

Minutes of the Meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 28th FEBRUARY 2024** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chair: -

Councillor C Moreton

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor T Foster (Town Mayor)

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Harris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor D Monkhouse

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Mr P Floyd

Planet Purbeck

Mr D Pratten

Beach Buddies

Mr F Roberts

Swanage Landers

Mrs E Teasdale

Litter Free Dorset

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 was one representative of the press and one member of the public present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Trite and Mrs T Churcher (National Trust).

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 and Green Spaces Committee held on 11th October 2023

There were no matters raised on this occasion.

4) Matters arising from the Meetings of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee, held on 1st November 2023 and 7th February 2024

The Assets & Compliance Manager provided an update regarding the Seaweed Management Plan and confirmed that an advert had been published seeking expressions

of interest from suitably qualified contractors to work with the Council in delivering the agreed plan.

The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager reported on ongoing discussions regarding the town centre flood defence project in conjunction with Dorset Council and the Environment Agency and noted that public consultation is scheduled to take place later in 2024.

5) Environment Action Plan

The VSBDM briefly discussed the current Environmental Action Plan (Version 10) which has evolved since its commencement in 2020. As new actions are identified, the document is updated in consultation with the relevant working party.

Whilst solid progress has been made, with many actions now completed, others are currently still in progress and some would be discussed as part of the other items on the agenda. It was envisaged that there would be a more fundamental review of the Environmental Action Plan at the next meeting.

6) Picnic in the Park Event

The VSBDM discussed the event held on 1st May 2023 within Herston Community Field which was led by Sustainable Swanage. Moving forward, there is a possibility that the event will be led by the National Trust with the involvement of Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust as part of the Herston Village Hall redevelopment project.

A request had been submitted to Swanage Town Council for assistance with the funding of the event. This would be considered as part of the budget allocation for the Environmental Community Engagement Action Plan (see Minute No. 10 below).

The Chairman wished the organising committee being formed every success.

7) Swanage Central Beach Water Quality Overview

The VSBDM introduced the Swanage Central Beach Water Quality Overview, which is a document developed two years ago and has been available to the public on the Council's website since that time. It was developed primarily due to the number of queries received at the Visitor Information Centre regarding water quality incidents on the beach. The document details how Swanage Town Council are informed about water quality incidents and the steps taken in response, as well as detailing relevant statistics from recent years.

Concern was expressed that the risk warnings provided by the Environment Agency only cover the period May to September each year, despite the town having seen a growth in year-round sea swimming. The Environment Agency had been approached to ascertain if year-round data would be available. However, the Environment Agency had clarified that this was not possible as it constructs a predictive risk model using large data sets and there was not enough information available to provide accurate modelling for the off-peak season at the current time.

It was noted that although the number of incidents relating to the Ocean Bay Storm Overflow in the 2022-2023 period has remained similar to the 2021-2022 period, the duration (measured in minutes) of spills had doubled.

A request will be made to the Beach Management Advisory Committee for these matters to be added as an agenda item to be considered further at its next meeting.

8) Motion for the Ocean

The VSBDM introduced the Motion for the Ocean initiative, led by the Ocean Conservation Trust. It was noted that in order for the Town Council to adopt the Motion for the Ocean it must:

- a) Declare an urgent need for ocean recovery; and
- b) Ensure that the actions identified in the Motion are achieved.

The Committee welcomed this proposal and it was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a working party be established to develop an Action Plan to support ocean recovery, to be brought before the Environment & Green Spaces Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

Councillors Foster, Tomes & Monkhouse expressed a willingness to serve on the working party.

9) Swan Brook Partnership

Ian Rees from the Dorset National Landscape team (formerly the Dorset AONB) presented a report on the ecological condition of the Swan Brook which had been produced in partnership with Sustainable Swanage, National Trust, Planet Purbeck and Litter Free Dorset.

It was reported that the report provides an initial analysis of the current condition of Swan Brook, assesses the various factors which affect the health of this river and its impact upon the water quality of the sea, as well as identifying steps that can be taken to further monitor its condition and make a positive improvement to its overall health. The formation of a partnership group was recommended to deliver on the actions identified within the report, including raising awareness through community consultation and engagement. A request was made for Swanage Town Council to support the development of the project and to help deliver the partnership programme, in particular the community consultation and engagement elements.

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

To offer formal support to the development of the Swan Brook Partnership Project.

A question was asked as to whether the project could be expanded to include the Ulwell Stream as well, and it was acknowledged that this merited further consideration.

