

Minutes of the Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall on **Monday 8th February 2010 at 9.30 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor Mrs A Patrick

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor B Audley

Swanage Town Council

Councillor L Gloyn-Cox

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Hadley

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Wiggins

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-

Ms K Black

Durlston Country Park

Ms K Delahay

STRATA

Mr A Lander

Swanage Fishermen's Association

Ms L Robinson

Ensors

Mr G Willey

Swanage and District Licensed

Victuallers Association

Revd J Wood

Churches Together in Swanage

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Deputy Town Clerk

Mr G Brookes

Operations Manager

Mrs C Hooper

Tourist Information Centre Supervisor

Ms H Lagden

Purbeck Tourism Officer

Public Participation Time

There were two members of the public in attendance.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor Trite, and the Swanage and Purbeck Hospitality Association.

2) Proposal to alter start time of Tourism Committee to 10 am

Further to minute 13)b) of the meeting of the Tourism Committee held on 12th October 2009, consideration was given to a request from the Hospitality Association to change the start time of future meetings to 10.00 a.m. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Patrick and seconded by Councillor Hadley:

That future meetings of the Tourism Committee start at 10.00 a.m.

Upon being put to the Meeting THREE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and ONE AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

3) Market Matters

a) Operations Report from Ensors

It was reported that the market would re-commence on Tuesday 30th March 2010 and that there had been significant expressions of interest from traders. It was noted that the internal auditor had raised some questions regarding market income at a recent meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Committee, and Ms Robinson agreed to discuss this issue with the Town Clerk on leaving the meeting.

Ms L Robinson left the Meeting at 9.40 a.m.

4) Boat Park Matters

a) Security matters

Attention was drawn to a small number of thefts that had occurred at the Boat Park over recent months. The potential for improving CCTV coverage was raised, together with the possible amendment of the boat park regulations to stipulate that all boat owners should have insurance. It was proposed by Councillor Hadley, seconded by the Chairman and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Town Council's officers explore the possibility of introducing low-cost security improvements to the site and amending the Boat Park regulations to stipulate that insurance is required for all boats stored on site.

5) Matters arising from Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 12th October 2009

Further to item 13)a) it was noted that the Town Council had written in support of the local fishermen's concerns regarding the proposed introduction of Marine Special Areas of Conservation. The Chairman of the Fishermen's Association thanked the Town Council for their support and the Chairman of the Committee thanked Councillor Gloyne-Cox for his work on the issue.

6) Event Organisation

a) Report on review of event organisation

Information was provided regarding the Council's proposals for reviewing the arrangements for event organisation. Following a meeting between representatives of the Town Council and the Events Manager of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, it was noted that a revised user agreement would hopefully be implemented for the coming season. New licensing arrangements would also be introduced following the retirement of the Town Clerk, who currently acts as the Town Council's Designated Premises Supervisor.

It was reported that the Hospitality Association were looking to apply for funding for an events co-ordinator for the town.

b) Request for Goldwing Motorcycle club visit

Consideration was given to a request from Thames Valley Goldwing Club to park motorcycles on the seafront during one Sunday in May. It was proposed

by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Gloyn-Cox and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That permission be granted for the event, on the condition that it is held away from the Beach Huts and during one of the quieter weeks in May.

7) **Beach Gardens – operating arrangements for summer 2010**

It was reported that the Town Council would continue to operate the kiosk at Beach Gardens this summer and that it would open over Easter weekend and the May Day Bank Holiday. It would then open for the summer season from mid-May onwards.

8) **Beach Management Sub-Committee – to agree date on next meeting**

Attention was drawn to the importance of the Beach Management Sub-Committee in supporting the Blue Flag application process. It was agreed that the next meeting be held at the Town Hall on Friday 19th February 2010.

9) **Swanage and Purbeck Hospitality Association – Update**

In the absence of a representative of the Hospitality Association the following report was read by the Tourist Information Centre Supervisor.

- **Destination Dorset Board meeting** – Concerns were raised that there appeared to be no clear direction, product or funding.
- **Quality** – Alan Power has been appointed chair of the Destination Dorset quality sub-committee. A report would be made in the future regarding non accredited accommodation being able to advertise in the Guide.
- **Website Update** – A new website was going live today – www.VisitSwanage.com - to showcase the region with a view to attracting more visitors to the area.
- **PR / Marketing Updates** – More movement towards the nationals and increasing contact relationships with travel editors was driving increased PR for the area. Urgent attention was also being paid to the funding dilemma for the required signalling work for Swanage Railway. The issues have been communicated to local and national press and television.
- **Walking Festival Update** – In full swing for May 3rd – 7th All walks details on website – going live next week www.walkswanage.com Mentioned on Walking World website. The aim is to pass over the event as a commercial proposal next year. Merchandising was being organised for sale and a ceilidh was being planned for Sandpit Field on the Thursday, including a hog roast. A bar licence would be applied for.
- **General Business Update** - Overall members are reporting cautious optimism for the coming season. Bookings are a little slower than last year possibly owing to the extreme weather conditions in January.

