Cutter shop at Herston. Members indicated that they understood that the supply of bus shelters was a matter for the County Council and should not, therefore, be placed on a future agenda of the Town Council.

11) Date of Next Meeting

It was recorded that the next meeting is scheduled for 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday 18th March 2009.

The Meeting closed at 12.00 noon.