

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall on **Monday 31st March 2008 at 9.30 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Bright

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor Mrs C Gainsborough

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Hadley

Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mrs G Marsh

Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mrs A Patrick

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Pratt

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Also Present: -

Mr A Leeson

Town Clerk

Dr M Ayres

Assistant Town Clerk

Mr G Brookes

Operations Manager

Mrs A Holmes

Tourist Information Centre Manager

Mr R Johnson

Swanage Pier

Ms H Lagden

Tourism Officer, Purbeck District Council

Mr A Lander

Swanage Fishermen's Association (until 10.30 a.m.)

Mr R Marsh

Swanage Bay Users Association

Ms L Robinson

Thomas Ensor and Son (until 9.45 a.m.)

Revd J Wood

Churches Together in Swanage

Public Participation Time

In addition to the above three members of the public attended the meeting.

MR D. FURMAGE handed in proposals regarding kite-surfing on Swanage Beach.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor Gloyn-Cox, Mrs M Dean (Swanage Railway), Mr H Murray (Durlston Country Park) and Mr T Williams (Purbeck Tourism).

2) Market Matters

a) Operations Report – Ensors

It was noted that although the market had begun far in advance of recent years due to the early date of Easter it had got off to a successful start.

b) Market Signage

Further to minute 2)b) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 5th November 2007 it was RESOLVED:

That approval in principle be given to the fixing of a lightweight aluminium sign advertising the market to the railings of Main Beach Car Park, provided that it complies with planning regulations.

It was agreed that Ms Robinson would forward a sketch of the sign to the Town Council so that enquiries could be made of the planning authority.

c) Any other matters relating to the market notified prior to the meeting or for future Tourism agendas

It was noted that the market agreement was still outstanding and should be placed as an urgent item on the next Finance and Performance Management Committee agenda.

Attention was drawn to the need to ensure that the period of free parking for residents on market days was adequately advertised.

Ms Robinson left the meeting at 9.45 a.m.

3) Boat Park Matters

a) Trailer storage – possible additional sites

It was noted that due to the high demand for grid spaces in the Boat Park there was little space available for the storage of trailers for day users. Consideration was given to the utilisation of a number of the car parking spaces on Peveril Point Road, currently allocated for use by local fishermen, for this purpose. There were no objections to this from the representatives of the Swanage Fishermen's and Bay Users Associations, provided that it was on a short-term ad-hoc basis when spaces were vacant. However, it was noted that this was not a suitable long-term solution.

b) Installation of payment machine – feasibility report

Attention was drawn to the problem of boats being launched from the Peveril slipway outside of the hours of work of the Boat Park attendant. It was reported that it would be feasible to install a payment machine at an estimated cost of between £5,000 and £6,000, but that problems of enforcement would remain. The possibility of extending the hours of staffing was also raised. It was proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Mrs Patrick and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the issue of installing a ticket machine be not pursued, but that information relating to the cost benefit of increasing the number of manned hours be put to a forthcoming meeting of either the Personnel or Finance and Performance Management Committees.

c) Any other matters relating to the Boat Park notified prior to the meeting or for future Tourism agendas

The dangerous launching of watercraft from the Town Council's other slipways was discussed and it was **AGREED:**

That the Assistant Town Clerk investigate the powers of the Town Council to control launching across its property and, together with the Operations Manager, propose appropriate signage to the next meeting of the Tourism Committee.

Further to minute 3)c) of the Minutes of the Tourism Committee meeting held on 5th November 2007 it was reported that European Union funding may yet be available for improvement or replacement of the fishermen's slipway. It was also RESOLVED:

That the fishermen's slipway be added to the list of projects to be considered as potential recipients of funding from the De Moulham Trust.

In reference to minute 3)b) of the Minutes of the Tourism Committee meeting held on 5th November 2007 it was noted that the introduction of a residents' launch pass was impractical at present due to the lack of available grid spaces.

Mr Lander left the meeting at 10.30 a.m.

4) Matters arising from the Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 5th November 2007

Further to item 8)a) it was reported that the proposed additional public toilet opening hours had not been approved by the full Council due to budgetary restraints. Details of the Community Toilet Scheme introduced by Richmond Upon Thames Borough Council were being sought as a possible alternative.

It was noted further to item 11)b) that the Beach Bungalow prices for 2009 should be put to a forthcoming meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Committee to ensure their availability for publication.

5) Kite-Surfing on Swanage Beach – request for permission

Further to the distribution of information by Mr Furnage during Public Participation time it was proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Pratt and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That this matter be deferred for consideration at the next appropriate Policy and Planning Meeting.

