

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY,**
14th MARCH 2018 at **10.00 a.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Finch

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor G Green

Swanage Town Council

Councillor G Marsh

Swanage Town Council – from 10.10 a.m.

Councillor T Morris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor W. Trite

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-

Ms K Black

Durlston Country Park – from 10.10 a.m.

Mr R Johnson

Swanage Pier Trust

Mr M Norris

Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre

Mr L Singleton

RNLI Lifeguard Supervisor

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Mr M Winter

RNLI Lifeguard Supervisor

Also Present: -

Miss N Clark

Acting Administration and Communications
Manager

Miss H Lagden

Tourism Manager, PDC

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services Manager and Business
Development Officer

Public Participation Time

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Bonfield and Lejeune, Mr I Brown (Maritime Coastguard Agency), Mr L Clark (National Trust), and Mr M Green & Mr D Rawsthorn (Swanage Railway).

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.

Councillor Whitwam left the room at 10.05 a.m.

3) Matters arising from Minutes of the Tourism Committee Meeting held on 22nd November 2017

There were no matters raised.

4) Matters arising from the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting held on

31st January 2018

6) Lifeguards and sea safety

b) Five knot speed limit enforcement in the bay – update

A query was raised as to whether the District Council (PDC) had been in contact regarding possible enforcement cover in the bay this coming season. It had been two years since there had been any enforcement by PDC of the Pleasure Boat Byelaws, and it was reported that difficulties had been experienced in sourcing cover for the role of enforcement officer.

Concerns were reiterated regarding safety in the bay, speeding incidents, and enforcement issues experienced during the previous two seasons, and a request was therefore made for officers to contact PDC as a matter of urgency to discuss these concerns. A suggestion was also put forward that contact should be made with Poole Harbour Commissioners for advice on these matters and to enquire what procedures were in place in Poole.

7) Shore Road – consideration of guidelines for authorised vehicles using closed section

It was reported that this matter would be on the agenda of the Monthly Council Meeting being held on 26th March 2018.

5) Beach Gardens – consideration of proposals for dementia friendly site

Consideration was given to a Briefing Note dated March 2018 prepared by the Visitor Services Manager detailing improvements currently being made to Beach Gardens and the ‘Tea on the Green’ refreshment facility, which presented the Town Council with the opportunity to work with Dementia Friends to identify what further changes/improvements could be made to create an accessible site which could be enjoyed by all. It was noted that dementia training would also be provided to the Swanage Information Centre and Beach Gardens teams.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Morris, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That delegated authority be given to the Visitor Services Manager to liaise with Dementia Friends to identify any necessary improvements required to Beach Gardens to make it a dementia friendly site.

6) Swanage Value of Tourism Summary 2016

The 2016 Value of Tourism statistics for Swanage had been received which reported the following key facts:

- 166,000 staying visitor trips
- 895,000 day visits
- £74.2 million direct visitor spend
- £75.3 million total visitor related spend
- 1,400 actual jobs supported by visitor related spend
- It was noted that there had been a slight decrease in staying visitor nights

Members had reviewed the content of the report, which was considered to be a very lengthy and comprehensive document. The Tourism Manager reported that the data for Purbeck was based on actual figures, but that the data for Swanage was ‘modelled’. However, it was felt that this type of data may attract businesses to the area in the future, and could be included in Business Plans. The Tourism Manager and the Visitor Services Manager would be reviewing the reports in greater detail in due course.

Councillor Whitwam returned to the meeting, and Councillor Marsh and Ms K Black joined the meeting, at 10.10 a.m.

7) Consideration of Christmas marketing proposals

Consideration was given to a Briefing Note dated March 2018 prepared by the Visitor Services Manager setting out proposals for a new leaflet, and digital marketing campaign, to advertise Swanage as a Christmas destination, and to make visitors aware of the dates and details of events being held.

It was reported that, whilst a variety of events took place in Swanage over the Christmas period, very little marketing for the town as a Christmas destination was undertaken, and the VSM was therefore proposing to work in partnership with local stakeholders to raise the estimated £600 funding required to cover the costs of the proposed campaign.

