

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM AND LOCAL
ECONOMY COMMITTEE** held at The Grand Hotel,
Burlington Road, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 19th MARCH
2025** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor J Dorrington

Swanage Town Council

Councillor T Foster

Swanage Town Council

Councillor J Lejeune

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Ms L Bish

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Ms L Egan

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Ms C Finch

Swanage Pier Trust

Ms A King

Swanage Railway

Ms S Libicka

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Mr M Whitwam

Purbeck Community Rail Partnership

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mrs S Layton-Kelly

Administration Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

Mrs J Moulder

Business Development Officer

Public Participation Time

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming new representatives to the committee, Ms A King, newly appointed Chief Executive of Swanage Railway, and Ms C Finch newly appointed trustee of the Swanage Pier Trust.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Moreton and Sutton, Mr G Johns (Swanage Railway), Ms T Churcher (National Trust), Mr R Pattinson (Swanage Railway), Ms T Deacon (Purbeck Coast), Ms D Morley (The Mowlem Theatre), Ms K Black (Head Ranger Durlston Country Park) and Mr R Marsh (Swanage Fishermen's Association).

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.

Agenda Item 11a) - Councillor Tomes declared a pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a private beach hut user.

Agenda Item 7) – Councillor Bonfield declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of his position on the committee of Dementia Friendly Purbeck.

3) Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 27th November 2024

There were no matters raised.

4) Matters arising from the Meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 12th February 2025

A brief summary of matters discussed at the advisory committee was provided by the Chairman and officers.

5) Dorset Town Of Culture 2026 – Update

The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) provided an update on Swanage's bid to be recognised as the Dorset Town of Culture 2026. It was confirmed that despite a strong and well received application, Swanage had been unsuccessful in securing the title. The VSBDM reported that feedback on the bid is currently being reviewed to identify areas for future improvement. The outcome was met with disappointment, but gratitude was expressed to all those involved in the campaign. It was noted that the Chairman and the VSBDM would continue to meet with representatives from the Mowlem Theatre to identify if there are proposals contained in the bid that could be taken forward.

6) Heart of Swanage

A discussion took place regarding a letter received by the Town Council from representatives of the Heart of Swanage business community, titled 'Proposal to Officially Recognise The Heart of Swanage'. Members welcomed the request but agreed that further clarity would be required regarding the specific nature and implications of the proposal.

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

That Councillor Tomes and The VSBDM liaise with representatives of 'The Heart of Swanage' to seek further clarification of their proposal which will be presented at the next Full Council Meeting.

7) Charity Beach Huts – Allocations for 2025-26.

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM which set out the applications received for the allocation of beach huts to charities and community groups during the 2025-26 season. The applications were considered in turn, as follows:

- Purbeck Runners: Concerns were raised regarding the number of potential users and the capacity in and around a beach hut. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes and seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the application be declined for 2025-26 but that
The use of beach huts by sports clubs be reviewed
prior to the allocation of charity huts for the
next year.

- Swanage Mama Swim: A discussion ensued where it was agreed that a short trial would be appropriate to assess usage. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a trial period of four weeks be granted with a
review to be undertaken at the next Tourism and
Local Economy Committee Meeting.

- Dorset Council Purbeck Local Office-support to unpaid Carers in the Purbeck area: It was noted that the application lacked specificity in the reasons for requesting a

beach hut. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the VSBDM works with Carers in Purbeck to seek clarification and further detail regarding their application.

Further to his declaration under Minute No.2) Councillor Bonfield left the room during the consideration of the following item.

- Dementia Friendly Purbeck: It was proposed by Councillor Lejeune, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the application from Dementia Friendly Purbeck be agreed.

Councillor Bonfield re-entered the meeting.

- Jurassic Care: It was noted that insufficient information had been provided to support the application. AND AGREED:-
That the application be declined on the grounds of lack of information.
- Hand H Care Dorset, Lewis Manning Hospice Care & Community Credit Scheme: It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
To grant the VSBDM delegated authority to approve one-day beach hut bookings for Hand H Care Dorset, Lewis Manning Hospice Care, and the Community Credit Scheme.
- It was further proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
To grant the VSBDM delegated authority to approve applications from schools, provided the schools have made use of a beach hut in previous years.

8) Festive Lights-Consideration of future use of Mowlem projector

Consideration was given to a briefing paper provided by the VSBDM which set out requests from event organisers seeking permission to use the facility for promotional purposes. Members raised concerns regarding potential planning and conservation issues, the requirement of consultation with the Mowlem Theatre, along with possible costs and the current absence of a formal policy governing such use. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a working party be formed to consider the future use of the Mowlem projector and report back to the committee in due course.

Councillors Bonfield, Dorrington, Tomes and the VSBDM agreed to sit on the working party.

Following discussion on this item, the Chairman was presented with a cheque for £600 by Ms L Bish, on behalf of the Chamber of Trade, as a contribution towards the town's Festive Lights.