10) **Purbeck District Tourism Review – Report of outcomes**

- The Tourism Officer provided a summary of the outcome of the recent District Council tourism review.
- Support had been given to the continued operation of the Wareham Tourist Information Centre, although the location may be reviewed in the future.
- Swanage Museum and Heritage Centre is to be passed to Swanage Museum

Trust, with Purbeck District Council retaining responsibility for building maintenance for the first five years.

- Consideration is to be given to discontinuing the accredited accommodation only policy from 2011.
- Advertising pricing and policy in the District Guide is to be reviewed.
- The District Council is to continue supporting Destination Dorset as the means of partnership working across the county.

11) Destination Dorset – Update

No report was available at the present time. Concern was expressed that progress towards achieving the aims of the organisation had been slower than expected.

12) Tourism Reports

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

a) Tourism Fair

Following the success of the inaugural Purbeck Tourism Fair in 2009, the event is to be repeated on 17th March 2010 at Lulworth Castle.

b) Tourism Website

It was reported that Purbeck District Council would no longer be providing Tourism web pages from late 2010. The public would be guided to the Visit Dorset website.

c) Swanage Seen Arts Trail

Funding had been made available for a leaflet in respect of the Swanage Seen Arts Trail.

d) Winding up of Purbeck Tourism

It was reported that following the winding up of Purbeck Tourism funds had been distributed to a number of local organisations, including £1,000 towards the map and guide.

The Chairman congratulated Wareham Tourist Information Centre on their recent award.

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

a) Beach Bungalows

It was reported that Shore Road beach bungalows were fully booked for the school summer holiday period. There was still some availability at the Spa although bookings appear to be up on the same period last year.

b) National Express Bookings

National Express bookings continue to attract new visitors to the TIC and agency income increased last year.

c) New Events

The Town Council had worked closely with event organisers on proposals for new events, including the Walking Festival and Victorian Week. These had been arranged for May, thereby attracting visitors to the town outside of the peak season.

d) Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade Fortnight will take place between 22nd February and 7th March. This will be supported by a display at the TIC.

e) Purbeck Aware Festival

This year's Purbeck Aware Festival will take place between 15th May and 12th June. The theme will be Brilliant Biodiversity and the TIC will host a display including maps of areas of special interest and information on local flora and fauna. This will also provide an opportunity to promote 'out of car experience' leaflets and the annual beach clean. Such initiatives are an important part of the Town Council's annual Blue Flag accreditation process.

13) 2012 Olympic Legacy – Update

No report was available at the present time. It was noted that a meeting would be held in the near future.

14) Durlston Project – Update

- It was reported that the project was progressing well and that tenders had recently been received. The award of the contract would be made following a cabinet meeting in early March. It was anticipated that the castle will re-open in spring 2011. It was noted that there would be some alteration to the footpaths around the castle whilst the work was ongoing, but that any disruption would be kept to a minimum.
- This summer would see a 12-week trial of a Durlston shuttle bus, to be operated by Discover Dorset.
- The Victorian trail was currently being reviewed.
- Swanage Town Council was thanked for their involvement in recent beach clean events.
- Attention had been drawn to the possibility of re-opening the zig-zag path and the County Council's Head Ranger had agreed to review the situation.

15) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

- a) Attention was drawn to a presentation to be held at Winfrith Technology Centre on 18th May 2010 regarding proposals for an off-shore windfarm.
- b) The possibility of sinking a barge in Swanage Bay as an artificial reef for divers was raised.

Councillor Mrs Patrick declared a personal interest in this item under the Model Code of Conduct by reason of a business association with the applicant.

It was noted that the Environment Agency had approved such a project in Weymouth Bay. It was agreed that this be an agenda item for the forthcoming Beach Management Sub-Committee.

- c) Some concern was expressed regarding the opening hours of the Town Council's public conveniences. It was agreed that this would be reviewed by the General Operations Committee.
- d) Concern was again expressed at potential dangers arising from the parking of motorcycles and vehicles on the stone quay. It was agreed that this be placed on the agenda of a future Transport Committee meeting.

16) Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 10 a.m. on Monday 14th June 2010.

The Meeting closed at 10.45 a.m.