

Minutes of the **MONTHLY MEETING** of the Swanage
Town Council held at the Town Hall, Swanage on
MONDAY, 30th JULY 2007 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor G.M. Suttle (Town Mayor) – Chairman.

Councillor B. Audley

Councillor C.R. Bright (until 7.50 p.m.)

Councillor Mrs. C. Gainsborough JP

Councillor L. Gloyn-Cox

Councillor M. Hadley

Councillor Mrs. G.A. Marsh

Councillor Mrs. A. Patrick

Councillor S. Poultney

Councillor M.W. Pratt

Councillor W.S. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

In the absence of a clergyman, Councillor Mrs. Marsh offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, 23 members of the public attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised by members of the public:-

- i) The proposal of the Dorset Primary Care Trust to close the minor injuries unit at Swanage Hospital overnight. The retention of this facility was considered to be of paramount importance, and individuals and organisations alike were encouraged to make strong representations against this proposal to the Primary Care Trust. It was reported that a consultation meeting was being held on 12th September 2007, and Councillors were requested to attend this meeting.
- ii) Reference was made to the “Safe Bathing Zone” on Swanage beach, and it was reported that some of the yellow marker buoys defining the area were missing.
- iii) Boat Park. Concern was expressed at the increase in launch fees for 2007, and whether this increase had affected the usage/income compared with the 2006 season.
- iv) Shower/Foot Bath – Shore Road. The possibility of introducing showers/foot baths on Shore Road was again raised. It was explained that the matter had been considered by the Public Conveniences Working Group, but as there was no water supply to Town Council property in that vicinity, the cost of providing this facility had proved prohibitive at the present time.
- v) Appointment of Accountant. Reference was made to the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2007, when a suggestion had been mooted regarding the appointment of a CIPFA trained accountant.

This matter would be considered at a future meeting of the Personnel Committee.

- vi) Removal of seat – Northbrook Road. Attention was drawn to the removal of a seat in Northbrook Road in the vicinity of Beach Gardens. This had been necessary due to the deteriorating condition of the seat, and subsequent vandalism.
- vii) Compliments were extended to the Operations Department regarding the cleanliness and general maintenance of the beach and town in general.

The Council Meeting commenced at 7.25 p.m.

28. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies to report for inability to attend the Meeting.

29. **MINUTES**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Mrs. Gainsborough, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 25th June 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed.

- (b) Proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Hadley, and RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the second paragraph in Minute 2 being amended to read:-
“Before the commencement of the Meeting, Councillor Bright asked “What is the agreed number of days notice of a meeting before the date of meeting?”
Having received the response, “3 working days” he requested that as a “Point of Order”, it be recorded that he had not received the Agenda papers until the previous Wednesday evening and insufficient time had been available to fully read the extensive documents and sought clarification as to the convening of the Meeting. The Town Clerk informed those present that the Statutory Notice had been displayed on the Town Hall Notice Board, and Members had previously been informed of the date of the Meeting.

Later in the meeting, Councillor Bright said he had used the incorrect terminology and should have referred to the “summons” to the meeting, rather than “notice”. He apologised for this error and any misunderstanding caused.

- (c) Proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Poultney, and RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held to discuss planning and policy matters on 6th July 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed.

- (d) Proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Poultney, and
RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held to discuss planning and policy matters on 16th July 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed.

30. **TOURISM COMMITTEE**

- Proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism Committee held on 25th June 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Arising therefrom, the following recommendations were adopted:-

2. That the present arrangements for booking Beach Huts and Bungalows be continued.

That the introduction of an on-line booking system be deferred to the 2009 summer season, unless it should prove possible earlier, subject to consideration of costs.

That the principle of reducing the hire charges for the Spa Bungalows during the low and mid season be adopted for the 2007 summer season.

That the hire charges for the Spa Bungalows be reduced by 25 per cent during low and mid season , as set out below.