10) Environmental Community Engagement

The VSBDM reported that until recently, the work of environmental community engagement had been undertaken by the Sustainable Swanage Project Officer who had now moved on to another role. Environmental community engagement is an objective of the Town Council's Environmental Policy and the Town Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2025 commits to supporting Sustainable Swanage until March 2025. However, Dorset Coast Forum had notified the Town Council that it is unable to continue to host the support officer role and hence consideration was given as to how best to proceed in engaging the community in the delivery of the Town Council's environmental action plan.

It was recognised how much had been achieved by Sustainable Swanage with regards to community engagement and attention was drawn to the importance of ensuring that this work is built upon. Consequently, a draft Environmental Community Engagement Plan had been drafted, the content of which was considered by the committee.

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

That the Environmental Community Engagement Action Plan 2024-25 be approved and adopted.

It was further proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Harris and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To delegate to officers the procurement of external support to deliver the Action Plan, funded from the £20,000 Environmental Projects budget, with any single commitment in excess of £10,000 being presented to Council for approval.

It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Harris and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To delegate oversight of the delivery of the
Environmental Community Action Plan 2024-25 to
the Environmental Action Plan Working Party.

The importance of members of the working party attending meetings to drive this
work forward was noted.

11) **Waste Management**

a) **Update on activities from Beach Buddies**

The representative of Beach Buddies provided an update on the group's
activities. In the last calendar year, 71 beach cleans had been carried out,
clearing over 1,182kg of debris and litter. This represented a slight decrease on
the amount of waste recorded in the previous calendar year. On occasions when
there was a surplus of volunteers, cleaning operations had been extended inland
to include prominent areas of the town.

It was noted that Swanage Town Council had recently appointed a new beach
cleaner and the Beach Buddies volunteers had reported that this appointment
was already having a measurable effect in reducing the debris and litter
encountered.

The general trend regarding types of litter revealed a decrease in the amount of
PPE, polystyrene and fast food packaging although there had been a noticeable
increase in the amount of cigarette butts and dog waste being encountered.

After a brief discussion regarding how best to raise awareness and tackle the
increasing issue of dog waste, it was agreed that this would be an important task
to include on the Environmental Community Engagement Action Plan.

b) **Update on activities from Swanage Landers**

The representative of Swanage Landers provided an update on recent activities,
which had been more reactive than proactive due to limited availability. Focused
projects had included:

- Attending areas identified as having a larger amount of litter and
debris.
- Assisting with road sweeping campaigns (4 completed in 2023)
- Main route verge clearance. Recently completed was the A351 from
Coombe Corner through to Norden Farm.

c) **Update on Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) Summer schedule**

The Assets & Compliance Manager reported that she had attended a recent
meeting with DWP regarding their plans for waste collection during the summer.
This would be similar to the plan utilised in 2023, although a commitment had
also been made that collections would continue until 7pm during the peak season.

12) **Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

a) **Solar Panel & LED Lighting update**

The Assets & Compliance Manager reported that a full grant application had been
submitted to Low Carbon Dorset, although a decision on the application had not yet
been received.

13) **Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday
26th June 2024.

The Meeting closed at 3.20 p.m.

Protecting the Natural Environment and Addressing the Climate Crisis



The Town Council will protect the natural environment and address the climate crisis by:

- Developing a Carbon Neutral Plan with the aim of ensuring that Council energy use is carbon neutral by 2030;
- Implementing projects from the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- Ensuring that all new construction projects, including the proposed seafront enhancement scheme, have sustainability embedded within the design;
- Managing its parks and open spaces to adapt to climate change;
- Identify opportunities to increase biodiversity.

In support of the natural environment and addressing the climate crisis the Town Council...

- Funds and supports Sustainable Swanage to work with the community to deliver local environmental projects, including a Community Pantry, Repair Café and Greening Swanage.
- Has developed an Environmental Action Plan.
- Has installed a free water refill station on the seafront.
- Requires all events held on Town Council land to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment and prohibits single use plastics.
- Works with Dorset Council to implement waste management systems along the seafront.
- Manages some green spaces to enhance biodiversity.

Between 2023 and 2025 the Town Council will:

- Continue to support Sustainable Swanage;
- Develop and deliver the first elements of the Carbon Neutral Plan;
- Provide Climate Crisis training for all staff and councillors;
- Explore options to reduce reliance on fossil fuels;
- Continue its commitment to increase tree planting in Swanage;
- Increase the number of electric car charging points in its car parks;
- Consider ways to increase cycling and walking across the town.