During the ensuing discussion Members were in agreement that it would be important to have a marketing strategy to encourage more visitors to the town during the quieter winter months, and it was therefore proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Trite and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That delegated authority be given to the Visitor Services Manager to implement the Christmas marketing proposals as set out in the Briefing Note dated March 2018.

8) Tourism Reports

a) **Visitor Services Manager & Business Development Officer**

The VSM provided updates on achievements and actions since the last meeting, which included:

- **Visitor Services Assistant Manager** - Sarah Tattersall had been appointed as the new VSAM, and congratulations were extended to Sarah for her new role.
- **South West Tourism Excellence Awards 2017/18** – the VSM was extremely proud to report that Team had won ‘Gold’ in the Visitor Information Service of the Year’ category. Congratulations were extended to the Team for this significant achievement.
- **Jobs Fair** – a very successful ‘Jobs Fair’ had been held in the Information Centre from 15th to 17th February 2018. There were currently four vacancies in the team, and over 40 applications had been received. Interviews would be taking place in due course.
- **Customer experience** – the Team continued to receive excellent TripAdvisor reviews.
- **Beach Gardens – Putting and Tennis**
 - Phase 2 development of ‘Tea on the Green’ had now been completed, and included indoor seating, Wi-Fi, and a wider range of refreshments/snacks.
 - A ‘Putting Open Day’ would be held on Good Friday 30th March 2018 – there would be free putting all day for holders of a copy of the advert from the Gazette, Advertiser, or Facebook, and a free hot drink or bottle of water.
 - Tennis bookings diary would be online by the end of March 2018.
- **Beach Huts**
 - a new IT management system had been implemented enabling online payments.
 - the beach hut lottery had been undertaken and, as of 1st March 2018 income of £71,394 had been received, which was up by 9% (compared to end of March 2017 figures). As of today’s date income stood at £82k. New payment terms of 30 days had also been introduced.
- **Events** – 39 events had been approved so far. It was reported that a new event management system had been implemented, using an online form, which was working well.
- **Boat Park**
 - a new IT system was being procured to manage boat park administration, and enable online payments. It was hoped that this would be in place by the end of

March 2018.

- a list of 89 customers interested in renting a space at the boat park when it re-opened had been collated. It was anticipated that the stabilisation works would be completed during April 2018, and it was reported that the provisional re-opening date had been set for 23rd May 2018.

- **Marketing** - various adverts had been placed in the Gazette and Advertiser to promote the beach huts and Beach Gardens, and space had also been procured in 'Mapgirl', a Bournemouth map, to promote Swanage to day trippers. It was noted that the Information Centre's Facebook page had reached over 1,500 likes and 1,540 followers.
- **Other** – it was reported that the 'Artisans on the Beach' event had proved very popular and successful, with 44 huts being rented out during the period.

b) Tourism Manager

The Tourism Manager gave updates on the following:

- **Visit Dorset** – the Visit Dorset Team was currently 'brushing up' on skills. Details were given on current digital marketing, information sharing, and tourism 'market drivers'.
- **Swanage and Purbeck Map** – the map had gone to print and it was anticipated that copies would be received in time for Easter.
- **Marketing activities planned and Visit Dorset Instagram, Facebook and Twitter** – social media channels now had 55,000+ followers.
- **PurbXperience and Dorset magazines** – the Tourism Manager continued to provide editorial information to the publishers, including an article called 'Forty eight hours in Purbeck'. In total, 68 journalists were assisted with publications and enquiries.
- **English Tourism Week** – would be held from 17th to 25th March 2018.
- **Dorset Residents' Week** – would be held from 23rd to 29th April 2018.
- **Other** – further updates were given on a Visit England Press & PR Workshop, Portland Port, Coach Friendly Town Status application, a new 'Cultural Tourism' module on the Dorset Ambassador online training website, and a meeting held with Bournemouth Airport to discuss potential advertising opportunities.