Spa Weekly	
Easter – 25 th April	£31.00
26 th April – 4 th July	£55.00
5 th July – 5 th September	£137.00
6 th September – 26 th September	£55.00
27 th September – 31 st October	£31.00

Spa Daily Rate	
Easter – 25 th April	£7.00
26 th April – 4 th July	£9.00
5 th July – 5 th September	£21.50
6 th September – 26 th September	£9.00
27 th September – 31 st October	£7.00

That the Tourist Information Centre Manager be given the discretion to offer reduced prices for last-minute bookings for the 2007 and 2008 summer seasons, the policy to be reviewed at the end of that period.

3. That the environmental policy, tourism policy and the Tourist Information Centre be added to the list of the Tourism Committee's responsibilities, as agreed under Minute 2 of the Policy and Resources Meeting held on 21st May 2007.

31. **GENERAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor Gloyn-Cox, seconded by Councillor Poultney, and RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 29th June 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Arising therefrom, the following recommendations were adopted:-

3. Proposed by Councillor Gloyn-Cox, seconded by Councillor Audley, and RESOLVED:-

That the emptying of car parking machines, and the operational aspects of environmental policy be added to the list of the General Operations Committee's responsibilities, as agreed under Minute 2 of the Policy and Resources Meeting held on 21st May 2007.

That the grazing fields and other Town Council-owned open spaces be added to the list of the General Operations Committee's responsibilities, as agreed under Minute 2 of the Policy and Resources Meeting held on 21st May 2007.

4. Proposed by Councillor Poultney, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and RESOLVED:-

That, until the future provision of replacement toilets is determined, Herston public conveniences be closed due to police advice regarding ongoing vandalism and inappropriate use.

5. Proposed by Councillor Gloyn-Cox, seconded by Councillor Poultney, and RESOLVED, with ONE ABSTENTION:-

That the trees along the western boundary of Forres Field be reduced to a height of 5 metres over the next two years.

That Swanage Town Council endorses its existing Tree Survey reports and the professionalism of its staff, and continues its work to preserve the heritage of trees in the town.

32. **TOURISM COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism Committee held on 23rd July 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the word "target" being replaced with the word "market" in the fifth line of Minute 9.

Arising therefrom, the following recommendations were adopted:-

7 (a). Proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and RESOLVED:-

That the seafront stabilisation project be retained by the Tourism Committee, with the aim of developing an aesthetically acceptable scheme.

That initial enquiries be made of Purbeck District Council Planning Department.

- 7 (b). Proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and RESOLVED:-

That the Tourist Information Centre Manager be given delegated authority to agree with the Operations Manager extended opening hours for the Town Council's public toilets as and when required.

11. Proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and RESOLVED:-

That the Town Council does not give consent for a fourth concession to operate from the Stone Quay.

That the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to discuss with both applicants the possibility of operating a third concession from the Stone Quay, giving consideration of the weather and the size of boats.

Councillor Bright left the meeting at this point.

33. **MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Town Mayor welcomed Mr. Peter Aston, the Acting Monitoring Officer from Purbeck District Council, who presented the Revised Code of Conduct – Guide for members May 2007 (published by the Standards Board for England).

He gave a summary of the document, by way of training and awareness. Particular emphasis was put on the importance of the declaration of personal and prejudicial interests, and advised that it was a statutory obligation for the Revised Code of Conduct to be adopted by 1st October 2007. It was noted that paragraph 7 was not mandatory for parish councils and this should be considered when adopting the Code.

34. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported on the following matters:-

- (a) The section of Shore Road between the Mowlem and Victoria Avenue would be closed for 24 hours per day for a maximum trial period of 18 months commencing on 6th August 2007.
- (b) The refurbishment of the toilets at Mermond Place had now been completed, within the required timescale and at a cost of £14,644.

35. **TOURISM REPORT**

The Tourist Information Centre Manager reported on the following matters:-

- (a) Footfall figures at the Tourist Information Centre continued to decline, although telephone enquiries remained at a similar level and e-mail enquiries had increased.
- (b) The Destination Management System was now fully operational at the Tourist Information Centre and was generally working well. One

outstanding problem remained with the system, but this was being addressed at regional level.