Swanage Town Council

DRAFT Environment Policy Action Plan**Version 11**

The draft Environment Policy agreed by Council in March 2020 provided six distinct policy areas and, in the sections below, the actions have been categorised under each of these. Swanage Town Council have taken the approach of producing a short action plan with a small number of key actions that can be developed quickly. This is seen very much as an iterative action plan that can grow and develop as we better understand what is required to meet the challenges of the climate crisis. Completed actions are retained at the bottom of the document.

1. Managing the Town Council in an environmentally sustainable manner

We shall ensure that sustainability is at the heart of how we manage the Town Council and its functions.

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	Officer
5.	Provide climate crisis training for all STC staff and councillors.	External providers.	Not known	2023	Course undertaken.	Various options are being considered and a report will be brought to the Environment Committee. It is felt that training should be undertaken after the councillor elections in May 2024.	TIC1

2. Managing our built environment sustainably

We are directly responsible for both historic and modern buildings and infrastructure which will be managed sustainably

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	Officer
1.	Implement energy reduction measures.	Produce report which details various possible measures.	Not known	March 2024	Energy use reduction will be tracked by officers	Solar panels are being installed on Beach Gardens pavilion and the Operations Depot and Garage. LED lighting replacement being undertaken at Town Hall, TIC, Operations Depot and Garage and	OPS1

						Beach Gardens pavilion. Installation Q2 timescale 2024.	
3.	Consider options for reducing water use and harvesting rainwater.	Report detailing water use and proposals to reduce.	Not Known	Oct 24	Reduction in water use as measured by water bills		OPS1
4.	Ensure all new Town Council constructions have sustainability embedded in their design.	Included in each specification.	Not known	Ongoing	All construction specifications will include sustainability.	ONGOING	TH1

3. Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

We are directly responsible for a wide range of natural environments and shall work to enhance these and look to support initiatives that enhance other natural areas within the town

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	Officer
3.	Undertake a 'bio-diversity' audit of all sites owned by the Town Council to assess their importance within the natural environment.	Volunteers could be used from Sustainable Swanage depending on type of work required.	Not known	March 2024	A map demonstrating high, medium or low bio-diverse areas which might include proposals for improvements	The Council are undertaking a Greenspaces Strategy which will encompass this. The framework for this strategy is proposed to be discussed as an agenda item at the Environment and Green Spaces Committee on 26 th June 2024. A biodiversity audit is being undertaken of King Georges Field during June 2024.	OPS1
4.	Identify two further sites to be enhanced by Sustainable Swanage	Work with Sustainable Swanage to develop plans	Not known	March 2024	Action Plan developed and work undertaken at sites	Northbrook Copse and the former St Mark's Playing Field identified for enhancement. For Northbrook Copse a management plan and enhanced information signage has been produced.	OPS1
5.	Work with partners to implement actions identified within the	Identify areas within Strategy that can be developed.	Not known	March 2024	Action Plan developed	ONGOING – Need to develop Action Plan for Committee. The Green Infrastructure Strategy is included in the Purbeck Local Plan and will be reviewed during the	OPS1 / TIC 1

	Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy.					current preparation of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.	
6.	Continue to plant trees according to the Swanage Tree Strategy and Policy (approved November 2022) generally with 30 planted each year.	Areas identified and trees planted.	Not known	On-going	Number of trees planted.	ONGOING – For past 3 years at least 30 new trees planted per annum to continue. During 2022, Tree Strategy and Policy were approved by Full Council. Site specific Beach Gardens Tree Strategy also produced in 2023.	OPS1

4. Encouraging, educating and embedding environmental best practice

We shall work with the community and other stakeholders to encourage environmental best practice

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	
1.	Support Dorset Waste Services to increase the household recycling rate across Swanage.	Support the education teams at DWS, including about composting and food waste.	None	Ongoing	Positive feedback from DWS.	ONGOING - Work with Sustainable Swanage to promote household recycling. (FareShare and Community Pantry)	TIC1
2.	Recommend that all new constructions in Swanage are built according to sustainable criteria.	Include recommendation in all responses.	None	Ongoing	Increase in new builds built according to sustainable criteria.	ONGOING - May be included in the Design Code in the draft Swanage Neighbourhood Plan	TH2
3.	Continue to support Sustainable Swanage and other partners to deliver community based environmental improvements.	Through funding Sustainable Swanage Officer for 2 days a week, oversight, and management of staff time.	£20,000 per annum	Ongoing	Successful projects being delivered through Sustainable Swanage and its sub-groups.	ONGOING - Costs included in 2023-24 budget with agreement to fund this role for 2 years.	TIC1

5. Protecting local infrastructure

By working with the community and stakeholders we shall strive to protect and enhance local infrastructure to retain a vibrant and sustainable town.

