

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** of the Parish of Swanage, held at the Swanage Youth Centre on **MONDAY, 18th APRIL 2016** at 7 o'clock p.m.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Steve Poultney, assumed the Chair, and in addition to members of the Council and officials, approximately 32 persons were present.

Chairman – Councillor Steve Poultney (Town Mayor)

In attendance:-

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor M. Bonfield
Councillor C. Finch
Councillor G. Green
Councillor G.A. Marsh
Councillor T. Morris
Councillor W.S. Trite

Mrs. K. Gallagher Swanage Town & Community Partnership/Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust
PCSO Ian Leslie Dorset Police
Mrs. Jean Gibbs Swanage Dementia Friendly Community

Before the commencement of the Meeting, the Chairman explained that, with a view to attracting a wider audience, local organisations had been invited to make a short presentation on local issues and/or matters relating to their organisation, and he introduced the representatives that were present.

The Town Clerk then outlined the procedure that would be followed during the Meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Harris and Whitwam.

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 9th March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed. (Copies of the Minutes were circulated to those present at the Meeting).

3. **SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL**

The Chairman gave a brief summary of matters affecting the Town Council during the past year.

a) **Town Council Elections – May 2015**

The Town Council seats had been hotly contested and ultimately six new Councillors had been elected, Councillors Bishop, Finch, Green, Harris, Lejeune and Morris. The new Council soon introduced a significant change to the Council's meeting schedule with the

introduction of a new Planning and Consultation Committee. This was established to provide councillors with the space and time to discuss these matters in greater detail than was possible at full Council meetings, and had been welcomed by members of the public.

b) **Seafront Stabilisation Scheme**

Last spring saw the official opening of the new seafront development, kindly sponsored by Westover Motors. A raffle on the day raised a significant sum for the Council's 2015 Volunteers of the Year, Cancare. On the whole very positive feedback had been provided by those that had used the new beach huts, and the trial use of the huts as 'pop-up shops' in the run up to Christmas had proved successful.

c) **Tourist Information Centre and adjoining former shelter site**

The Council reviewed the Tourist Information service over the autumn and agreed to continue to provide such a service. It recognised that the existing TIC building required significant investment to bring it up to modern standards, and planning was underway for the improvements to take place during the coming autumn and winter so that it could be re-opened in its new format in spring 2017.

Carolyn Hooper, the TIC supervisor, had left the Town Council after almost 10 years' sterling work at the TIC. Carolyn had been largely responsible for the successful retention of the Council's Blue Flag award during that period, and her work, and that of her team members, had been recognised by a Dorset Tourism Bronze Award in 2015 for a second consecutive year.

In the longer term, the Council was working with Swanage Museum to explore the possibility of building a new joint facility on the former shelter site. Work on this project was in its very early feasibility stages, but could potentially be an exciting project for the future.

d) **Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust**

A close relationship had been forged during the past year with the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust, chaired by Bob Foster and with Kim Gallagher as secretary. The Council and Trust were working together to attempt to secure the future of the building as a youth and community centre. Further details would be provided later in the meeting.

e) **Proposals for Gas and Oil Exploration**

Local residents opposed to proposals for gas and oil exploration to the south of the town had continued to attend Council meetings to voice their concerns. The Town Council had responded to a government consultation on Habitats Regulations in relation to the licensing of such projects to register its concerns about the need to ensure that any future exploration doesn't damage the protected species in and around Durlston Country Park.

f) **Navitus Bay Offshore Windfarm**

During the year the government had refused permission for the development of the Navitus Bay offshore windfarm, something which the Town Council had already expressed grave concern over.

g) **Other matters**

Other matters dealt with during the year included the following:-

- The continuation of work on the Swanage Local Plan.
- The resolution of the indemnities contained in the Bay View Holiday Park sale agreement.
- Continued discussions with Dorset Waste Partnership over street cleansing in the town.

h) **Voluntary Groups and Charitable Organisations**

The Town Council acknowledged the positive role played by many voluntary groups and charitable organisations in the community, and was pleased to support them in their work. These included:-

