

Minutes of the Meeting of the **GENERAL OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE** held via ZOOM on **WEDNESDAY
11th NOVEMBER 2020** at **4.30 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Moreton Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Finch Swanage Town Council
(from 4.45 p.m.)

Councillor A Harris Swanage Town Council

Councillor D Monkhouse Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Tomes Swanage Town Council

Also present: -

Councillor M Whitwam Swanage Town Council

Councillor T Foster Swanage Town Council

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk
(from 4.45 p.m.)

Miss N Clark

Administration & Communications Manager
(until 6.00 p.m.)

Miss C Johnston

Operations Department Administration Officer

Ms Gail Percival

Operations Manager

Mr M Green

James Smith Funeral Directors
(until 5.45 p.m.)

Mr M Jones

Prospect Allotment Association
(until 5.50 p.m.)

Public Participation Time

There were three members of the public and one member of the local press present at the meeting.

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- The representative of the Friends of Northbrook Cemetery gave special thanks to the Council for the £500 grant award towards their work at the cemetery. A question was asked as to whether the Council are to carry on with the grass cutting and if so, a request was made for the cuttings to be removed. It was agreed that the Council would continue cutting the grass. Further details for the information displays are awaited from the Friends group and would need Council approval. The Memorandum of Understanding will be discussed later in this meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor Page, Mr A Bennett (Prospect Allotment Association) 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 paragraphs 9 – 13 of the Council's Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

3. Matters Arising from Minutes of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 13th November 2019

There were no matters raised.

4. Allotment Matters

a) Allotment inspections

Due to the on-going thefts at the allotments, the provision of CCTV had been explored and an indicative estimate was for the sum of £5,000. It was suggested that as Prospect Allotment Association is a small association it should refer back to its members regarding any financial contributions that may be possible and report back to the Council.

Further to Minute 4.b) of the Meeting of the General Operations Committee held on 13th November 2019 it was reported that advice had been sought from the National Allotment Association regarding refunds for tenants that give up their plot part-way through the year. The response given was it was rare for Councils to give a refund. Advice was also provided regarding the sending of warning letters due to allotment condition and it was advised that generally a 2-letter warning procedure is recommended with a third letter giving tenants 4 weeks' notice to quit following which the Council would terminate the agreement and reallocate the plot.

It was therefore proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Town Mayor, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That Council accepts the advice provided by the National Allotment Association, and that the Operations Manager should re-write the allotment inspection letters in light of this latest guidance.

b) Matters raised by Prospect Allotment Association

There were no matters raised. The Prospect Allotment Association representative agreed with the above advice regarding inspections.

5. Cemetery Matters

a) Godlington Cemetery – winter works planned to be undertaken by Operations Team

The Operations Manager reported that the roof of the chapel and external decoration works had been completed and internal redecoration will be completed over the winter. The grave diggers' huts are being refurbished and a grass mat path is being created to the rear of the chapel to an area where the digger will be stored. Tree works will be undertaken over the winter.

b) Godlington Cemetery extension – approval of plans

The draft plans were presented. A question was raised whether the number of cremation plots will be increased and also more spaces for car parking. It was advised that the extension will include a turning circle which will be a great improvement for vehicular access and will have the same entrance and exit as currently. The Operations Manager gave thanks to the James Smith representative for assisting with assessing the area's future plans. A query was raised regarding the spaces between the paths into the middle plots and this was advised that the new scheme will make the new plots more accessible. The walkways will likely be formed of a 'grass crete' pathway which is a type of matting that enables grass to

grow up through. The meadowland burial ground will be extended. It was mentioned that there appears to be more of a trend towards natural burials and it would be wise to add more capacity to that area. There will also be an extension to the children's section on the south-east corner. It was agreed that if the children's section had too much space then it can be reduced. It was questioned if there are any plans for landscaping and for the planting of trees or shrubs and it was advised that on the main route there is a verge which will provide opportunities for planting.

It was therefore proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Tomes, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That Council takes forward the proposed plans for the Godlingston Cemetery extension.

c) Friends of Northbrook Cemetery Group update

It was reported that a meeting had taken place on site at Northbrook cemetery and following this a Memorandum of Understanding had been drafted which is yet to be signed off. Risk assessments for the cemetery have been completed and the next step is a toolbox talk, which has been delayed due to lockdown. If draft signage is provided by the Friends it can be referred to the appropriate committee for approval. Thanks were given to the Friends of Northbrook Cemetery for the work proposed.

d) Matters raised by James Smith Funeral Directors

There were no matters raised.