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	
1.	Develop Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy to increase the number of charging facilities in STC car parks.	Consider options and bring a report to Committee.	Not known	July 2023	Chargers installed.	ONGOING - STC is working with Dorset Council to deliver the Charging Ahead scheme in three car parks in Swanage – hopefully will be in place by summer 2024	TIC1
2.	Support businesses in their efforts to be more sustainable	Working with Sustainable Swanage to provide information and support to businesses	None	Ongoing	Positive feedback from businesses.	All new leases between Swanage Town Council and its business partners include a section on environmental considerations. Sustainable Swanage works with businesses to identify effective ways to provide support.	TIC1
3.	Support, where possible, the establishment of a community bus in Swanage.	Review options around a community bus for Swanage	Not yet known	Ongoing	Options exist around improving the route of the Durlston Bus but a community bus serving the whole community could take some time to develop.	ONGOING – Discussion was being held with the Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust during early 2023. Unsure what the current situation is.	TIC1
4.	Campaign to ensure essential services are retained in Swanage in accordance with the Swanage Local Plan, to minimise travel requirements.	By working with SPDT Dorset Council, P-TAG, and other relevant organisations, such as DCCG, and supporting community initiatives to maintain services.	None	Ongoing	By recording and reviewing the actions undertaken and reporting to Full Council.	ONGOING – Working in partnership with SPDT on developing the Chapel Lane community services. Working with other groups such as Wellbeing Swanage and will be included within the draft Neighbourhood Plan.	TH1

6. Supporting Sustainable Tourism

We shall support the town's tourism economy through the promotion of sustainable tourism

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	
1.	Enhance the beach 'toy bank' to include a provision at the Ocean Bay end of the beach.	Identify a solution and implement it.	Not known	July 2023	Enhanced Toy Bank in place.	Beach Toy Bank currently successful at the Information Centre. Will engage with North Beach partners in 2024.	TIC1
2.	Develop a sustainable tourism vision.	Work with stakeholders to develop a vision of what a sustainable destination might mean for Swanage.	£0	November 2023	Report to Tourism Committee.	ONGOING - This has been built into the Marketing Strategy that the Marketing Working Group are developing and includes the launch of the new Visit Swanage website.	TIC1
3.	Promote sustainable transport and walking in and around the town to reduce the need for visitors to use cars.	Look at alternative forms of transport and promote these on website and digital media.	-	Ongoing	Customer feedback and uptake.	ONGOING - Sustainable Swanage's Active Travel sub group has now disbanded due to lack of volunteers.	TIC1
4.	Enhance electric facilities on event fields and the market site to eliminate the requirement for fossil fuelled generators.	Report produced detailing costs of upgrades to sites.	Not known	Ongoing	Upgrades undertaken	ONGOING - Two electric points installed and in use at the market site. Further work required for PAG and Sandpit Field – to be included in the Phase 2 Seafront Development.	OPS1

Completed Actions 2023-24							
1.	Review vehicle & equipment needs and where possible move to electric machines.	Equipment asset list to be reviewed and options for change considered.	Not known	March 2023	Review undertaken.	DONE - Officers to produce asset list of machines, including power source, during 2022/23 and take report to Committee at the end of 2023.	OPS1
2.	Develop an environmental monitoring system for the Town Council's business which includes tracking carbon use.	System to be set up and managed by officers.	None	March 2023	System set up.	DONE: The Council publishes annually usage for the following: gas, electricity, waste tonnages, petrol, diesel, and water.	OPS1
3.	Develop a system to monitor the Council's waste streams and undertake review.	Identify waste streams and review options for reduction.	Not known	June 2023	Waste tonnages monitored through Management System.	DONE – Linked to 2 above.	OPS1
4.	Reduce the amount of paper documents printed by the Town Council	Review printing volumes and work towards reducing, beginning with introduction of councillor laptops.	Total not known. Budget for Councillor s' laptops agreed.	June 2023	Monitor through Environment Management System	DONE – Laptops have now been procured and training provided to Councillors. Printed copies of Council reports are no longer issued to Councillors.	TH1
6.	Move to a fully renewable energy contract for the electric supply to the Town Council	Reviewing green options and undertaking a procurement exercise.	-	October 2023	New contract set up.	DONE – Fully renewable energy contract is now in place – Sep 2023.	TH3
2.	Consider options for renewable energy on the Town Council estate.	Undertake research and produce report.	Not known	March 2024	Report produced detailing relevant options.	DONE: Solar Panels are being procured..	OPS1 / TIC1