- The construction of the RNLI's new boathouse to accommodate its brand new lifeboat.
- This year's Volunteers of the Year were the group working for a Dementia Friendly Town, ably led by Jean Gibbs.
- Former Volunteer of the Year, Lorna Haines, continued her incredible fundraising for new skate park equipment.
- The Town Council had made grants to support the CAB, Dorset Blind Association, Purbeck Arts Weeks, Swanage Pier and Swanage Coastal Change Forum. In support of local events donations had been made to the Blues Festivals, Regatta and Carnival and the inaugural Fish Festival.
- The Town Council had also welcomed the Signals Regiment to exercise the Liberty of the Town.

i) **Looking to the Future**

- The RNLI boathouse is due for completion in the autumn and there will also be an extended jetty to aid the mooring of local fishing boats. Improvements to the boat park would also be considered prior to its reopening.
- RNLI lifeguards will be patrolling Swanage Beach for the first time, and a new Punch and Judy performer will shortly be appointed to carry on the long standing tradition.
- The Council is working with the Bowls and Tennis Clubs to improve facilities at Beach Gardens. The Council is also exploring the possible revival of Swanage in Bloom.
- Improvements are to be made to the setting of the war memorial with the construction of a new plinth to commemorate the U.S. troops' contribution to D-Day and the fallen in conflicts since the second world war. The Council is also seeking an appropriate way to commemorate the victims of the bombing raids that Swanage suffered in the early 1940s.
- Probably the greatest change affecting local government will be a decision on whether Purbeck District Council will be absorbed by a wider unitary authority, the implications affecting Dorset County Council and the impact this decision will have on the Town Council – interesting times ahead!

In concluding the report, the Chairman expressed his appreciation of the sterling work and dedication of all members of the Town Council's staff.

4. **PRESENTATIONS**

The Chairman welcomed representatives from various organisations, and invited them to make presentations on behalf of the following groups:-

(a) **Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust**

Mrs. Kim Gallagher reported on the work of the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust, a voluntary group which acted as an umbrella organisation to support a range of community groups. The Trust continued to work with the Town Council, Purbeck District Council and the Swanage Town and Community Partnership to progress the Swanage Local Plan, which had now been submitted to the Inspector. The Trust had continued to work closely with the Town Council in its negotiations with Dorset County Council to secure the future of the Youth Centre building as a community asset for the town. Volunteers had pledged to undertake some improvements/renovations to the premises in anticipation of the completion of the lease negotiations by September 2016.

It was noted that an 'Open Day' was scheduled to be held at the Centre on 4th June 2016.

(b) **Dorset County Council**

County Councillor Bill Trite reported on matters relating to Dorset County Council, and the impact that the reduction in the revenue support grant from central government would have on the delivery of services provided by DCC.

Councillor Trite then referred to the proposals for future local government reorganisation and the implications that the introduction of larger unitary authorities would have on local democracy. Concerns were expressed that decision making would be taken further away from local communities.

(c) **Dorset Police**

Community Support Officer, Iain Leslie, gave a brief outline of the work undertaken by the Safer Neighbourhood Officers, and sadly reported that as a result of cost-saving cuts by Dorset Police, the number of officers assigned to the Safer Neighbourhood service had been reduced.

The front desk counter services had been retained in Swanage, but unfortunately, due to the budgetary constraints within Dorset Police, the services previously provided at Wareham had been withdrawn and the police desk was now closed.

Officer Leslie then reported on an increase in 'doorstep' scams that were occurring in Dorset, and wished to raise awareness of these unfortunate incidents, particularly for vulnerable and elderly householders. It was reported that Dorset Police was now using social media to update the public on its activities, a service that was proving to be well received.

(d) **Swanage Dementia Friendly Community**

Mrs. Jean Gibbs and Mrs. Mo Andrews, on behalf of the Swanage Dementia Friendly Community, gave a report on the progress of the group which had been launched approximately one year ago, and

expressed their appreciation of the continued support given by the Town Council and many other organisations in the town. She explained that the Swanage Dementia Friendly Community (SDFC) is an alliance of local community organisations and services that are working together to raise public awareness and understanding of dementia so that people with the disease, and their carers, are encouraged to seek help and are supported by the community. She then reported on the aim of the Group to provide an 'Admiral Nurse' for Swanage and the surrounding area, and outlined activities that were planned to raise funds towards the realisation of this aim.

