

Minutes of the Meeting of the **BEACHES AND FORESHORE**
BEST VALUE WORKING GROUP held at the **Town Hall** on **Friday, 27th**
February 2004 at 10.00am.

Present:-

Councillor A.H. Miller – Chairman.
Councillor C.R. Bright
Councillor Mrs. J. Farrow (until 12.05p.m.)
Councillor M.W. Pratt
Councillor Mrs J.D. Wheeldon (until 12noon)

1. **APOLOGIES**

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

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Beaches and Foreshore Best Value Working Group held on 4th August 2003 were noted as approved.

3. **BEACH HUTS – PRIVATE SITES**

Before consideration of this item, Councillor Bright declared a personal interest under the Model Code of Conduct, by reason of being a private site hirer. He remained in the Meeting during the general discussion, but as his interest was prejudicial, left before the financial implications were considered.

Further to Minute No. 3 of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 8th December 2003, and subsequent representations received in respect of the private beach huts sites, detailed consideration was given to the charges to be levied for the 2004 season.

Consideration was given to the need to “Compare”.

During the discussion, it was considered that the prices of the private rents should be brought into line with similar increases in the Spa and Shore Road Bungalows sites over the last five years – an average increase of 77%. In applying this level of increase, the proposed site rent would be £240.00.

Comparisons had been made with charges levied for a similar facility offered by a neighbouring authority, whereby a separate charge was made for business rates.

It was proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Farrow, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the sum of £240.00 be levied for a private beach hutsite for the 2004 summer season, which includes a notional sum of £40.00 for business rates, pending a proper rating assessment.

Councillor Bright re-joined the Meeting.

The Clerk highlighted the requirements to apply the principles of Best Value. The following matters were considered:-

Challenge – Councillors questioned whether the services should be provided, and determined that it was an integral part of Swanage’s image.

Compete - It was then determined that the Council wished to maintain its management of the sites in preference to subjecting the service to competition by a private operator.

Other issues raised included regularising the spacing, height and style of the huts in order to conform to the Council's existing rules, and the proposal to introduce 15 additional huts sites – the huts to be supplied from the Council's surplus stock currently held in the Depot.

It was proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Farrow, and
RESOLVED:-

That the above recommendations be agreed.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:-

That existing private site hirers whose own huts do not conform to the Council's regulations, be offered the opportunity to purchase one of the Council's surplus beach huts at a discounted rate of £100 plus VAT.

In order to address the issues raised, and in accordance with the principles of Best Value, it was AGREED:-

That a Meeting be arranged with the private beach huts site hirers to be held on Monday, 22nd March 2004 at 6.30 p.m. in the Town Hall. Those unable to attend the Meeting be invited to submit representations in writing.

4. **SAFE BATHING ZONE**

Consideration was given to introducing a new "safe bathing zone" in order to regulate the use of personal watercraft in the area of the main beach.

Consideration was also given to a proposal to request the District Council to improve the marking of the access channels.

After discussion, it was AGREED:-

To request details of the costs of providing an additional "safe bathing zone", improving demarcation of the 5 knot limit, and laying down access channels at Peveril Boat Park and the Ocean Bay/Main Beach landing points.

5. **OUTSIDER REPRESENTATIVE**

Following recent consultation of proposals to regulate jetski launching, it was suggested that an outsider representative be co-opted onto the Working Group.

After a brief discussion, it was AGREED:-

To invite Mr. Ron Hardy to attend future meetings of the Working Group when it is envisaged that specific input is required.

6. **CONTROL OF ACCESS POINTS**

Concern was expressed at the use of the unrestricted access points along the seafront.

Following discussion, it was AGREED:-

To authorise the Clerk to seek an extension of the Council's Off-Street Parking Order to assist in controlling vehicles used for launching.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.
