

SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL

Dr Martin Ayres
Town Clerk

Town Hall
SWANAGE
Dorset
BH19 2NZ

18th March 2026

Dear Councillor

Local Government Act 1972

You are summoned to attend a Meeting of the Swanage Town Council to be held at **THE METHODIST CHURCH, HIGH STREET, SWANAGE** on **MONDAY, 23rd MARCH 2026** at **7.00 p.m.** for the purpose of transacting the business mentioned in the Agenda.

Yours sincerely

M.K. Ayres

Town Clerk

PLEASE NOTE: **15 MINUTES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TIME WILL BE HELD AT 7.00 P.M. PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING.**

A PRESENTATION WILL ALSO BE MADE BY CULTURAL PURBECK ABOUT A BID TO BE UK TOWN OF CULTURE 2028.

To all Members of the Council

A G E N D A

1. To report apologies (if any) received from Members for inability to attend the Meeting.
2. Declarations of Interest and consideration of requests for Grants of Dispensations (Councillors are reminded of their obligations to declare their interests in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct).
3. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the following Meetings:-
 - (a) Council Meeting held on 23rd February 2026. (Copy enclosed).
4. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the following Committee Meetings, and consider the recommendations contained therein:-
 - (a) Finance and Governance Committee held on 25th February 2026.
 - (b) Planning and Consultation Committee held on 2nd March 2026.
 - (c) Environment and Green Spaces Committee held on 4th March 2026. (Copies enclosed).
 - (d) Finance and Governance Committee held on 18th March 2026.
 - (e) Community Services Committee held on 18th March 2026. (Copies to follow).
5. Budget Monitoring:-
 - (a) Statement of Cash Balance as at 28th February 2026. (Copy enclosed).

6. Monitoring Payment of Accounts. (Schedule enclosed).
 7. Chairman's Announcements.
 8. Cultural Purbeck – To consider request for support for submission of an Expression of Interest for Swanage and the Isle of Purbeck to be the UK Town of Culture 2028 (small town category). (Information enclosed).
 9. Mowlem Theatre – To consider grant request for hearing loop. (Information enclosed).
 10. Working Party and Task & Finish Group Updates.
 - (a) Beach Huts & Commercial Space Task & Finish Group held on 23rd February and 18th March 2026.
 - (b) Fishers' Huts Working Party, 25th February 2026.
 - (c) Seafront Masterplan Working Party, 9th March 2026.
 - (d) Car Parks Working Party, 11th March 2026.
 - (e) Events Working Party, 11th March 2026.
 11. Reports from Council representatives on outside organisations.
 12. Report from Dorset Councillors.
 13. Reporting of delegated matters.
 14. Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas.
 - (a) To note revised date for next meeting of Traffic Management Advisory Committee – 4 p.m. 24th June 2026.
 - * 15. Neighbourhood Plan – To consider approval of draft Neighbourhood Plan to be issued for Regulation 14 public consultation and authorisation of increased budget for professional fees. (Information enclosed).
 - * 16. Property Related Legal Matters
 - (a) Sandpit Field and Weather Station Field, acquisition from Mowlem Land Trust and Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust – To consider valuation advice. (Copy enclosed).
 - (b) Marsh Way/Victoria Terrace boundary wall – Consideration of next steps.
 - (c) Beach Concession – To note award of contract and consider matters arising.
 - (d) Punch & Judy Concession – To consider matters arising from negotiations re. licence for 2026/27. (Briefing note enclosed).
 - * 17. Procurement
 - (a) Town centre catenary and hire of festoon lighting – To award contract.
 - (b) Seaweed and sand management services, Main Beach – To award contract.
 - (c) Beach signage – To award contract.
 - (d) Insurance – To award contract and consider cyber insurance cover.
 - (e) Car park terminals maintenance – To award contract.
 - (f) Parade railings repairs – To award contract. (Briefing notes enclosed).
 - * Under Standing Order No. 1 c), it is envisaged that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public will be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of agenda item 15 (in order to preserve the integrity of the forthcoming public consultation process) and items 16 and 17 (due to legal and commercial confidentiality).
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Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at The Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 23rd FEBRUARY 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M. Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor P. Burridge
Councillor M. Coward
Councillor J. Dorrington
Councillor T. Foster
Councillor J. Lejeune
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor C. Sutton
Councillor C. Tomes

