

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM AND LOCAL ECONOMY COMMITTEE** held at All Saints Church Hall, Ulwell Road, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 5th JULY 2023** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Finch

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Moreton

Swanage Town Council

Councillor M Whitwam

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Ms L Bish

Grand Hotel (Swanage Chamber of Trade)

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Also Present: -

Dr M Ayres

Town Clerk

Mrs E Evans

Democratic Services Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

Mrs J Moulder

Business Development Support Officer

Public Participation Time

There was one member of the local press present at the meeting.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillor Foster, Mr P Angel (Mowlem Theatre Trustees), Mr K Egan (Rivendell Guest House, Chamber of Trade), Ms H Lagden (Visit Dorset), Mr R. Marsh (Swanage Fisherman's Association), Mr M Norris (Swanage Museum) and Ms D Paige (Mowlem Theatre Trustees).

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 No. 10 - Councillor Bonfield declared a pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a beach hut user.

3) Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 22nd March 2023

There were no matters raised.

4) Matters arising from the Meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 21st June 2023

An update was provided by the chairman of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee which included:

- Councillor Bonfield was re-elected as chairman.
- The Terms of Reference were reviewed and it was agreed that key items from the Coastal Change Forum would be incorporated into the business of the CCBMAC. Members were asked to consider the revised Terms of Reference in preparation for the

next meeting of CCBMAC in September.

- It was reported that informative presentations had been provided by Alan Frampton, BCP Council regarding the Shoreline Management Plan and from Dorset Council's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Team regarding three major projects: coastal flood defences, beach recharge options and Swanage and Durlston Cliff Management Strategy.

5) **Tourism Marketing**

a) **Visit Swanage website – Update**

Further to Minute No. 12 of the meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 22nd March 2023, the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) reported that, in conjunction with Visit Dorset, the building of the new Visit Swanage website was progressing well. A photographer had been employed to supply images, including drone photography. A press release had been prepared, which detailed the benefits to the Visit Swanage site, and would be circulated following the meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee. It was noted that the launch of a dedicated tourism website had been an aspiration of the Town Council for some time and it was anticipated that the site would be functional by January 2024. It was noted that business engagement was underway and further network events would be held in the upcoming months to encourage businesses to advertise on the Visit Swanage site.

b) **Christmas 2023 – Update on marketing plan for festive period**

Members noted the contents of a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM, which detailed the events organised to date for Christmas 2023. It was reported that the Chamber of Trade anticipated holding a stall at the forthcoming Rotary Fete in order to raise additional funds for the 'Switch on the Lights' event.

6) **Impact of criminal activity on retail outlets and the local economy - Update**

Further to Minute No. 7 of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting held on 22nd March 2023, an update had been provided, via email, to the Town Clerk which summarised reported crimes over the previous months. It was noted that between 1st January and 31st March, nine shoplifting crimes had been reported in total compared to 21 shoplifting crimes between 1st April and 30th June 2023. It was acknowledged that the rise in figures was primarily due to an increase in the reporting of shoplifting, not an increase in crime. It was noted that a local PCSO had met with the Chamber of Trade on 21st March 2023 and encouraged all crimes to be reported to better reflect the situation and therefore increase police resources to the area. It was noted that an experienced Police Constable had recently been allocated to Swanage and it was anticipated that this would have a positive effect on the reduction of crime in the town.

It was reported that a public meeting, arranged by residents, regarding crime and policing in the town had been held on 12th June 2023 at the Methodist Church and had been well attended. It was noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had been in attendance and had offered advice regarding potential grant funding available for additional CCTV cameras and training for volunteers.

It was suggested that, as the newly elected Police Liaison representatives, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would initiate a meeting with the PC to establish a good working relationship between Members and the Police.

7) **Swanage Seafront Masterplan – Update**

Further to Minute No. 8 of the meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee held on 22nd March 2023, the VSBDM stated that public engagement for the Seafront Masterplan draft document was currently being undertaken until 10th July. Members were encouraged to provide feedback and it was anticipated that, dependant on public response, the plan would be approved at the Council meeting on 24th July.

