

Minutes of the Meeting of the **COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage  
on **WEDNESDAY 29<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor J Bishop

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Finch

Swanage Town Council

Councillor T Foster

Swanage Town Council

Councillor A Harris

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Moreton

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives:-

Ms T Ferrari

Swanage Neighbourhood Policing Team

Mr B Foster

Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust

Mr M Green

James Smith Funeral Directors

Ms L LeFevre

Swanage Tennis Club

Mr M Norris

Swanage Museum

Mr K Snooks

Swanage Neighbourhood Policing Team

Also present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mrs E Evans

Democratic Services Officer

Ms G Percival

Assets and Compliance Manager

### **Public Participation Time**

There were 21 members of the public present at the meeting.

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- Members of the Croquet Club expressed disappointment at no longer being able to play at the Cricket Club grounds.
- It was stated that croquet provided a great opportunity for members to remain healthy, improve wellbeing and by hosting events, increase tourism opportunities. In response it was stated that the matter would be discussed under Agenda item 15).
- A query was raised regarding the lack of wildflowers in the Godlingston Cemetery Meadowland.

In response it was acknowledged that due to the heavy clay soil type in that location achieving a diverse mix of wildflowers was challenging. In 2022 numerous wildflower plug plants and seeds had been planted and additional seeds were scheduled for planting in the forthcoming weeks.

#### **1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

##### **a) Apologies**

Apologies for his inability to attend the Meeting were received from Mr M Jones, Prospect Allotment Association. Councillor Monkhouse attended the meeting remotely.

## b) 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 No. 8** - Councillors Bishop, Bonfield, Finch and Harris declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a committee member of the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust.

**Agenda Item No. 11** – Councillor Bonfield declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a supporter of the Cricket Club.

**Agenda Item No. 15** – Councillor Bonfield declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a supporter of the Cricket Club, the previous location of the Croquet Club.

There were no other declarations to record on this occasion.

## 2. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community Services Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022

There were no matters raised.

## 3. Report on cases of anti-social behaviour in Swanage and statutory services response

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which outlined the cases of anti-social behaviour in town which had caused damage to a number of Council assets, as listed in the chart below. All of these incidents had been reported to the police and crime numbers issued.

Date	Location	Summary
06/12/2022	Shore Road Toilets	Velux roof window damaged
08/01/2023	Shore Road Beach Huts	Light covers damaged
08/01/2023	Spa Beach Huts	Windows, locks and doors broken and damaged
20/01/2023	Shore Road	Benches broken
13/02/2023	Mermond Place Toilets	Fire setting in WC's and climbing on roof
16/02/2023	Main Beach Toilets	Climbing on roof – damage to velux roof windows
16/02/2023	Shore Road Toilets	Fire set in male toilets
17/02/2023	Skate Park	Graffiti and fire setting
17/02/2023	Sandpit Field	Cupboard door removed electric box
18/02/2023	Shelter 1 – near Mowlem	Attempt to set fire to bench in shelter
18/02/2023	Playpark King George's	Verbal abuse
22/02/2023	Toilets King George's	Fire setting baby change and sink
05/03/2023	King George's male toilets	Fire setting and graffiti
12/03/2023	King George's male toilets	Fire setting door and towel holder

The Swanage Neighbourhood Policing Team stated that there had been an increase in reported anti-social behaviour since January 2023, and that multiagency work was being undertaken to manage the current incidents and work towards the reduction of future occurrences. It was noted that the Youth Outreach Team were currently engaged with local secondary schools to work with individuals to raise awareness regarding the potential risk to life and property as a result of arson. It was noted that additional CCTV cameras may be beneficial, as the footage obtained would be a useful tool in identifying those responsible for crimes. The importance of reporting crimes was stressed as this had a direct impact on the police resources assigned to the town.

Further to discussion, it was noted that the Tourism & Local Economy Committee had recently agreed that a letter should be sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the local M.P. jointly on behalf of the Town Council and the Chamber of Trade to request

additional police resources for the town. Members noted the content of the briefing paper and the information provided by the Swanage Neighbourhood Policing Team.

**4. Wellbeing Project – To receive an update from Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust regarding progress on proposals for The Centre and adjoining facilities at Chapel Lane**

Further to Minute No. 4 of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022, an update was provided by Mr Bob Foster, Chairman of the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust. Mr Foster was delighted to report that, at the recent Dorset Council Cabinet meeting, Members had voted unanimously to support the asset transfer of the Chapel Lane complex of buildings (The Centre, Children’s Centre and Day Centre) to S&PDT to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. It was anticipated that the S&PDT would be in a position to occupy the buildings within a few months.