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, 12 members of the public and two members of the local press and media attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- Queries were raised regarding the decision-making process in respect of the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme and whether the town would receive sufficient benefits to justify the additional £2.5 million cost of the larger scheme. It was noted that a business plan had not yet been published.
- Thanks were expressed to the town's two Dorset Councillors for supporting the retention of two-way traffic along Shore Road. Reference was made to a report prepared by the resident which raised queries regarding the development of the Shore Road proposals and it was noted that a revised copy would be issued shortly. The need for residents and business owners to be fully informed when decisions relating to the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme were made was highlighted.
- A resident of Shore Road commented on the proposed traffic measures, noting that the town was in need of a well-designed pedestrian-friendly promenade. Good design was considered paramount to ensure successful shared use of space between vehicles and pedestrians.
- Further to an item in the minutes of the January Council Meeting, a member of the public noted the generosity of Swanage residents, which had assisted Graham Warburton in raising significant funds for the Salvation Army, and expressed thanks to him. It was also commented that it would have been beneficial had public consultation regarding Shore Road and the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme been conducted separately. In addition, the resident noted that a submission he had made for inclusion on the agenda of a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee meeting had not yet been considered.
- Support was expressed for the need to stabilise the seafront land, and it was noted that two-way traffic had historically operated successfully along Shore Road. It was further noted that issues such as open car doors and other obstructions on the pavement would need to be addressed to ensure that the area functioned effectively, especially for disabled residents and visitors.

Rev. Ian Bird offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.15 p.m.

178. **Apologies**
Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Suttle and Vile.
179. **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.
There were no declarations to record on this occasion.
180. **Minutes**
(a) Proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th January 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.
181. **Planning and Consultation Committee**
(a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 2nd February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.
- Consideration was given to the following recommendation contained in the Minutes:-
- 8(a)(i) Swanage Neighbourhood Plan website – to recommend approval of creation of website and allocate budget at the Council Meeting on 23rd February 2026**
It was proposed by Councillor Lejeune, seconded by Councillor Burridge and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the creation of a dedicated Swanage Neighbourhood Plan website, and the allocation of a budget of up to £2,000 for this additional work by ONH Planning Consultants, be approved.
182. **Statement of Cash Balance**
(a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st January 2026 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).
183. **Payment of Accounts**
In accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Council's Financial Regulations, the following Payment Schedule was submitted for information:-
 - Payment Schedule 10, amounting to £632,561.77.
184. **Chairman's Announcements**
The Town Mayor reported his attendance at the following events since the Council Meeting held in January:
 - Rotary Young Musician of the Year – The Mayor noted the enthusiasm of this young group of musicians and had an enjoyable afternoon.
 - Folk Festival Presentation and AGM – It was reported that £10,000 had been donated to local charities.

- Silver Afternoon Tea – The Deputy Mayor attended the afternoon tea event on behalf of the Mayor.
- Swanage Community Awards – It was reported that the nominations were now open and awards would be issued at the Annual Parish Assembly being held on 20th April 2026.

185. **Shore Road Enhancement Project - To consider report from Dorset Council setting out preferred option**

Further to Minute No. 169 of the Council Meeting held on 26th January 2026, consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out Dorset Council’s preferred option for enhancements to Shore Road, following public engagement undertaken during summer 2025. This would retain two-way traffic on Shore Road whilst removing on-street parking in order to enable wider footways and deliver public-realm enhancements (including a reduction in street ‘clutter’ on the pavements), introduce a 20-mph speed limit and make associated changes to the wider highways network.