8) Accessibility Working Party – Update

Further to Minute No. 9 of the meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 22nd March 2023, it was reported that the Accessibility Working Party were in the process of recruiting members to form an independent Disability Reference Group, to advise on accessibility issues. It was noted that a budget had been allocated for the production of an accessible map of the town and it was anticipated this would be completed by Spring 2024. A first meeting to recruit members to the Disability Reference Group would be held on 10th July 2023 and a further update would be provided to a future meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee.

9) Potential commercial opportunities on Town Council land – To consider process for inviting expressions of interest for 2024

Further to Minute No. 10 of the meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 22nd March 2023, consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the VSBDM which outlined the proposed procedure and timescale for inviting expressions of interest for the use of Town Council land for commercial opportunities. At a meeting of the Property Panel held on 9th June 2023, a range of different options had been explored and it was proposed that the Town Council should consider the following areas, as potential locations for commercial activities:

- Main Beach Car Park and King George’s Field
- The beach and hardstanding on Shore Road
- Broad Road Car Park and the Boat Park
- North Beach Car Park and Journey’s End.

It was noted that the Property Panel would review expressions of interest received and the recommendations would be reported through the committee process. The applications would be evaluated by means of a scoring matrix, including:

- impact on the local economy;
- revenue implications to the Town Council;
- environmental credentials; and
- amount of work required by the Town Council to achieve the stated outcome (staff capacity and/or physical improvements to sites).

The following timescale in which to review business proposals was suggested.

Action	Date
Proposal approved by Tourism & Local Economy Committee	5 th July 2023
Concession pack developed and published requesting ‘Expressions of Interest’ (EOI) for locations outlined below. This will include maps, available facilities, restraints and information useful to potential operators	Early September
Concession EOI closes	End October
Reviewed by Property Panel	Early November
Property Panel recommendations to Tourism and Local Economy Committee regarding which opportunities to take forward for further development	15 th November
Recommendations to Full Council	11 th December
Work up details with potential concessionaires	December / January
Licences approved by Full Council	29 th January 2024

Members were encouraged to give thought to the timescales and any potential refinements to the process, prior to the Council Meeting on 24th July. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by the Chairman and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the process and timetable, as set out above, for inviting expressions of interest for potential commercial opportunities on Town Council land be adopted and that the locations identified are reviewed by the Town Council for potential inclusion within a ‘Concessions Pack’.

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

10) Beach Huts – To consider fees for 2024/25 and revised Terms and Conditions

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM, which outlined beach hut demand and usage, proposed beach hut charges for 2024-25 and amended terms and conditions. It was noted that Beach Hut prices had last been increased for the 2022-23 season and prices had remained at the same level for two years. It was acknowledged that during the past two years the Council had experienced a high level of inflationary cost increases.

Consideration was given to a schedule of potential changes to the fees for the 2024-25 season outlined in Appendix 2 of the briefing note. A discussion ensued, during which some concern was expressed about the impact of increasing some of the prices in excess of 20%. Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by the Chairman and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the VSBDM be requested to review the Beach hut fees for 2024-25 and present a revised proposal to the Council meeting on 24th July 2023.

Further consideration was given to Appendix 3 of the briefing paper which outlined alterations to the Beach Hut Terms and Conditions. Members noted some minor amendments that were required which included the removal of paragraph number 5 under the heading ‘Booking Fees and Regulations’. Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Finch and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the VSBDM be requested to review the Beach Hut Terms and Conditions and present a revised document to the Council meeting on 24th July 2023.

11) Winter Market fees - To consider the revised fees for 2023/24

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the VSBDM, which noted that the winter market figures had been reviewed and an error had been discovered in the Swanage Friday Market winter prices. The error had related to an incorrect calculation of weeks.

The revised figures, indicated in red, related to the last period charge with all other calculations remaining the same.