6. Fishermen's Huts and Jetties

a) Update on works to slipway and jetties

It was reported that works due to be carried out in September on the slipway and the eastern jetty are outstanding. Low tides are required for works to re-start and include refixing the loose fenders to the jetty. Contractors will instal the bollards around the fuel store, as recommended by the fire service. On the new slipway, one of the anchor bolts had failed. It was noted that a revised specification had been provided and six new anchor bolts will be installed to this specification.

b) Matters raised by Swanage Fishermen's Association

The contents of an e-mail from the Swanage Fisherman's Association were noted, and it was acknowledged that most of the issues raised were in hand. In the absence of a representative of the Association it was suggested that the new committee chairman should meet with the fishermen's hut occupiers to continue the long-established working relationship between them and the Council. This would also provide context to the Council's plans to undertake at least annual hut inspections.

7. Capital Projects Sub Committee

a) Appointment of Capital Projects Sub-Committee 2020/21

This being the first meeting of the General Operations Committee of the current Council year, and further to Minute No. 55(f) of the Council meeting held on 19th October 2020, it was agreed to re-appoint the Capital Projects Sub-Committee for 2020/21.

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

That Councillors Moreton, Bonfield, Harris, Tomes and Page be elected to form the Capital Project Sub-Committee.

Councillor Whitwam, who was not a member of the General Operations Committee, expressed interest in attending these meetings and it was agreed that he would be sent the agenda papers and was welcome to attend in a non-voting capacity.

b) Matters arising from minutes of recent meetings of Capital Projects Sub-Committee

There were no matters raised.

c) Draft Capital Programme 2021/22

Consideration was given to the draft capital programme to be included in the budgets for the 2021/22 financial year. The following matters were noted.

- Item 4 – Vehicles - Pool electric car – this is to be substituted for the purchase of an electric van.
- Item 13 – Environmental – this relates to implementation of the Council’s environmental plan and the installation of sustainable energy generation within the Council’s estate. The £18,000 is for next year’s budget and a further £18,000 for the year after. A suggestion was made for solar panels on the depot building and it was advised that this would be considered.
- Item 17 – Festive lighting – after the last capital projects meeting, and following advice regarding the lifespan of the current seafront lights, a provisional estimate for replacement has been added.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by the Town Mayor, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the draft capital programme for 2021/22 be taken forward to the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee for further consideration as part of the budget setting process.

8. Budget setting 2021/22

a) Scale of charges 2021/22

Consideration was given to the draft scale of charges for 2021/22. The possibility of freezing all charges was discussed, and particular concern was raised around charges for youth football matches.

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

That no charge be levied for youth football matches (up the age of 18).

It was **FURTHER** proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Finch, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Operation Department’s fees and charges should be frozen for the forthcoming financial year, this matter to be considered further at the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee as part of the budget setting process.

b) Items of One-Off Revenue Expenditure 2021/22

Consideration was given to the draft list of items of one-off revenue expenditure to be included in the budgets for the 2021/22 financial year. The following matters were raised:

- The Downs - Peveril Point fortification repairs have added £45,000 to the draft budget.
- Burlington Chine Public Conveniences drainage repairs – works were completed last week, and the toilets were re-opened, although there is potential for future failures due to the drainage system being extremely pressurised, and the drainage pipes being within unstable ground.

It was noted that both one-off items are expensive. It was reported that when Burlington Chine toilets failed in August of this year a decision was required whether the Council invest for the future of the conveniences or close them permanently. The question was raised whether the toilets could be moved or temporary ones installed but there is no alternative and no additional land in Council ownership.

It was proposed by the Chairman and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY:
That these two items of significant expenditure be referred
to a meeting of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee to be
held prior to budget setting.

It was noted that item 1. The Parade Railings would be completed in this financial year
and would therefore be removed from the schedule. It was further AGREED:

That the draft list of one-off revenue expenditure for
2021/22 be taken forward to the next meeting of the
Policy, Finance and Performance Management
Committee for further consideration as part of the
budget setting process.

9. Environmental Plans

a) Tree Planting proposals

It was noted that trees are due to be planted this season as per the briefing note that
was circulated to the meeting.

b) Provision of cycle racks future

Provision will be made for the potential installation of cycle racks within the town
to encourage more cycling. The Council will work in partnership with Sustainable
Swanage to look at proposals for local stores to install bike racks as well as those on
Council land. This matter will be referred to the Environmental Working Party.

c) Footpath Survey

Consideration was given to a proposal that had been received for a footpath survey to
encourage the use of public rights of way in the parish. The benefits of having this
undertaken for Swanage were discussed. It was agreed that particular attention should
be paid to the paths in the north and centre of the parish.