It was noted that the planned works to Shore Road would be co-ordinated with the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme. It was clarified that the pavements would be widened on the seaward side with some smaller targeted improvements on the landward side.

It was explained that the current proposal represented an initial plan and an indicative timescale was noted for next steps. Subject to the proposals gaining Town Council support, it was anticipated that Dorset Council would prepare a more detailed design by late summer 2026, with the proposals then being subject to formal public consultation in autumn 2026. Members committed to working with Dorset Council to refine the designs to ensure that the best possible outcomes would be achieved for Swanage.

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

That the Town Council wholeheartedly supports Dorset Council’s preferred option for Shore Road enhancements proceeding to the next stage of development.

186. **To consider recommendations of the Grants Panel**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Planning and Community Engagement Manager, which set out recent grant applications received for the 2025/26 financial year.

It was noted that the Council had approved a grants budget of £10,000 for 2025/26, a total of £2,518.50 had been awarded to date, and a further £9,188.80 had been requested. Members considered the summary of the recommendations of the Grants Panel as outlined below:

Applicant	Sum Requested	Recommended grant	Summary of project	Reason for support
1 st Swanage Guides	£300.00	£300.00	<p>Swanage District Guides Association – Registered Charity No. 301224 (Girl Guiding (UK) – Registered Charity No. 306016)</p> <p>This application seeks a small grant to assist towards the costs of a trip to Switzerland in August 2026 for 20 Guides and leaders.</p>	<p>Recommend approval - the grant request fits within the Town Council’s criteria by supporting a non-profit youth organisation, benefiting local girls and young women, and providing developmental, cultural and educational value to the community. Supports confidence, independence, and personal growth for young people.</p>

It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Town Council approves the recommendation of the Grants Panel to award a grant of £300 to the Swanage District Guides Association.

Purbeck Art Weeks Festival	£1,500.00 (to be paid in 3 annual instalments of £500)	£1,050 (to be paid in 3 annual instalments of £350.00)	Registered Charity No. 1140350. The application seeks funding over a three-year period towards <i>Purbeck Young Artist</i> workshops in Swanage schools, costed at £350 each (provided free of charge to all primary and secondary schools in Purbeck), taking place from March to May, with residual funds going towards a proposed <i>Whispering Dome</i> music project. A grant application has been made to Dorset Council for £5,000 towards the cost of the <i>Whispering Dome</i> project.	Recommend approval at £350 x 3 years (£1,050 in total) in support of the school youth workshops - a wide range of free, year-round entertainment and activities is available for all ages, providing significant benefits to the mental health, wellbeing, and social engagement of both the local community and visitors. These activities also generate economic benefits by attracting additional visitors to the area.
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It was noted that Members had considered the total amount requested of £1,500 and recommended that a total of sum of £1,050 be offered.

It was proposed by Councillor Coward, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves the recommendation of the Grants Panel to award a grant of £1,050 (to be paid in three equal annual instalments of £350) to Purbeck Art Weeks.

Purbeck Film Festival	£500.00	£ - decline	Registered Charity No. 1195008. The application seeks funding towards the costs of this year's festival (16 th October to 1 st November), an established annual event held across various venues in Purbeck/Dorset. The festival provides a wide range of film screenings which facilitate an enjoyable social gathering whilst also showing many different cultures, viewpoints, and lifestyles. Financial support is currently	Recommendation - decline as submitted – this is a long-established, ticketed event - in line with the Council's existing grant policy, eligibility Points 3 to 3.6 refer (grant awards have been made in previous years towards the costs of the festival). However, the application notes that one of the festival's aims is to provide film-related activities and workshops for local children. It is also recognised that the festival hosts a <i>Short Film Evening</i> intended to encourage and promote the work
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			received from the British Film Institute, sponsors and donors, fundraising activities, and audience revenue.	of young film-makers. Members therefore recommend that the Council invites the festival organisers to consider a specific youth-focused project for inclusion in this year's event, which could be eligible for grant funding. Members would welcome the resubmission of a grant application in support of such a project.
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It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves the recommendation of the Grants Panel to refuse the grant application from Purbeck Film Festival for a sum of £500.