It was noted that Dorset Councillors, Suttle and Trite, had spoken favourably of the project during the cabinet meeting, and thanks were given for their support. Members expressed their gratitude to Mr Foster and his fellow Trustees from the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust for their valuable work across the Swanage and the Purbeck area.

**5. Swanage Skate Park – To provide an update on works completed to date and proposals for further public consultation**

Further to Minute No. 5 of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Members noted the contents of a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which provided information regarding the works to the skatepark to date. The upcoming public engagement event scheduled for Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023 at 11 a.m. was highlighted and skatepark users were being encouraged to attend the event and provide ideas and suggestions for new equipment.

**6. To consider responses to the Council’s Corporate Plan consultation**

Further to Minute No. 161 of the Council Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023, a report was provided on the feedback relating to the Town Council’s priority to encourage health and wellbeing and enhance community safety, which had been received as part of the public consultation on the Corporate Plan 2023-25. The main subjects that had drawn comment were a need to improve the supply of affordable housing, to protect local services (e.g. hospital and library), and to provide improved cycling infrastructure.

Members noted the contents of the briefing paper and the comments made in relation to the Community Services committee. Thanks were given to all those who had participated in the consultation.

**7. Swanage Rights of Way Survey – To provide a progress report and results of footpath surveys undertaken by volunteers**

The Assets and Compliance Manager introduced a briefing note, which outlined the progress of the Rights of Way survey to date, and the results of the walked routes by volunteers. The allocated routes had been graded against criteria to enable Red, Amber and Green ratings to be assigned to the routes. Key themes had also been highlighted through the survey which included whether the route contained a gate or stile, the condition of the surface of the path and the state of the vegetation.

The next steps were noted as follows:

- Encouraging volunteers to repeat the walks in the Spring to assess the rating in different seasons;
- Encouraging volunteers to complete footpath surveys on routes that have not been walked;
- Improving waymarking and working with volunteers to install this;

- Identifying and promoting planned footpath improvement works;
- Creating Swanage Footpath ‘Walkabout’ leaflets that can be downloaded.

Members noted the contents of the report and the progress made to date, in respect of the recommendations made in the Rights of Way Survey Report 2021 and acknowledged that further updates would be reported to the Environment Committee.

Further to their declaration under Minute No. 1 b) Councillors Bishop, Bonfield, Finch and Harris left the room during consideration of the following item. In the absence of the Committee Chairman, it was agreed that Councillor Moreton would assume the Chair during consideration of the item.

**8. To consider a request for the installation of a noticeboard and seating at the Recreation Ground – Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust**

The Assets and Compliance Manager introduced a briefing note which detailed a request from the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust for the installation of two benches and a lectern style noticeboard at the Recreation Ground. It was noted that the works would be funded by the Trevor Chadwick Memorial Trust and undertaken by contractors working on behalf of the Trust. It was therefore proposed that matters such as health and safety and timings would be delegated to the Assets and Compliance Manager for final approval.

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

That the installation of two benches and a noticeboard at the Recreation Ground, at the location and of the style shown on the appended plan, be approved. Furthermore, that matters such as timing, permissions and health and safety considerations regarding the works be delegated to the Assets and Compliance Manager for final approval.

Councillors Bishop, Bonfield, Finch and Harris returned to the meeting.

**9. To consider a request from Cancare for a Memorial Garden at Prince Albert Gardens**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which provided information and proposed design ideas from Cancare for a Memorial Garden at Prince Albert Gardens. Further to a site meeting with Cancare representatives and subsequently the garden designer, a Preliminary Ideas-Inspiration-Concept plan had been received. It was suggested that should the garden plans proceed, the following matters should be considered:

- Exploration of requirements regarding planning permission;
- Requirement for permission from Dorset Council under the terms of the conveyance of Prince Albert Gardens to the Town Council;
- Immediate and long-term maintenance requirements in respect of time and cost;
- Location of services such as electricity and water;
- Health and Safety;
- Ease of access for a wide variety of users;
- Sympathy with the surrounding area in terms of planting and design;
- Resilience to potential anti-social behaviour;
- Timing of any works.

A query was raised regarding the effect on events at Prince Albert Gardens and the future maintenance of the gardens. In response, it was stated that the gardens were not designed as a self-contained area and therefore would not affect events, and the ongoing maintenance would ultimately be undertaken by the Town Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Finch and

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That the installation of a Memorial Garden at Prince Albert Gardens, as shown in the Preliminary Ideas-Inspiration-Concepts plan from Garden Design by Michelle Brown, be approved. Furthermore, that delegated authority be given to the Assets and Compliance Manager regarding specific aspects of the proposal as outlined in the briefing paper with the oversight of the project to be undertaken by the Community Services Committee and that a Licence Agreement between the Council and Cancare Purbeck, be drawn up.

