

Minutes of the Meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 12th JULY 2023** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chair: -

Councillor C Moreton

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor B Trite

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Mr A Evans

National Trust

Mr D Pratten

Beach Buddies and Planet Purbeck

Mr F Roberts

Swanage Landers

Mrs S Spurling

Sustainable Swanage

Also in attendance: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business

Development Manager (VSBDM)

Ms G Percival

Assets & Compliance Manager

Mr M Snowdon

Assets & Compliance Support Officer

There were two members of the public at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:

A question was raised with regards to the position of Swanage Town Council in respect of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points on the highway. It was explained that whilst there was an item on the agenda relating to EV Charging, this was focused on Swanage Town Council Car Parks. Any activity which relates to roads or pavements falls under the jurisdiction of Dorset Council and guidance should be sought from them on this matter.

A short presentation was made by a local business owner regarding a new venture relating to items that can be generated using seaweed. It was reported that the business, Ocean Origin Ltd, had begun the process of obtaining a permit to farm seaweed from a site in Purbeck, but that the licensing process is complex and may take up to one year before this is in place. A request was therefore made for permission to obtain small amounts of seaweed from Swanage beach, thereby enabling early-stage testing to be completed. In response, it was noted that the Town Council does not object to the collection of small amounts of seaweed from the Main Beach for personal use.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Foster and Harris, Tracey Churcher (National Trust) and Brian Bleese (Dorset Wildlife Trust). Councillor Monkhouse attended the meeting remotely.

2) **Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct.

No declarations were made on this occasion.

3) **Matters arising from the Meeting of the Environment Committee held on 1st February 2023**

There were no matters raised on this occasion.

4) **Environment Policy Action Plan Version 9 – Update**

It was reported that the Environment Policy Action Plan had recently been reviewed by the relevant Working Party. It was noted that the plan remains iterative and that key points to be raised regarding progress had been included on the agenda for this meeting. The Chairman recorded thanks to the Working Party for their work on the Action Plan and it was AGREED:-

That the version 9 of the Environment Policy Action Plan, incorporating reports on progress to date, be noted.

5) **Sustainable Swanage Update**

An update was provided on the activities of Sustainable Swanage since the last meeting of the committee, some of which had been supported by funding to the amount of £1,100 received from the organisation Stepping Into Nature. Activities undertaken included:

- Installation of information panels at Peveril Point and the Downs Local Nature (LNR).
- A successful launch event for Peveril Point and the Downs Local Nature Reserve. Since the launch, a Friends Group had been established with approximately 20 active members and an additional 7 butterfly watchers.
- Former St Marks Playing Field "Picnic in the Park" event which proved very popular with the local community.
- A BioBlitz event held at the LNR. There were approximately 40 people involved identifying insects with additional surveys carried out at Northbrook Copse and Prospect Green. As part of the lead-up to this event, several mini BioBlitz events were organised with over 300 children from local schools attending to develop their knowledge and understanding of the nature found within the various school grounds.

The Chairman recorded thanks to Sustainable Swanage and noted it is gaining momentum; each time an update is received, there is more to be reported and lots more people are getting involved.

6) **Swanage Town Council Energy Footprint Report - 2022**

The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) introduced a report that set out data regarding energy and water use and waste generated by the Town Council over a 12-month period. The report presented the actual figures regarding usage and costs across various metrics including gas, electric, water, fuel usage and waste generation. It was noted that this report would be produced annually. Thanks were offered to the Assets & Compliance Support Officer for compiling such a comprehensive report.

It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Trite and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To present the Energy Footprint report to the Environment & Green Spaces Committee annually, thereby enabling a comparison of these figures over time.

7) **Electric Vehicle Charging in Town Council Car Parks**

Consideration was given to a detailed briefing note regarding procurement options available for the expansion of EV charging facilities in the Town Council's car parks. The VSBDM reported that the Environment Action Plan Working Party had conducted two further meetings with the task of reviewing these options, including Dorset Council's 'Charging Ahead' project.