Swanage Depression Support Group	£500.00	£500.00	Volunteer-led community group. The group re-opened in May 2025 after a period of closure. Its aim is to provide support for individuals experiencing depression through open meetings at The Focus Centre, where members can receive confidential assistance. Meetings are held twice monthly, with a charge of £2 per session. These fees do not cover the group's costs which include monthly room hire, insurance, supervisory visits from a mental health professional, and refreshments.	Recommendation - approve – to safeguard this important local service. The group contributes significantly to the wellbeing and mental health of local residents and provides a clear benefit to the community. Members feel that this group could be considered for regular annual funding in the future, should the proposed new grant guidelines be approved/adopted, which would provide additional stability and help ensure the continuation of its valuable service.
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It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Sutton and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves the recommendation of the Grants Panel to award a grant of £500 to the Swanage Depression Support Group.

Swanage Town Band	£388.80	£150.00	<p>Registered Charity – No. 1214942.</p> <p>The application seeks funding to assist with the purchase/costs of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Printed panels to existing A frame £98.00 2. Printed vinyl banner with fixing eyelets £76.00 3. VAT on the above £34.80 4. Design work on the above £80.00 5. New music for next year £100.00. 	<p>Recommendation - approve £150 – to support the purchase of new music (previous grants of the same amount were awarded for this purpose in 2024 and 2025) - in support of funding the purchase of new music, in recognition of the valuable contribution that the band makes to the town and local community, supporting community health and wellbeing through free events, social activities, and youth engagement. It is noted that the Band donates its surplus funds to other charitable causes; in 2025/26, donations were made to Swanage Carnival, Weldmar Hospice, and towards a second Admiral Nurse.</p>
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It was proposed by Councillor Coward, seconded by Councillor Bishop and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves the recommendation of the Grants Panel to award a grant of £150 to the Swanage Town Band.

The Swanage Emporium	£6,000.00	£ - decline	<p>The legal structure of the new shop and café at 52 High Street is currently unknown (TBA)</p> <p>The application seeks funding towards the installation of accessible toilet facilities at the premises to serve a new café area within the shop, at an estimated cost of £6,000 (no supporting costings provided at this stage).</p> <p>It is intended that the café will provide drinks and snacks to residents and visitors, offering an additional space for people meet in a relaxed and comfortable setting, with accessible facilities available. Income generated by The Swanage Emporium is to support The Loft Swanage Community Centre.</p>	<p>Recommend decline as submitted – does not currently meet the Council’s Grant Guidelines - Eligibility Criteria, Point 2, which states that applications will only be considered from community groups and organisations that are a properly constituted body.</p> <p>Met with applicant who advised that further discussions are planned with his accountant to finalise the arrangements for the new ventures. At present, there is insufficient information regarding the intended legal set-up of the new café within The Swanage Emporium shop at 52 High Street. While The Loft Community Centre in Commercial Road is established as a CIC, the</p>
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				structure for the new High Street café remains unclear. Recommend a further meeting with applicant once the organisational arrangements have been finalised, to allow the proposal to be reconsidered if appropriate.
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It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Burridge and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves the recommendation of the Grants Panel to refuse the grant application for £6,000 from the Swanage Emporium.

Whilst the application was not approved, Members noted their willingness to meet with the applicant in the future to discuss the proposals.

187. **Working Party and Task & Finish Groups Updates**

(a) **Property Panel held on 6th February 2026**

It was noted that discussions at this meeting in relation to the Shore Place concessions would be considered under Agenda Item 17 (see Minute No. 194 (c) below). Matters relating to leases, licences and rent reviews were also discussed.