1.	Review options to reduce or eliminate pesticide/herbicide use.	Current use will be reviewed and alternatives considered.	Not known	March 2023	By monitoring amount used.	DONE - Report provided to February Committee detailing current use and explanation of some available alternatives. Committee agreed to continue current approach and review in the future	OPS1
2.	Reduce quantity of bedding plants and develop more drought resistant plantings.	Planting more drought resistant plants.	Not known	June 2023	Reduction in water use and more hardy plants	DONE - Trial of more drought-resistant plantings is ongoing.	OPS1

Completed Actions 2022-23

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required by	How will we measure this?	Responsible Committee	Progress to date	
1.5	Make climate impact a determinant in all grant giving.	Add section to grant application form.	None	31 st March 2021	Revised application form	Full Council	COMPLETE – Criteria now included within application form.	NIKI
2.1	Undertake an energy audit of all Town Council buildings and identify ways to reduce energy consumption.	Review options to procure a consultancy to undertake this work.	£2,000	31 st March 2021	A report will be produced once complete	Operations	COMPLETE - A report was procured which provided a range of options for the installation of LED bulbs and solar panels across the Council's estate. This will be incorporated in further work being undertaken by the Council in 2022-23.	CULVIN
3.5	Develop The Downs as a Local Nature Reserve.	Continue to work with Sustainable Swanage to deliver this.	Not yet known	31 st March 2023	Nature Reserve established	Operations	COMPLETE - Customer survey released in January. Sustainable Swanage Open Meeting in early 2021. A Management Plan is complete.	OPS1
5.1	Support a Rights of Way survey to	Identify solution and work with	£250	Summer 2021	Survey completed with areas for improvement identified. STC will	Operations	COMPLETE – Survey complete, Rights of Way Open Meeting on 21 st June	TIC1

	encourage walking in the area	partners or other stakeholders			present findings to Dorset Council for implementation, if necessary		2022 – setting up volunteer hub to undertake grading of ROWs.	
6.3	All events held on Town Council land to be single use plastic free	No single use plastic will be permitted	£0	Nov 2021	No single use plastic in use	Tourism	COMPLETE - 1 st November 2021 - Full Council confirmed that all events should now be single use plastic free	TIC1
6.5	Enhance the supply of free drinking water solutions across the town	Produce signage for current drinking water taps to make them more obvious and consider if any further are required	Budgeted in 2020-21	31 st March 2021	Signage implemented	Tourism	COMPLETE - Signs have been added to all drinking water taps to make them more visible. A water refill station has been installed on the seafront; part funded by a grant from 'Sea Changers'.	TIC1 / OPS1
6.6	Work with event organisers to ensure that sustainability is embedded into their events	All event applications to detail what positive and negative impacts their events will have on the local environment	£0	Immediate	Event application form updated	Tourism	COMPLETE - All events during 2021 were required to complete an 'Environmental Impact Assessment'. These will be reviewed at year end and a report produced	TIC 1

Swanage Town Council Green Spaces Strategy – Proposed format for review

At the Environment and Green Spaces Committee held on 11th October 2023, Minute No. 7a) resolved that a Green Space Strategy be prepared to provide a strategic framework for the management and development of green spaces owned and managed by the Town Council. It was further noted that this would be overseen by this Committee, with the final strategy being approved by the Council.

Work has commenced and is ongoing and the following format for the strategy is proposed.

Format

1. Introduction
2. Overarching Principles
3. Management and Resources
4. Site Specific Information
5. Action Plan
6. Appendices

Overarching principles

- Supporting health and wellbeing
- Supporting leisure, play and sport
- Supporting wildlife and biodiversity and mitigating climate change
- Supporting accessible green spaces
- Supporting public engagement and promoting social interaction

Management and Resources

- Directly employed skilled team
- Team training and development
- Vehicles, plant and facilities
- Budget allocation

Site Specific information

- Map/image/size (ha) and photographs
- Description (relating to the overarching principles)
- How the space is managed (include relevant management plans in appendices)
- How the space is currently used

Action plan

- To set out a working list that can be reviewed annually by committee
- Funding, capacity and logistics as well as public/Council support can determine actions that may be completed

Appendices

- To contain Management Plans, wider plans and strategies for example Swanage Town Council Tree Strategy, Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy etc

The development of a Green Space strategy will support the budget setting process, ensure the Council's wider strategic plans and policies are embedded into the management of green spaces and provide a framework for their development enabling input by the public and wider stakeholders.

Observations and comments on the proposed structure and content of the Green Spaces Strategy are welcomed.

It is anticipated that a draft version of the Strategy will be brought to a future meeting of this committee for approval.

For information

Gail Percival, Assets and Compliance Manager
June 2024