

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall on **Monday 12th October 2009** at **9.30 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor Mrs A Patrick

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Hadley

Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mrs G Marsh

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-

PC D Cox

Swanage Safer Neighbourhoods Team

Ms K Delahay

STRATA

Mr A Lander

Swanage Fishermen's Association

PCSO I Leslie

Swanage Safer Neighbourhoods Team

Mr A Power

Swanage and Purbeck Hospitality Association

Mr G Willey

Swanage and District Licensed Victuallers Association

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Deputy Town Clerk

Mrs C Hooper

Tourist Information Centre Supervisor

Mrs C Bartlett

Olympic Working Group

Public Participation Time

There were no members of the public in attendance.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Audley, Mrs Gainsborough, Gloyn-Cox, Pratt (Town Mayor) and Trite, and from Mr R Johnson (Swanage Pier), Ms H Lagden (PDC Tourism Officer) and Mrs L Robinson (Ensors).

2) Co-Option of Representatives of Swanage Safer Neighbourhoods Team

The Chairman highlighted the importance of the local police force being aware of matters within the remit of the Tourism Committee, including event organisation and beach management. It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Mrs Marsh and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That a representative of the Swanage Safer Neighbourhoods Team be co-opted to the Tourism Committee.

3) Market Matters

a) Operations Report

The content of a written report from the market operator was noted. The last market of the current season would be held on 27th October 2009 and the first of the new year on 30th March 2010. Despite the economic conditions, market

income is down by only 2.8 per cent, and this is at least partly explained by the fact that there were three more market days at the beginning of the season last year. The Town Council were thanked by the market operator for their support over the past year, and the Chairman also requested that the Tourism Committee's appreciation of the successful management of the market was recorded.

Some concern was expressed that Swanage Library was closed on Tuesday which, as market day, was one of the busiest days of the week.

4) Boat Park Matters

It was reported that occupancy rates remained high at the Boat Park and that winter letting was now underway. The process of leasing out the park was currently under review. One option currently being explored was the location of a site for the Sea Rowing Club gig house in the vicinity.

5) Matters arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism Committee held on 6th July 2009

Further to item 6), attention was drawn to continued problems with rubbish collection between the Stone Quay and the Pier over the summer. It was suggested that Town Council staff keep detailed records of this problem in order to better assess the action required to resolve it.

6) Swanage and Purbeck Hospitality Association - Update

The Chairman of the Hospitality Association reported that many accommodation providers had experienced a significant upturn in business this summer. A number of businesses had also been successful in upgrading their premises, which had been recognised by the awarding of a higher star rating. Considerable effort was also being made to develop new events in the town, including walking and dinosaur festivals. Some concern was expressed over the lack of progress being made by Destination Dorset and also at the possibility of cutbacks to the tourism service provided by the District Council, although it was felt that this may now be averted following the review currently being conducted. The likelihood that non-accredited accommodation would, in future, be accepted into the holiday guide was highlighted.

Particular concern was expressed over anti-social behaviour in the lower High Street and Park Road on weekends, and the negative impact this was having on visitors to the town. Complaints had been received regarding the lack of sleep due to noise in the street in the early hours. Members of the Swanage Safer Neighbourhoods Team acknowledged the problem, but drew attention to the limited powers available to them to combat the problem of noise in public places.

7) Purbeck District Tourism Review - Update

It was reported that the District Council was currently undertaking a review of its tourism service to ensure that it was achieving value for money. It was noted that the possibility of combining the Tourist Information Centre and Heritage Centre was likely to be explored. The exercise had involved the receipt of evidence from a wide range of representatives of the tourist industry, including the Town Council, and one particular theme that had arisen was the importance of the Tourist Information Centre to local residents.

8) Destination Dorset - Update

It was reported that Destination Dorset had made relatively little progress, but that, as Board Members, the Chairman of the Tourism Committee and the Chairman of the Hospitality Association would continue to monitor developments and report to future meetings.