**10. Review of Swanage Town Council's Memorial Bench Policy**

Further to Minute No. 11 a) of the Community Services Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022, consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which outlined the recent review of the Council's Memorial Bench policy. It was reported that during January 2023, attempts had been made to contact the 42 people on the waiting list, of which 20 had expressed an interest to remain on the list.

Further to the review it was suggested that Members give consideration to the following points:

- Suspending the Council's current memorial bench policy.
- Withdrawing the Council's policy to charge a maintenance fee five years following installation of a memorial bench.
- Keeping the waiting list for memorial benches closed at this time.
- Prioritising, in order of time, the 20 individuals who had expressed an interest in remaining on the waiting list for a memorial bench by offering an inscription on an existing memorial bench, a memorial plaque at Godlingston Cemetery or a commitment to remain on the waiting list until opportunities to locate new benches are identified.

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

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That the Council's current memorial bench policy be suspended, that the Council's policy to charge a maintenance fee five years following installation of a memorial bench, be withdrawn, that the waiting list for memorial benches remains closed and that the 20 individuals, who have recently expressed an interest in remaining on the waiting list for a memorial bench, be offered an inscription on an existing memorial bench, a memorial plaque at Godlingston Cemetery or a commitment to remain on the waiting list until opportunities to locate new benches are identified.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 1 b) Councillor Bonfield left the room during consideration of the following two items. In the absence of the Committee Chairman, it was agreed that Councillor Moreton would assume the Chair during consideration of the following items.

**11. Swanage Cricket Club – to consider extension of lease of Lower Grammar School Field**

Further to Minute No. 158 of the Council Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022, consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which outlined a request from the Cricket Club for a renewal of the lease of the lower Grammar School Field on the same terms as agreed in March 2022. The briefing paper contained an update from the Cricket Club which detailed their plans and highlighted the social and environmental benefits to the community. In light of the benefits provided by the club the current lease for the Lower Grammar School Field had been set at £50 per annum, in March 2022, and was due for renewal later in 2023. Members noted the benefit to youth players of Swanage and were appreciative of the amount of planting which had taken place. It was noted that the Cricket Club had agreed that there would be no objection to the installation of a footpath around the perimeter of the field.

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

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That the Town Council consider granting a new Lease to Swanage Cricket Club for the Lower Grammar School Field for a period of five years at a charge of £50 per annum, this sum to reflect the social and environmental benefits of the Club's activities.

Further to Standing Order No. 12) a) viii, it was AGREED:-

That Item 15) on the agenda be brought forward to Item 12).

**12. To consider a request from Swanage Croquet Club for use of part of Queen Elizabeth II (Forres) Field**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper, prepared by the Town Clerk and the Assets and Compliance Manager, which detailed the request from the Croquet Club for the use of the Queens Elizabeth II Field (Forres Field) for three croquet lawns.

An onsite meeting had been held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023, with members of the Croquet Club, two councillors and Town Council officers to better understand the proposal, and subsequently a full proposal had been received from the Croquet Club and circulated prior to the meeting.

Further to receipt of the proposal, it was suggested that Members give consideration to the following aspects:

- The proposed layout showing both the football pitch and the croquet lawns;
- The offer to maintain the whole of the Queen Elizabeth II Field during the croquet playing season;
- The request for a shipping container to be installed next to the existing football container for storage of lawn maintenance equipment (n.b. the Council is currently anticipating a request from Swanage and Herston Football Club for permission to site a larger container in this location for youth football teams);
- The deeply cracked surface of the field during the summer months;
- Access to water and the relevant permissions that are likely to be required should this be sourced from the adjacent stream;
- Parking arrangements for club members and visitors;
- The timing of any decision regarding this request given the considerations regarding the lawn preparation and maintenance requirements;
- The duration of any arrangement with the Croquet Club;
- Consideration of the terms of use and the fee to be charged.

Members noted the benefit that the playing of croquet had on the health and wellbeing of residents, and in relation to some of the aspects listed above it was suggested that a one year trial be established in the first instance.

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

That the Town Council approve the request made by Swanage Croquet Club for the use of part of the Queens Elizabeth II (Forres) Field as summarised within the briefing paper and set out in the Swanage Croquet Club proposal, for a trial period of one year.

A discussion ensued regarding the use and position of a container for storage purposes on the edge of the field, and further to a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the decision regarding the use and position of a storage container be delegated to Town Council officers in consultation with members of the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing Working Party.

A brief discussion was held around the fee to be charged, and in light of the use of the field being agreed for a one-year trial period, it was proposed that no fee be charged. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That the Town Council agree that no fee be charged for the duration of the one year trial period.