(b) **Museum Task & Finish Group held on 6th February 2026**

It was noted that this had been a positive meeting with Museum representatives and that the Town Council maintained its support for the Museum. Discussions had included the potential joint use of the Town Hall building, although consideration would be given to the existing lease arrangements.

188. **To consider revised Committee meeting dates.**

(a) **Finance & Governance Committee – Change from 11th to 18th March**

(b) **Community Services Committee – Change from 15th July to 1st July**

(c) **Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee – Change from 3rd June to 22nd April**

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

That the change in Committee meeting dates as set out above be approved.

189. **Reports from Council representatives on outside organisations**

Cultural Purbeck – It was reported that Cultural Purbeck anticipated setting up as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with four trustees. It was noted that the group hoped to submit a bid to be the UK Town of Culture 2028 and that an event would be held at Emmanuel Baptist Church on 27th February 2026. A report would be provided to the next Council meeting.

190. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillor Tomes:

- **Budget** – It was reported that due to funding constraints Dorset Council had increased Council Tax by 4.99%. It was anticipated that a three-year financial settlement would be agreed with central government that would provide greater

certainty for the authority. Work relating to the 'Our Future Council' programme was continuing, with the aim of delivering savings across the Council.

- **Road repairs/gully issues** – It was reported that £5 million had been allocated for road repairs and gully clearance.
- **Aster Housing** – Councillor Tomes reported that he had seconded a motion at a meeting of Dorset Council requesting registered providers to review the disposal of housing stock and the maintenance arrangements that had resulted in properties being sold.

191. **Reporting of delegated matters**

No delegated matters were reported this month.

192. **Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas**

There were no matters raised.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

That, under Standing Order No. 1 c), in the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda item 16 (in order to preserve the integrity of the forthcoming public consultation process) and items 17 and 18 (due to legal and commercial confidentiality).

193. **Neighbourhood Plan – To consider approval of draft Neighbourhood Plan to be issued for Regulation 14 public consultation**

Members received an update regarding progress towards completion of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. Following consideration by the Steering Group and the Planning and Consultation Committee, a workshop had been held to consider the draft plan in detail. It was noted that the Committee had made a formal recommendation to the Council to approve the draft plan. However, a number of questions raised at the workshop had yet to be resolved. Consequently, it was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Burridge and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Council defers consideration of the draft Neighbourhood Plan to a future meeting.

194. **Property Related Legal Matters**

(a) **Punch and Judy Concession – To consider amendments to licence for 2026 and 2027 seasons**

Further to Minute No. 47 of the Council Meeting held on 23rd June 2025, consideration was given to amendments to the licence agreement for the performance of Punch & Judy shows on the Main Beach for the 2026 and 2027 seasons. The principal changes were summarised in a briefing note circulated prior to the meeting. The licence holder had requested an extension to the season, commencing in late-May instead of mid-July and operating until mid-September. In previous years a beach hut had been made available in connection with the operation of the concession and this had also been requested for an extended period for the next two seasons. Attention was drawn to potential alternative arrangements.

It was proposed by Councillor Coward, seconded by Councillor Sutton and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the extended season requested by the Punch and Judy concessionaire be agreed for the 2026 and

2027 seasons, at the current fee of £150 per season, excluding use of a Shore Road beach hut, and that delegated authority be granted to officers to make alternative arrangements to provide secure storage for use by the concessionaire.

Officers noted that if agreement could not be reached with the concessionaire the matter would be brought back to a forthcoming Council meeting.

(b) Swanage Museum – To consider extension to existing lease

Further to Minute No. 10 of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on 15th October 2025, and discussion at recent meetings of the Museum Task & Finish Group, consideration was given to a proposal to extend the lease of the Heritage Centre building to Swanage Museum for a period of up to two years. It was noted that the Museum was currently looking to strengthen its trustee base and review key elements of its operation to ensure a sustainable future. It was, therefore, felt that a comparatively short lease extension would allow the Museum Trust to finalise its plans, prior to entering into a longer-term commitment. It was proposed by Councillor Lejeune, seconded by Councillor Moreton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Council enters into a renewal lease with Swanage Museum for a period of up to two years on the same terms as the existing lease (excluded from the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954) and agrees to pay the cost of its own legal fees.