9) Scale of Charges 2010/11

Initial consideration was given to the Council's scale of charges in respect of beach hut charges for the Stroke Club and private sites, Tourist Information Centre services and Monkey Beach Rings. It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Hadley:

**TO RECOMMEND:
That the following proposed scale of charges be considered further at the Town Council's Annual Estimates Meeting.**

	Date of Last Increase	Actual Fees 2009/10 (Including VAT @ 15%) £/p	Proposed Fees 2010/2011 (Including VAT @ 17.5%) £/p	Actual Fees 2009/10 (Excluding VAT) £/p	Proposed Fees 2010/2011 (Excluding VAT) £/p
<u>SEASON CHARGES - 2010 SEASON</u>					
Stroke Club (Annual rental)	1/4/09	725.00	760.00	630.43	646.81
Private Sites	1/4/09	293.00	307.00	254.78	261.15
<u>TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE</u>					
Advertising Board 3ft x 4ft (Annual)*	1/4/08	380.00	380.00	330.43	323.40
Advertising 'A' Boards*	1/4/08	200.00	200.00	173.91	170.21
Accommodation Service - Serviced	1/4/96	10%	10%	10%	10%
Accommodation Service - Self-catering	1/4/96	5%	5%	5%	5%
* Half-priced 6-monthly fee introduced 2009/10					
<u>BEACH CONCESSIONS</u>					
Monkey Beach Boat Rings	1/4/09	65.00	68.00	56.52	57.87

Upon being put to the Meeting TWO Members voted IN FAVOUR OF THE Proposition and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

10) Tourism Reports

Mrs C Hooper, Tourist Information Centre Supervisor, reported on the following matters:

a) **Purbeck District Tourism Update**

It was reported that 75,000 copies of the Purbeck Holiday Guide 2010 were soon to be printed, and the tourism section of the District Council website had recently been revamped.

b) **Summer 2009**

This summer saw an increase in accommodation bookings and requests for guides, although footfall at the TIC had not itself increased.

c) **Beach Wardens**

The summer had also seen improved co-ordination between the beach wardens, Swanage Coastguard and the Safer Neighbourhoods Team with steps being taken to improve Swanage's already excellent record on public safety. The TIC staff received training from the Coastguard and it is hoped that this will be of benefit to the Blue Flag application process for next year.

d) Events

At a recent planning event for Armed Forces Day 2010, held at the National Arboretum Memorial in Staffordshire, mention had been made of the excellent management of last year's event in Swanage. The date for 2010 had been fixed as the weekend of the 19th – 20th June. The Town Council had been represented at recent meetings of the Hospitality Association and was working to support their initiatives for new events.

Following the report, some concern was expressed that the wording of signs on the seafront stating that the beach had no lifeguards would cause unnecessary concern to visitors who may not realise how safe the beach is. It was noted that the signs were a national standard and that the design had been approved by the Council prior to their installation. However, officers agreed to investigate possible additions or alterations to the signs.

The Tourism Officers and staff of Swanage Tourist Information Centre were thanked by the Chairman of the Hospitality Association for their hard work in promoting the town. The Beach Wardens were also praised for their work over the summer.

11) 2012 Olympic Legacy

Mrs Cherry Bartlett, representing a small working group which had been organised in the town to discuss matters relating to the 2012 Olympic sailing events in Weymouth, updated those present on recent developments. It was noted that bi-monthly meetings were taking place and that Committee members were welcome to attend. The possibility of providing additional moorings in the bay in the run up to the event was currently under investigation. The potential for erecting screens in public places to view the sailing events was highlighted and it was agreed that this idea would be taken back to the working group. The possibility of accrediting private houses for rent over the Olympic period was also being explored.

12) Durlston Project Update

In the absence of a representative of Durlston Country Park there was nothing to report.

13) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

a) Marine and Coastal Access Bill

Attention was drawn to the Marine and Coastal Access Bill which was likely to receive royal assent during November. Concern was expressed at the potential negative impact on angling and commercial fishing of a proposed marine conservation area between Studland and Ringstead. It was agreed that this should be placed on a forthcoming agenda, and that the Town Hall be made available for a presentation from Natural England.

b) Tourism Committee Start Time

The Chairman of the Hospitality Association requested that the start time of future Tourism Committee meetings be moved to 10 a.m. It was noted that

there was no need to change the time of the February meeting, and that it would be put on the agenda for that meeting.

c) Christmas Market

It was reported that a Christmas Market will be held on Saturday 5th December, to coincide with the switch on of the Christmas Lights at 5.30 p.m.

d) Swanage Railway

Attention was drawn to the fact that next year would mark the 125th anniversary of the railway arriving in Swanage, and that a week of celebration would be held between 17th and 23rd May. It was hoped that this would generate a wealth of publicity for the town.

14) Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 9.30 a.m. on Monday 8th February 2010.

The Meeting closed at 11.10 a.m.