Winter Market Fees - 2023-4						
From Friday 3rd November 2023 to Friday 29th March 2024 (21 weeks)						
* Small - <3m (without market style gazebo, small garden gazebo is permitted)						
25% reduction for new traders for one week only						
25% reduction on all fees for a BH19 business address						
Charity and community groups at no cost						
Electric charged at £6 pr day						
Charge - Base Rate						
	Weeks	Small	Standard	Large	Extra Large	Mega
		<3m*	<4m	<7m	TBA	TBA
03-Nov-23	1	16.00	20.00	23.00	27.00	58.00
10-Nov-23	2	16.00	20.00	23.00	27.00	58.00
17-Nov-23	3	16.00	20.00	23.00	27.00	58.00
24-Nov-23	4	16.00	20.00	23.00	27.00	58.00
01-Dec-23	5	16.00	20.00	23.00	27.00	58.00
08-Dec-23	6	16.00	20.00	23.00	27.00	58.00
15-Dec-23	7	16.00	20.00	23.00	27.00	58.00
22-Dec-23	8	16.00	20.00	23.00	27.00	58.00
Period Charge	8	96.00	120.00	138.00	162.00	348.00
05-Jan-24	1	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
12-Jan-24	2	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
19-Jan-24	3	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
26-Jan-24	4	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
02-Feb-24	5	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
09-Feb-24	6	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
16-Feb-24	7	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
Period Charge	7	75.00	90.00	100.00	125.00	250.00
23-Feb-24	1	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
01-Mar-24	2	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
08-Mar-24	3	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
15-Mar-24	4	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
22-Mar-24	5	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
29-Mar-24	6	15.00	18.00	20.00	25.00	50.00
Period Charge	6	60.00	72.00	80.00	100.00	200.00
<i>Periods in total</i>		231.00	282.00	318.00	387.00	798.00
<i>Whole Season</i>	21	323.00	394.00	444.00	541.00	1,114.00
<i>% Discount</i>		40.00%	40.00%	40.00%	40.00%	40.00%
Whole Season	21	193.80	236.40	266.40	324.60	668.40
<i>2022-23 Fee</i>	21	168.00	231.00	252.00		577.50
% Change		13.31%	2.28%	5.41%		13.60%
<i>Artisans at the Market</i>		12.50	(Artisans must be pre-approved and are permitted to be >3m and include a market style gazebo)			

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

TO RECOMMEND:

That the Council adopts the revised Winter Market fees.

12) RNLI Face to Face Fundraising Team – To consider granting permission for the RNLI fundraising team to operate from the hardstanding year round

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper, prepared by the VSBDM, which set out a request from the RNLI Face to Face Fundraising Team to operate from the hardstanding year-round.

Although Members were supportive of the RNLI Team it was acknowledged that a precedent may be set which could be unfair to other organisations who would also benefit from use of the hardstanding year-round.

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

That the application process for use of the hardstanding remain unchanged.

13) Tourism Reports

a) Visitor Services & Business Development Manager

The VSBDM provided an update which included:

- That weekends had been increasingly busy.
- Three seasonal vacancies were currently being advertised.
- The extended decking at Beach Gardens had increased the footfall and income at Tea on the Green.

b) Visit Dorset

The VSBDM reported that although the funding relationship with Visit Dorset had altered recently, they would remain a key representative on the Tourism and Local Economy Committee.

14) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas including updates from outside representatives

- **Chamber of Trade** – It was reported that the Chamber of Trade had formed a small working party to review signage in the town from the perspective of a visitor to the town. The group had visited other local towns which included Bournemouth and Weymouth as comparisons. The group would share their findings at the next meeting of the Chamber of Trade and provide an update to a future meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee. It was noted that the Marketing Working Party would be interested in the findings and that it was helpful to work together to achieve positive outcomes.

It was stated that part of the Seafront Masterplan focussed on ‘gateways’ to the town and it was suggested that a Dorset Council Highways officer be invited to a future meeting of the committee.

- **Swanage Railway** – Further to a report, circulated prior to the meeting, it was reported that a steam hauled train from London Victoria would operate on 13th September and a diesel hauled train from Leeds on 26th September. It was noted that various Christmas events were in the process of organisation. The diesel gala dates for 2024 had been confirmed as 10th – 12th May and the Roads to Rail Steam Rally 21st to 23rd June.

15) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 15th November 2023 at 2.15 p.m. at The Grand Hotel, Burlington Road, Swanage.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 3.50 p.m.