(e) **Purbeck Marathon**

Mr. Jason Haiseldon reported on the progress of arrangements for the 'Purbeck Marathon' which was being held in September 2016. As the event had grown in popularity, it was hoped to incorporate additional sporting activities, including the Nordic Walking Festival and Purbeck Bikemonger Bumble, within plans for a proposed 'Purbeck Outdoor Weekend' in the autumn 2017.

5. **MATTERS NOTIFIED TO THE TOWN CLERK**

(a) **Evening Bus Service between Wareham and Swanage**

Concerns had been raised regarding the evening bus service between Wareham and Swanage which was either too early or too late for youngsters returning to Swanage after visiting the Youth Centre in Wareham. A suggestion that a mini-bus service be provided was put forward.

The Chairman agreed that the matter would be raised with the Purbeck Transport Action Group and the Wilts and Dorset Bus Company.

(b) **Sale of Goods from former Shelter Site on Shore Road**

Concerns had been raised by the Swanage Lifeboat Fundraisers regarding the goods that were permitted to be sold by stallholders on the former Shelter Site on Shore Road.

It was noted that this matter was to be considered by the Town Council during the forthcoming week.

(c) **Litter**

Concerns had been expressed regarding the litter problem in the town centre and the inadequate number of bins provided. The Town Council had acknowledged the problem, and were working with Dorset Waste Partnership with a view to providing additional receptacles. It was noted that abuse of public bins for the disposal of trade waste and refuse from holiday properties contributed to the litter problem.

A suggestion was put forward that the Town Council considers the introduction of an award for businesses that deal efficiently with this issue.

6. **GENERAL ISSUES**

The Mayor then opened the Meeting for general discussion, and invited questions and comments from the audience.

Matters raised included:-

- Publication on the website of land in the Town Council's ownership.

- Pines Hotel Stabilisation – Acknowledgement for use of beach by contractors.
 - The Bandstand – Future use/replacement of roof.
 - Flags on Seafront.
 - Town Hall Clock repairs.
 - Proposals for future oil/gas exploration at California Quarry.
- Mr. Jason Haiseldon referred to recent discussions relating to proposals for future oil/gas exploration at California Quarry, and procedural matters regarding Town Council policy making, and made the following propositions:-

Proposed by Jason Haiseldon and seconded by Jack Daniels:-

That all policies adopted by Swanage Town Council are documented clearly and are included in the relevant policy document without exception.

Upon being put to the Meeting, 13 members of the public voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and 18 voted AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared NOT CARRIED.

Proposed by Jason Haiseldon and seconded by Karla Cherry-Daniels:-

That any and all planning applications that are specifically about land or property owned or managed by Swanage Town Council on behalf of the people of the Parish of Swanage;

- a) must be considered by the full Swanage Town Council and not just by the sub-Committee;
- b) a position of ‘No Objection’ or of ‘Objection’ MUST be taken.

Upon being put to the Meeting, 13 members of the public voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and 14 voted AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared NOT CARRIED.

Proposed by Jason Haiseldon and seconded by Jack Daniels:-

That Panorama Road can only be declared ‘safe’ for use when all of the recommendations of the risk assessment have been implemented and the same assessor has verified this to be so.

Upon being put to the Meeting, 12 members of the public voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and 11 voted AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

Proposed by Jason Haiseldon and seconded by Mary Zuckerman

That HGVs be banned from Panorama Road until such time as the PSV of the road has been determined and it is found to be sufficient for HGV usage.

Upon being put to the Meeting, 10 members of the public voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and 14 voted AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared NOT CARRIED.

Proposed by Jason Haiseldon and seconded by Jack Daniels:-

That the costs of the maintenance of the measures required to make the road safe be passed to Suttles in line with the agreement to which they are party and in which it requires them to 'maintain the road'.

Upon being put to the Meeting, 14 members of the public voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and 11 voted AGAINST, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was provisionally agreed that the next Parish Meeting be held on Monday, 10th April 2017.

In conclusion, the Mayor thanked those present for their attendance, and closed the meeting at 9.35 p.m.