It was reported that the recommendation from the Working Party is to work with the Dorset Council appointed supplier of these facilities to install additional Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in Main Beach Car Park, North Beach Car Park and Mermond Place Car Park. This would provide a total of 14 EV sockets each providing 22kw and would likely replace the existing 6 EV sockets providing 7kw which are now considered relatively obsolete. Additional potential improvements include:

- 50kw fast charger in both Main Beach Car Park and Mermond Place Car Park;
- electric Bike charging facilities.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY :

TO RECOMMEND:

That officers work with Dorset Council and their supplier to develop a detailed proposal for Electric Vehicle charging points in the town's car parks as per the 'Charging Ahead' scheme and report further to the autumn meeting of the Environment & Green Spaces Committee.

8) **Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Action Plan 2030: Council Buildings**

The VSBDM introduced a briefing note and supporting appendices which set out the next steps required to progress the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Action Plan, which would enable Council buildings to be carbon neutral by 2030. It was noted this would include the installation of LED lighting, Building Management Systems, solar panels and heat pumps. Initial actions are to undertake an investigation into switching to LED lighting and the use of Building Management Systems as these provide the greatest reductions in energy use. If all steps within the plan are taken, more kWh than the Council buildings require will be generated which could be offset against other activities the Council undertakes.

Consideration was also given to whether an application should be submitted in the 2023-24 year for the potential next round of Salix grant funding, should this be available, to assist in covering the shortfall between allocated funds for the project and estimated costs. Given the requirements for substantial match funding, the budget available and the level of professional input required to submit an application it was noted this requires further consideration.

The Assets and Compliance Manager reported that a meeting has been scheduled with a contractor in July 2023 to obtain a cost estimate relating to the provision of LED lighting and that a review and inspection of the Town Hall boilers is planned to ascertain their potential lifespan.

It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Action Plan 2030: Council Buildings, be approved and adopted, together with the next steps set out in the briefing note (which will be refined prior to the Council Meeting on 24th July 2023).

9) Waste Management update

The Assets & Compliance Manager reported that she is in regular contact with Dorset Waste Services and to date the summer service had performed well. It was also noted additional bin capacity on the seafront would be provided for Carnival Week. Despite challenges due to limited staff resources, it was reported that the team is sufficiently prepared for the oncoming summer season.

An update was provided regarding the work of Swanage Beach Buddies. It was reported that across the first 6 months of the year, 35 Beach cleans had been carried out (compared to 36 in 2022 over the same time period). The average number of hours volunteered is almost identical when comparing 2022 to 2023. It was encouraging that over this period in 2022 735kg of waste had been recovered whilst in 2023 the figure had dropped to 473kg of waste, indicating a significant 36% reduction. It was noted this may be attributable to a combination of improved efficiency in Swanage Town Council and Dorset Waste Services waste and litter strategy and a change in attitudes from residents and visitors to the town.

The representative from Swanage Landers reported there had been no formal litter picks within the town in 2023 although activity is still happening due to residents feeling more empowered to litter pick their street and local area within the town. It was also reported that the Swanage Landers had undertaken significant litter removal from verges on the A351. It was noted that, in conjunction with the Assets and Compliance Manager, two mechanical road sweeps had been undertaken so far this year, and that another had been booked to take place before the end of July. These sweeps had resulted in the removal of approximately 8 tonnes of waste which would otherwise have flowed into the drains.

During the discussion that followed, it was acknowledged that the number of events in the town each year is increasing. Thanks were offered for the continued work that the Seafront Operations teams undertake, alongside Beach Buddies and Swanage Landers.

10) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

a) St Marks Playing Field – 1st May 2023 event and next steps.

The Assets and Compliance Manager reported that a review of feedback from this event will be discussed at the next scheduled Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting. In the interim, it was observed that the space is being used a lot more now than before the 1st May event and that lots of positive feedback had been received.

b) Councillor and Staff Training

This will be arranged in accordance with the Environment Policy Action Plan.

c) Review of the Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS) and progress to date

A need to work on this in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Plan Environment Task Team was noted.

11) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday 11th October 2023.

The Meeting closed at 3.05 p.m.