Councillor Bonfield returned to the meeting.

**13. Cemetery Matters**

**a) Death registration in Swanage – James Smith Funeral Directors**

It was reported that some clients of James Smith Funeral Directors had stated their disappointment that there was no access to face-to-face registration services in Swanage. The difficulties faced by some residents in accessing computers, or travelling to Wareham, were noted. Members sympathised with the issues faced and it was noted that officers had attempted to make contact with Dorset Registration services to re-establish service provision at the Town Hall but were awaiting a response.

Further to a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Finch and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council support James Smith Funeral Directors in contacting Dorset Registration services to re-establish service provision in Swanage, as soon as practicable.

**b) Poole Crematorium – James Smith Funeral Directors**

It was reported that on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023, BCP Council agreed to re-instate two cremators to Poole Crematorium, anticipated to be in use by September 2024. Thanks was given to all those who signed the petition in support of the retention of Poole Crematorium.

**c) Memorial testing and inspection – Godlingston Cemetery and Northbrook Cemetery**

Members noted the contents of a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which provided information regarding the recent memorial testing undertaken at Northbrook and Godlingston Cemeteries, to ensure the health and safety of visitors. As noted in the briefing paper, in accordance with Godlingston Cemetery Regulations and best practice information received from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management the following actions were AGREED:

- A second review of all memorials identified as defective in some way is undertaken to ensure consistency of approach;
- The resulting memorials that require attention due to health and safety considerations are identified;
- That grave ownership information for such memorials is identified and where possible, those grave owners contacted and requested to undertake necessary actions to ensure safety;
- Where it is not possible to contact the grave owners, to place at the graveside and in a prominent place within the cemetery a notice with a timescale of not less than 2 weeks stating that the Council propose to take such necessary actions to make safe the memorial;
- That information is placed on the Council’s website and Facebook page outlining the process the council is taking in respect of memorial safety.

The Town Clerk left the room during consideration of the following item.

**d) Propose clarification of cemetery regulations regarding installation of memorials prior to interment**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which set out a request in relation to the purchase of a cremation plot for a deceased person, with interment taking place at a later date. It was noted that independent advice had been sought from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM), and that this had confirmed that such a proposal is acceptable within the Council’s existing regulations.

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

That the purchase of a grave/cremation plot, and installation of a memorial for a deceased person, prior to their interment at an unspecified future date be approved.

The Town Clerk re-entered the meeting.

Ms C Johnston was thanked for her help and efficiency, while in her role at the Town Council, from all the staff at James Smith Funeral Directors.

**13. Proposed addition to Allotment Tenancy Agreements – 2023/24**

Members considered a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager which outlined the recent request from the Allotment Association to review the current Tenancy Agreement for Allotment Gardens. It was suggested that an additional clause be added to the current agreement from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 as follows:

*‘Take proper precautions when using sprays or fertilisers to minimise any adverse effects on the environment and comply at all times with current regulations’.*

The model clause had been taken from the Law of Allotments Handbook and would ensure that the agreement is no longer silent on the matter of the use of herbicides and fertilisers and would provide conformity with the Council’s environmental agenda.

It was stated that consultation with Tenants would be undertaken in respect of the potential addition as follows:

- Correspondence with Prospect Allotment Association in order that this proposal can be communicated to the membership;
- Signage displayed on noticeboards within the allotments;
- Any new tenancies that are created between this time and the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023 be advised of this proposal in writing.

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

That a new clause be inserted within the Tenancy Agreement for Allotment Gardens, regarding the use of sprays or fertilisers, as outlined within the briefing paper, with effective from 1st October 2023 and that consultation with allotment holders be progressed.

**14. Former Swanage Grammar School Weathervane**

Members noted the contents of a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which referred to the Former Grammar School Weathervane. Members noted that the decision on the location of where to place the weathervane should not be taken lightly and therefore it was **AGREED:-**

That the Former Grammar School Weathervane location be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the Community Services committee for further consideration and that, in advance of that meeting, suggestions should be sought from the public.

**15. Items of Information and matters for forthcoming agendas**

- a) Town Hall reception and use of Town Hall by other organisations**
- b) Proposals for networking for smaller sports clubs in Swanage**
- c) Beach Gardens – Joint working on future plans**

It was noted that the Tennis and Bowls club would be involved in future meetings to contribute to plans for the Pavilion in terms of refurbishment and maintenance.

**d) Day's Park Sports and Social Centre - Update**

It was noted that a meeting was scheduled immediately after the committee meeting and an update would be provided to the next committee meeting.

**17. Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The Meeting closed at 4.20 p.m.

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