

4) **World Heritage Site – Jurassic Coast – Options for Swanage**

Mr Leeson reported on proposals for developments on Council owned land within the Heritage Coast with specific reference to Suttle's Quarry. It was noted that the bulky household waste site could possibly be closing in the near future and that this site could be used as a car park, with a car park at the quarry site also being used. The introduction of a quality surfaced walkway from this area to view the cutting shed and further interpretational information was discussed. Local trades and skills could be shown to visiting groups with access to the quarry site and it exposed face all year round.

Any future developments would have to be sensitive to the local environment and discussions were taking place with local landowners and other interested parties. The need to control visitor numbers was recognised, however it was noted that the area well used at present as the former quarry site is linked up with the network of paths across Durlston Country Park. Mr Murray expressed his concern at the potential number of visitors that would be attracted to the site and hoped that the degree of usage would be stemmed.

It was noted that the proposals for the development of this area have so far been formulated under the Swanage Town & Community Partnership in respect of applying for funding but it was recognised that it should now be brought to the Town Council through the Tourism & Environmental Committee to formulate a policy as the landowner. After further discussion:

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Bright, SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Farrow and AGREED:

That the Tourism & Environmental Committee support the proposed developments and recommends that the Council adopt the proposals.

5) **Beach Recharge – Formal Response to Consultation**

Mr Leeson reported that the Town Council had not formulated an official response to the consultation evening that was held on 19th November 2003. Several issues needed to be clarified in respect of Health and Safety and beach management. The timber walkways were highlighted as a concern for operational reasons with cleaning problems foreseen and slippery surfaces of particular concern.

It was expected that the work would commence in winter 2005, providing funding is forthcoming. It was noted that the timber groynes would be removed along the whole length of the beach and that the outfall jetty would remain, in effect being the first groyne along the beach.

Councillor Bright accepted that the rock groynes would be the best solution however his apprehension towards the timber walkways was noted. It was agreed that the Town Council, through its Policy and Resources Committee would look at the responses that Purbeck District Council had received from the public and would formulate an official response.

6) **Tourism Report**

Miss Stockley reported that the bookings for beach huts and bungalows for 2004 were now being taken and that bookings were very good, with Carnival week already fully booked. A half page editorial on Swanage had been published in the Coachdriver's monthly magazine, to which the TIC is a subscriber. The charity Christmas cards were selling well and bringing a lot of people into the TIC with the footfall for 2003 being 27,000 upon the previous year.

The Chairman enquired about the sale of National Express tickets. Miss Stockley reported that problems were being encountered with the voice recognition system for bookings and that she was trying to liaise with National Express to overcome the problems.

7) **Reports from Outside Organisations**
Durlston Country Park

Mr Murray reported that the Durlston Castle Project was moving forward, however most of the work was behind the scenes, with little to actually see. The need for work to be carried out on sewage and other fundamental repairs was highlighted.

Mr Murray also reported that Dorset County Council were in the process of deciding whether or not to fund the Castle Project and that a viable business plan was being formulated. The meetings should take place on 7th January 2004.

b) **Purbeck Tourism**

Mr Williams reported that the Purbeck Tourism website was now up and running. Committee members agreed that the website was very user friendly. It was also reported that the Eating Out Guide will be discussed at the next meeting of Purbeck Tourism.

c) **Swanage Railway**

Mr Scott reported that the Railway had had a good year overall, however it was noted that visitor numbers were down by 5% - 7% overall. The Railway recognised the fact that they may have reached a peak and would therefore have to change to attract more visitors. The question of whether customers were receiving value for money would also be looked at.

Upon being questioned as to the toilet facilities, it was noted that Swanage Town Council had agreed in principle to the transfer of the toilets over to the Railway, however at present the Council still oversees the cleaning and maintenance of the toilets.

Mr Scott was questioned as to the proposed link with the National Rail Network. Mr Scott stated that the SRA were trying to help and that a simplified signalling system had been proposed in order to speed up the process, however it was unsure as to whether this will be agreed. If it is agreed then it was expected to be linked by 2006/07.

Mr Scott reported that Swanage Railway was trying to encourage more coach business. Miss Stockley informed the Committee that she had a database of coach companies and would therefore liaise with Mr Scott on this matter.

d) **Swanage & Purbeck Holiday Accommodation Association**

Mrs Fegan reported that the hoteliers on the whole had had a busy and long season with the shoulder months being busy. Positive feedback had been received from customers as to the appearance of the town, with heating out facilities improving and with the extended opening of restaurants into the winter period.

e) **Independent Hoteliers Association**

Mr Ferguson reported on a good season for the independent hoteliers. Mr Ferguson also reported that a new police officer had been assigned to Studland and would be policing the dunes. The problems of parking on the ferry road were highlighted. Councillor Farrow stated that the problems encountered with the dunes and parking on the ferry road had been brought to the attention of the Crime and Disorder Partnership.

The issue of the ferry refit was discussed and the lack of notification of a ferry breakdown was highlighted. The need for advanced notification was noted and it was agreed that the Committee should contact the ferry company to request notices in Swanage and Poole/Bournemouth.

The Meeting closed at 12.15 p.m.