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

To engage the services of the consultant who had
written to the Council to undertake a rights of way
survey, as set out in the briefing note circulated to the
meeting.

10. Waste Management

a) Review of current provision of litter bins by Swanage Town Council

The locations of both litter bins and dog bins in the town were discussed. It was noted
that there were eight waste bins at Godlingston Cemetery, but it was advised that the
bins are often full. The lack of litter bins at Prince Albert Gardens was also noted and a
suggestion was made for improving provision.

b) Beach Buddies – update on litter collection

The Beach Buddies representatives provided an update on their activities, and their
thoughts on bins and signage, in particular the need for educational signage regarding
the disposal of litter. The group were reported to have ceased litter picks due to the
pandemic and were disappointed to see litter strewn across the seafront and seagulls
scavenging waste. Members of the public had noticed that the bins are not very
hygienic and have to be opened with both hands to dispose of waste. Dorset Council
Waste Services have advised that the types of bins could not be changed, and even
though there are no recycling bins, all waste is sorted. A suggestion was made to refer
to the ‘Only Rain down the Drain’ campaign and for Sustainable Swanage to assist with
a campaign involving young people designing posters and contributing on social media.
It was agreed that there is a need to educate the public and dog owners. It was also
reported that the amount of dog waste on the beach is an on-going problem, especially
around the beach huts in the North Beach area. Special thanks were given to Swanage

Landers and their team for their public spirit and contribution to the town. It was agreed to refer the Beach Buddies' proposals to the meeting of the Waste Management Working Party.

In accordance with Standing Order 1.q. the Chairman agreed to extend the meeting beyond the 2-hour limit.

c) Swanage Landers update

It was reported that the Operations Manager had met with Swanage Landers and risk assessments and a memorandum of understanding had been drafted. It was reported that there are several areas near highways that need addressing, the emphasis of activities being placed on litter picking and removal of street detritus. The Swanage Landers representative gave thanks to the Council for the support received and the Chairman gave thanks in return for their on-going work.

d) Street sweeping – review and proposals for 2021/22

It was reported that four street sweeps were carried out and also gully sweeping in 2020. The Operations Manager requested a £4,000 budget for 2021/22 for privately engaged road sweeps for the forthcoming year, such a sum being sufficient to enable around 9 or 10 visits.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by the Town Mayor, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To agree a £4,000 budget for extra road sweeping towards keeping the town litter free in 2021/22.

It was agreed that all of the matters raised under agenda item 10 should be referred to the Waste Management Working Party for further consideration.

11. Weed clearance – agreement of standards and proposals for 2021/22

It was noted that there was a need to identify what standard Members expected to see maintained in respect to weed clearance in the town, and the contents of a briefing note that had been circulated prior to the meeting were discussed.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by the Town Mayor, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To agree to this matter being included within the remit of the Waste Management Working Party, with a view to establishing a list of target areas for weed management and an outline management plan.

12. Future use of barbeques on Town Council Land – Referred under item.294 of the July 2020 Monthly Council meeting

It was agreed to refer this matter to the Waste Management Working Party to identify a way forward.

13. Health & Safety

a) Report since March 2020

The contents of the report were noted and no comments were made.

14. Operations Manager's Update

It was reported that the Christmas tree will be delivered on the 24th November and contractors are due on the 26th November to dress the tree and switch on the lights. This year the new Christmas lights will go further up the High Street, as far as the Town Hall.

It was noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on all the General Operations team and thanks were given to all the staff for their resilience during these uncertain times. Thanks were also given to the Operations Manager for her leadership during these unprecedented times

15. Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

a) A suggestion was made that the Council should explore the acquisition of a digital information sign for Main Beach car park showing the availability of parking spaces. It had been noticed that cars were seen to drive away as the car park appeared to be full up when driving in from Victoria Avenue, despite the availability of the overflow parking. It was agreed that this matter should be referred to a future meeting of the Roads and Transport Committee.

b) Tennis courts resurfacing update - it was reported that the Tennis Club's proposal for the installation of an artificial surface on Court 3 had been included in the preliminary capital budgets for 2021/22.

16. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 31st March 2021.

The meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.