- (c) Enquiries were being received for the forthcoming Folk Festival (7th – 9th September) and also for the Blues & Roots Festival which was scheduled for the 5th – 7th October.
- (d) The Carnival Procession, held the previous day, had once again proved to be a very popular and colourful event. Many other attractions were scheduled for the ensuing week.

36. **OPERATIONS REPORT**

The Operations Manager reported on the following matters:-

- (a) Works to install fire detection systems and emergency lighting had been completed at the following sites:-
 - Town Hall and Annex
 - Depot (Kings Road)
 - Beach Gardens
 - Tourist Information Centre
- (b) Works were in progress to change internal and external doors at the above locations to meet fire safety regulations.
- (c) Unfortunately, vandalism/anti-social behaviour continued during the previous month, which included damage in the following areas:-
 - Herston toilets, Main Beach toilets, Shore Road toilets;
 - Damage to signs and shelters;
 - Fires on Forres and King George's Playing Fields;
 - Damage to trees at King George's Field.

37. **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

(a) **Dorset Age Partnership**

Councillor Gloyn-Cox presented a report of the meeting of the Dorset Age Partnership held at Charlton Down on 25th June 2007.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Partnership was scheduled to be held at Swanage Fire Station on Friday, 6th July 2007.

38. **DELEGATED MATTERS**

There were no delegated matters to report.

39. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

Attention was drawn to the overflowing litter bins on Shore Road that did not appear to have been emptied following the Carnival and fireworks the previous day. It was noted that additional refuse collections had been undertaken by SITA, PDC refuse contractors, but due to the excessive amount of rubbish generated during Carnival Week, it was necessary for staff employed in the Council's Operations Department to carry out additional collections outside of their contractual agreements.

40. **METEOROLOGICAL RECORDS**

The meteorological records for the month of June 2007 were submitted for information.

41. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following matters.

42. **LEGAL ISSUES**

(a) **Landlord's Consent – Baptist Church**

Before consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs. Marsh declared her interest under the Model Code of Conduct by reason of being Vice-Chairman of the Purbeck District Council Planning Board. She remained in the Meeting during the debate, but did not vote on the matter. Further to Minute No.5 of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 16th April 2007, consideration was given to the location of the toilets to be incorporated within the proposed Emmanuel Baptist Church development at Victoria Avenue.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and RESOLVED:-

That the toilets be situated at location 2 within zone 4, as indicated on the submitted plan.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:-

That the toilets should include male, female and disabled facilities and that they should be open to the public with access from the outside.

(b) **Coastguard Building, North Beach Car Park**

The Clerk updated Members on matters relating to the proposed Coastguard Building at North Beach Car Park, and it was AGREED:-

That the matter be deferred for consideration at a future meeting of the Council.

(c) **Lease – Wilts & Dorset Settlement**

The Clerk reported on a letter received from the Council's surveyor regarding the Wilts & Dorset settlement.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, seconded by the Town Mayor, and RESOLVED:-

That a sum not exceeding £5,000 be contributed towards the Arbitrator's fees and settlement costs of Wilts & Dorset.

(d) **Counsel's Opinion**

Further to Minute 7 a) of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 29th June 2007 and following receipt of the Audit Commission's letter formally requesting details of the Counsel's Opinion under Section 6 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, it was proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To take solicitors advice as regards to the waiving of rights to legal privilege in replying to the Audit Commission's letter dated 19th July 2007 requesting disclosure of Counsel's Opinion.

In agreeing the above, Members noted the significance of Counsels Opinion and the possible implications to other Best Value authorities. Following further discussion it was AGREED:-

That having regard to the above, the Town Council should take solicitors advice in respect of waiving legal privilege and sharing the Counsel's Opinion with other relevant local authorities.

The meeting concluded at 9.15 p.m.