9) Sandbanks Ferry – update following Public Inquiry

Following a brief update provided by Councillor Bonfield regarding the Public Inquiry he attended in January, Members considered extending an invitation to representatives of

the Bournemouth Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company to join the Tourism and Local Community Committee. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That representatives from the Bournemouth Swanage Motor Road and Ferry Company be formally invited to join the Tourism and Local Economy Committee.

10) Fishers' Huts – Consideration of Allocation Policy

Further to Minute No. 10 of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee Meeting held on 3rd July 2024, consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined proposed updated criteria for inclusion in the Fishers' Huts Allocation Policy. It was noted that these had been devised by the appointed working party following a consultation meeting with current occupiers of the huts. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Allocation Policy for the Fishers' Huts be approved.

It was further proposed by Councillor Lejeune and seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the implementation of the approved Allocation Policy commence April 2025.

11) Scale of Fees and Charges

a) Private Site – licence fee for 2025-26

Further to his declaration under Minute No.2) Councillor Tomes left the room during the consideration of the following item. In the absence of the Committee Chairman, it was agreed that Councillor Bonfield would assume the Chair during consideration of this item. The VSBDM provided a brief update, referring to the briefing paper he had provided which outlined the proposal to increase the Private Site licence fee to £520.00 (incl. VAT) for the 2025-26 period. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To approve the increase of £520.00 (incl. VAT) of the Private Site License Fee for the 2025-26 period.

b) Swanage Market Fees – for 2025-26

The VSBDM drew Members attention to a further point on the briefing paper he had provided outlining the new proposed market fees to commence from 1st April 2025. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the new proposed market fees be approved, with implementation to commence on 1st April 2025.

12) Support for Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

The VSBDM referred to a briefing paper he had provided which included an invitation to submit a letter of support from Swanage Town Council, in relation to Dorset's application for LVEP status. The VSBDM advised that regrettably, the request had not allowed sufficient time for the Council to compose a response ahead of the closing deadline. However, it was felt important that Councillors and Members be made aware that an application to form a LVEP had been submitted in February 2025.

13) Update from the Visitor Services & Business Development Manager

The following update was provided by the VSBDM and included:

- **Tourist Information Centre (TIC) Refurbishment** – Members were informed that the TIC has undergone a refurbishment resulting in a more efficient internal

layout, and improved storage on the upper floor. The VSBDM expressed his thanks to the Town Council for supporting and approving the refurbishment.

- **Pedestrian Signage (finger signs)** – The VSBDM advised that Dorset Council had granted permission for the Town Council to repaint the pedestrian finger signs within the town. It was further noted that Dorset Council had allocated a small contribution from their budget towards the associated costs.
- **Lifeguard Kiosk** – Members were informed that the Lifeguards were considering the relocation of the Lifeguard kiosk. It was noted that the Lifeguards were considering moving the kiosk from its current location back to its previous position, closer to Banjo Pier, where it had been situated two years ago.

14) Updates from Outside Representatives

Outside representatives provided the following updates:

- **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership** - It was reported that after initial discussions with the new owners of Blue Pool concerning the potential establishment of a halt, a working group has been formed to explore the proposal further. The proposal may be subject to planning constraints. However, the new owners have expressed their interest and agreed to invest money into the venture. Members were informed that Swanage Railway will be celebrating its 140th anniversary in May. A series of events and activities are planned throughout the month to commemorate the milestone, including a dedicated stand at Waterloo Station in London.
An update was also provided on the status of the Wareham Railway Crossing. It was confirmed that the crossing will remain open.
- **Swanage Railway** – The representative referred Members to a report previously circulated, which outlined out events since the previous Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting as well as upcoming events planned for 2025. It was noted that the Swanage Belle has two scheduled tours from London Victoria to Swanage on Wednesday 25th June and Wednesday 10th September. Members were further informed that Swanage Railway is in the process of finalising its schedule for the Halloween and the Christmas period.
The Town Mayor, Councillor Foster, took the opportunity to formally welcome Ms King to both the Committee and Swanage.
- **Chamber of Trade** – It was reported that the Chamber continued experience growth in membership. Members were informed that the new organiser of the Pirate Festival has approached the Chambers with a view to engaging local businesses in the event.
Concerns were raised regarding the increasing cost of parking fees set by Dorset Council, which are considered to be a potential deterrent to customers. However, it was noted that Car Parks operated by Swanage Town Council remain competitively priced.
It was further reported that the Chamber of Trade will be celebrating its centenary. Discussions are ongoing regarding ways to commemorate the occasion, and representatives will report back to the Committee in due course.
- **Swanage Pier Trust** – The Committee received an update from the representative informing members of the success of recent events held at the Pier, and details regarding upcoming events aimed at attracting visitors to that area of the town. It was further reported that the Pier Trust is considering hosting a Nostalgic Weekend, which would provide an opportunity for local businesses to celebrate their own history.
Additionally, the Committee were advised that five piles on the Pier are in need of replacement. It was further reported that 5 piles on the pier need replacing.

15) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

Green Sea Front Scheme planned for late April.

16) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on the provisional date Wednesday 3rd July 2025 at 2.15p.m. at The Grand Hotel, Burlington Road, Swanage.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 3.40 p.m.