6) Tourism Report

Mrs Holmes, the Tourist Information Centre Manager, reported on the following matters:

a) Tourist Information Centre

Footfall at the TIC has recently been comparable to the same period last year, although it had been a poor Easter.

b) Beach Gardens

At Beach Gardens a pensioners put for a pound offer will be run during May, with a coupon being printed in the Swanage and Wareham Advertiser.

c) Boat Park

Boat Park occupancy is at its maximum and waiting lists are in existence for all grid sizes.

d) Beach Awareness Week

Beach Awareness Week will be held in late May as part of Purbeck Aware Month. New beach signage is scheduled to be in-place by mid-May and the Blue Flag awards are to be announced shortly.

e) Coach Drivers Club

A full page advert has been placed in the Coach Drivers Club yearbook and this year Swanage heads up the South-West section, securing a full-page editorial.

f) Beach Bungalows

Special offers are currently available as part of a drive to increase occupancy of the beach bungalows on Shore Road between Easter and the main season.

Ms Lagden, Tourism Officer, reported on the following matters:

a) Purbeck Tourism Strategy

A Purbeck Tourism Strategy is being developed to identify tourism trends. Also included in this will be the results of the Tourism Occupancy Survey that was carried out in late 2007. This will be circulated once the details have been agreed by council members.

b) Destination Management Organisation (Destination Dorset)

A Business Plan for Destination Dorset will be completed during summer 2008. It will be launched in the autumn and will be fully operational from 2009/10. In the meantime, there are various working groups combining private and public sector representatives developing an action plan which will drive the partnership's work. The key areas of focus are: Partnership Development, Marketing, Quality, Sustainability and Research.

It is likely that West Dorset District Council's website will be used as the Destination Dorset website, although relevant tourism information will still be available on Purbeck District Council's website.

c) Fra Newbery Trail

Purbeck is to host a range of exhibitions, events and activities celebrating the life and work of the painter Fra H Newbery, as part of a month of exhibitions taking place around Dorset in April 2008. A trail has been produced promoting this and events are taking place at Corfe Castle, Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre and Durlston Country Park.

Further to item 6)b), above, some concern was expressed regarding the possible loss of identity for Swanage as a tourist destination under the Destination Management Organisation. Concerns were also raised over the town's coverage in the Purbeck Holiday Guide. It was RESOLVED

That in future Members should be invited to provide feedback on the proposed Swanage pages at an early stage of preparation.

7) Durlston Project Update

In the absence of Mr H Murray a written report was circulated to Committee Members.

8) Tourism Committee Priorities – Update

a) 2012 Olympics

It was reported that the Tourist Information Centre manager had attended a relevant customer care campaign workshop. The Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership are also running a range of training courses. It was noted that the Swanage and Purbeck Holiday Accommodation were also playing an important part in preparing for the increased visitors to the area not only during the games themselves, but also during the qualifying events. It was reported that the Olympic Legacy Officer was willing to give a presentation in Swanage and it was agreed that this should be placed on a future agenda.

b) Information Gathering/Market Research

It was agreed that the Town Council's officers should draw together all available information and that the Chairman of the Tourism Committee would call a meeting if deemed necessary.

9) Spa Bungalows – Possible Upgrade

Further to minute 9) of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 23rd July 2007 consideration was given to the possibility of upgrading the Spa Bungalows. It was, however, agreed that any increase in bookings was unlikely to justify the investment in equipping the huts. As an alternative it was proposed by Councillor Pratt, seconded by Councillor Hadley and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the Tourist Information Centre Manager have delegated authority to market rental of the Spa Bungalows to those on the waiting list for a Private Beach Hut Site.

Mr Marsh left at 11.05 a.m.

10) Swanage Bandstand Usage

The Chairman declared a personal interest in this item.

A number of suggestions were made for increasing use of the bandstand, including hiring out for parties, theatrical performances and youth rock band performances. It was noted that all such uses had to comply with the Town Council's health and safety and licensing requirements. It was **RESOLVED:**

That the availability of the bandstand be better publicised through improved signage and a leaflet.

11) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

a) Formation of Events Management Sub-Committee

It was agreed that all event organisers be written to, to enquire whether they would like to work together to form an events management group.

b) A-Boards

It was agreed to enquire what steps Dorset County Council were proposing to take in respect of A-boards on pavements.

c) Shore Road Retaining Wall

Concern was again expressed at the failure to resolve the issue of the unstable walls at Battlegate and Shore Road, resulting in barriers remaining in place on one of the main entry routes to the town.

d) Weather Station Location

Further to Minute 106 of the Monthly Council Meeting held on 26th November 2007, attention was again drawn to the possibility of moving the weather station.

e) Marketing and Branding

It was noted that the issues of marketing and branding should not be lost sight of in respect of the information gathering exercise under item 8)b) above.

f) Tourist Information Centre Manager

Thanks were passed to the Tourist Information Centre Manager for her informative and professional contribution to Tourism Committee Meetings.

12) Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the meeting dates for 2008/09 were yet to be established.

The Meeting closed at 11.25 a.m.