(c) Shore Place – To consider proposed event usage by business tenants

Members considered a briefing paper regarding a proposal from the two concessionaires operating from Shore Place to deliver a programme of wellbeing-focused activities, including yoga, fitness sessions and related events. The Property Panel had reviewed the proposal and expressed support in principle, subject to a number of conditions, including a one-year trial period, agreed allocation of use between charities and businesses, seasonal restrictions, and the use of an adapted Sports and Wellbeing Licence.

Members noted the potential benefit to both residents and tourists to accommodate well-being activities in this location. It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Foster and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the proposed arrangements for the use of Shore Place by the two concessionaires, as set out in section two of the briefing paper, be approved.

Members noted the plans by the Swanage Sauna to install a webcam, to be positioned with a view to the sea. It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Coward and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Council notes the proposed installation of a webcam by the Swanage Sauna.

Consideration was given to a proposed amendment to the Council's Sports and Wellbeing Licence criteria to allow greater flexibility in recognising appropriate instructor qualifications. It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Foster and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the proposed change to the Council's Sport Licence arrangements, as set out in section 4 of the briefing paper, be approved.

(d) **Mowlem Land (De Moulham) Trust and Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust – To consider approval of draft management agreements and authorisation of Members to sign documents.**

Further to Minute No. 176 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 26th January 2026, Members considered draft management agreements between the Town Council and the Mowlem Land Trust and the Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust, following earlier agreement to formalise management arrangements on the advice of the Council's insurers and legal advisors. It was noted that both Trusts had considered the draft agreements and requested that the Council enter into formal arrangements, subject to final amendments. Members were advised that a number of clarifications and additional clauses were currently being reviewed by the Council's solicitors. It was proposed by Councillor Bishop, seconded by Councillor Moreton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

To enter into management agreements with the Mowlem Land Trust and Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust (subject to final amendments) and to authorise the signing of the same by two councillors.

(e) **Marsh Way/Victoria Terrace boundary wall – Consideration of next steps**

Members noted a verbal update regarding ongoing negotiations around the works to the boundary wall, which it was anticipated would be commenced over the summer.

(f) **Vodafone Mast, Day's Park – Update on lease renewal and rent review**

A verbal update was provided following a meeting with representatives of Vodafone held at the Football Club. It was noted that the Council's professional advisers had been instructed to assess revised proposals that had subsequently been submitted and that an update on the Town Council's position would be provided to a future meeting.

195. **Mowlem Land (De Moulham) Trust and Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust – To consider correspondence from Trusts regarding proposed acquisition of Sandpit Field and Weather Station Field by Town Council to facilitate ground stabilisation work, together with legal and professional advice**

Further to Minute No.152 of the Council Meeting held on 15th December 2025, Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which detailed the correspondence from both Trusts requesting that the Town Council acquire Sandpit Field and Weather Station Field for a nominal sum, in order to facilitate required ground stabilisation works. Members noted the legal advice received, which outlined the potential routes for acquisition, together with their respective advantages and disadvantages. It was further noted that independent valuation advice had not yet been obtained and would be required to inform any final decision.

A lengthy discussion ensued, during which Members considered the options available and the need to determine a way forward. The Mowlem Land Trust's proposal to retain a small section of Sandpit Field in order to secure the future enforceability of the estate covenants was scrutinised. The importance of seeking further legal and valuation advice was highlighted. It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council agrees to acquire Sandpit Field and the Weather Station Field from the Mowlem Land Trust and Gift of Public Pleasure Grounds Trust for a nominal sum, subject to the consideration of valuation advice and further legal guidance regarding the Trust's proposed retention of a small parcel of land at Sandpit Field.