9) Updates from Outside Representatives

Durlston Country Park Ranger, and Rights of Way Officer

A quiet winter was reported due to the adverse weather conditions experienced. Updates were given on the following:

- The Park's Heritage Lottery Fund application had been completed and submitted.
- There would be a Heritage Ability event at the Park on 27th March 2018 from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. This was a Heritage Lottery Funded project, working to improve accessibility and inclusivity at 20+ heritage destinations across the South West.
- Durlston Bus service – 12,000 passengers had used the service in 2017, and it would return again for the 2018 season. The service schedule would be included in the local bus services booklet.
- Marketing activities undertaken, including videos, via the Park's Facebook page.
- New car park ticket machines would be installed in due course.
- Free water refills were now available to reduce the number of plastic water bottles being sold. The Park was looking to offer more 'compostable' items in the future.
- Rights of Way – updates given on the footpath diversion which was in place, and new signage to be installed, at Peveril Point. It was noted that consideration was also being given to a more direct footpath across Swanage Bay View Holiday Park.

RNLI Lifeguards

Mr Lewis Singleton and Mr Mark Winter introduced themselves to the meeting. Mr

Singleton would be the Lifeguard Supervisor overseeing the Swanage Lifeguards this season. The service would run from 26th May until 9th September 2018, and would consist of two lifeguards until peak season commenced. From mid-July to the end of August there would be a team of three in situ. The recruitment process was underway, and it was hoped that the positions would be filled by local residents. Induction training would be held on 16th May 2018. The VSM offered assistance with promotion of the vacancies at the Information Centre, and a suggestion was made for the RNLI to also contact the Open Water Swimming Club and Swanage Sailing Club in this respect.

Swanage Museum & Heritage Centre

Following the decision by Swanage Museum and Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust to shelve plans for relocating to an alternative site, options were now being considered for the museum to remain and expand in its existing location. Funding options would also be explored.

Swanage Pier

An update was given on the pile replacement and restoration project being undertaken at the Pier. It was anticipated that the works would be completed during July in readiness for the main summer season. It was noted that the Pier was not open to pedestrians at the present time. However, the City Cruises service to the Pier was unaffected, and was using the small landing stage. Updates were also given on the refurbishment works being undertaken to the toilet block, shop/museum, and cafeteria facilities. It was reported that the licence for the new radio station had been obtained.

Swanage Railway

Updates were given as follows:

- **2017 Passengers** – total 213,518 (slight increase on 2016).
- **2017 Santa Specials** – over 10,900 carried on 13 days (92% load factor).
- **2018 Group Travel Trade Shows** – attended/represented at a number of shows, all through membership of the Poole Attractions Group.
- **2017/8 Dorset Tourism Awards** - Silver Award in the Large Attraction Category.
- **2018 Heritage Railways Association Awards** – The Manisty Award for Excellence. Recommended by the HRA Board 'for bringing back passenger services to Wareham'.
- **2018 Bournemouth & Poole Tourism Awards (BAPTAs)** – nominated in The Transport Delivery Award category. Winners announced on 15th March 2018 at The Lighthouse in Poole.
- **2018 Rail Tours** - (details subject to change/cancellation by tour operators)
26th April - Great Britain XI, 27th April – Great Britain XI, 31st May – The Dorset Explorer, 29th July - The Cathedrals Express, 13th September - The Swanage Belle.
- **2018 Sea Train Adventure** – increasingly successful joint venture with City Cruises Poole returns for another season.
- **Project Wareham** – it was reported that the 2nd year's trial running season was postponed until 2019. In the meantime, Railway crews were main line training to ensure that they were qualified to operate the service when necessary. Some special trains may be possible during the autumn between Swanage and Wareham, and details would be circulated at the earliest opportunity.
- **2018 Travel Trade Familiarisation Day** – being held Thursday 15th March 2018 to showcase the Railway's facilities and commercial opportunities to the travel trade.
- **2018 Special Events** – a variety of events and Galas had already been booked in, which could be viewed on the Railway's website:
<http://www.swanagerailway.co.uk/events> It was noted that 'The Railway Children', a stage Musical by the Swanage Repertory Company, would be running from 14th to 18th August 2018 in the Mowlem Theatre.

10) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

There were no matters raised.

11) Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting, planned for June 2018, would be confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2018.

The meeting closed at 11.30 a.m.