The Meeting closed at 8.35 p.m.

Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 25th FEBRUARY 2026** at 2.15 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor M. Bonfield (Town Mayor) – Chairman

Councillor T. Foster
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor C. Sutton
Councillor C. Tomes
Councillor S. Vile

Also in attendance: -

Dr M Ayres Town Clerk and RFO
Mrs R Darkin-Miller Internal Auditor (until 2.35 p.m.)
Miss A Spencer Finance Manager

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

1. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for his inability to attend the meeting was received from Councillor Suttle.

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.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

3. **TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CAPITAL PROJECTS SUB-COMMITTEE HELD 19TH JANUARY 2026 AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Consideration was given to the following recommendations made by the Capital Projects Sub-Committee to the Finance & Governance Committee. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Sutton, and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: -

5. Parade Railing Repair-Proposals

That the sum of £5,000 allocated within the 2025/26 one-off revenue budget for the upgrade of the Santa Fe railings be reallocated to the repair of railings at the parade and that the authority to determine the most appropriate course of repair be granted to the Assets and Compliance Manager in conjunction with Dorset Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Vile, and AGREED UNANIMOUSLY: -

6. Town Centre Festive Lights Catenary - proposals

That the budget allocation of £6,000 per annum for the hire of town centre festoon lighting be brought forward a year from 2027/28 to 2026/27.

4. **INTERNAL AUDIT**

For the benefit of the most recently appointed members Mrs Darkin-Miller, the Council's Internal Auditor, introduced herself to the committee.

a) **INSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL WORK**

Proposals were set out by the Chairman and Town Clerk for a review of certain internal processes and procedures by the Council's internal auditor. It was noted that additional internal audit work had been commissioned previously as a tool for learning and applying this knowledge to future projects, thereby driving continuous improvement. A recognition of the benefits of self-review was seen as a key organisational strength and members welcomed this approach. The audit work would include:

1. Asset transfer – a review of the processes applied during the asset transfer from the legacy Purbeck District Council leading up to the formation of Dorset Council in 2019 to inform work around future asset transfers.
2. Delegated decision-making – a review of processes required under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations, 2014, and the consistency of practices around the recording and reporting of officer decisions.

It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To instruct the Internal Auditor to review and report on:

- Asset transfers (specifically, the transfers enacted between Swanage Town Council and the legacy Purbeck District Council); and
- Delegated decision-making (the practice around the recording and reporting of officer decisions).

b) **UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS FROM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS 2024/25**

Members reviewed the updates on the high and medium level recommendations that had been made by the council's internal auditor contained within six Internal Audit reports issued relating to the 2024/25 financial year. The status updates on the recommendations made in those reports were noted.

5. **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

a) **Income and Expenditure Account Q3 2025/26**

Consideration was given to a report setting out the Council's financial position at the end of the third quarter of the financial year and forecast year-end position.

It was reported that at the end of Q3 net expenditure was £137k under budget in total, with income from car parking and investments being significantly over budget, and employee costs being under budget.

It was noted that an appropriation of £140k from the general reserve to the Green Seafront Scheme earmarked reserve had been allocated during the 2026/27 estimates, and this sum had been included in the forecast for the current year. However, it was noted that any further adjustments would be made to these reserves at year end, as per the Council's Reserves Policy. The reserves held for the Green Seafront Scheme were discussed and it was agreed that the funding should be held in one Earmarked Reserve, rather than a number of component EMRs. Members noted the contents of the report.

b) **Capital Programme Monitoring Report**

A Capital Programme Monitoring Report for the 2025/26 financial year was submitted for information. The report and the progress made with the projects was noted. Discussion arose as to the proposed way forward in respect of the IT tender. It was noted that this would be in two processes with the first being an EOI being issued for IT Consultancy services, the second with the purchase of any recommended hardware/software. Discussion also ensued regarding a digital transformation process and how this may be incorporated into any procurement.

6. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

The following matters were listed for forthcoming agendas.

- **Update on creation of FOI webpage** – it was reported that this was still under construction.
- **Digital Transformation**– discussed in item 5 b).
- **Review of Social Media Policy**
- **Internal Audit Report 2025/26 - Visit 4 of 6** - Members were informed that an Internal Audit Report for Visit 4 had been received, reviewing Risk Management, Payments and Car Park Income, with no recommendations having been made by the Internal Auditor.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as 18th March 2026, at 12.00 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda Item 5 (a)

SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL

Statement of Cash Balance as at 28th February 2026

	£ p	£ p
Balance in Hand at 01/04/2025		£73,888.50 Cr
As per reconciliation dated 31/01/2026	£9,382,182.12 Cr	
Income during February	£89,801.40 Cr	
Movement of Cash-Investment	£500,000.00 Cr	
Add - Outstanding receipts- January	£241.20 Cr	
Less - Outstanding receipts - February	<u>£6.00 Dr</u>	£9,972,218.72 Cr
Less payments made:		
As per Reconciliation dated 31/01/2026	£9,337,737.49 Dr	
Schedule 11	£250,182.22 Dr	
Movement of Cash-Investment	<u>£350,000.00 Dr</u>	£9,937,919.71 Dr
		<u>£108,187.51 Cr</u>
Balance at Bank		
Current Account		£35,406.92 Cr
Deposit Account		<u>£72,780.59 Cr</u>
		<u>£108,187.51 Cr</u>
Short Term Investments held by the Council		
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (MMF)		£750,000.00
Abrdn (MMF)		£500,000.00
DMADF-Deposit		£350,000.00
DMADF-Deposit		£500,000.00
DMADF-Deposit		£350,000.00
DMADF-Deposit		£400,000.00
		<u>£2,850,000.00</u>

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief this is a true and accurate Statement of the Town Council's Cash Balance as at 28th February 2026

Prepared by Alison Spencer

Dated: 11th March 2026

Certified by Martin Ayres

Dated: 11th March 2026

SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL

Year Ending 31st March 2026

Payment schedule reported to Council - 23rd March 2026

Schedule 11:

The following payments have been made in accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Town Council's Financial Regulations, amounting in aggregate to:

**SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY TWO POUNDS
AND TWENTY TWO PENCE**

.....(**£600,182.22**).....

Swanage Town Council Schedule of Payments - Month 11

Cheques

Date	Name	Chq number	Inv Date	Details	Payment Total
25/02/2026	Petty Cash	015023	25/02/2026	Petty Cash & Postage	199.93
Total of Cheques					199.93

Direct Debits & Standing Orders

Date	Name	Inv Ref	Inv Date	Details	Payment Total
16/02/2026	AIB Merchant Services	300126.00001	30/01/2026	Merchant Serv charge	223.94
10/02/2026	Barclaycard Merchant Services	001884330126	31/01/2026	Monthly charge	62.57
16/02/2026	DNA Payments	007340386770	01/02/2026	Card charge	21.99
20/02/2026	Ecotricity Ltd	08185595	06/02/2026	Electricity - various sites	4,558.59
20/02/2026		08185601	06/02/2026	Electricity - various sites	36.27
23/02/2026		08202704	09/02/2026	Electricity - various sites	1,168.32
27/02/2026		08185603	06/02/2026	Electricity - various sites	423.46
09/02/2026	Lloyds Bank PLC	477427999	12/01/2026	Bank charge	45.09
24/02/2026		478167011	06/02/2026	Bank charge	92.20
10/02/2026	Paytek Admin Services Ltd (First)	11247	03/02/2026	Regular service charge	72.00
10/02/2026		14565	03/02/2026	Regular service charge	128.35
16/02/2026	Sage (UK) Ltd	INV22124750	01/02/2026	Monthly charge	703.80
26/02/2026	SEFE Energy Limited	INV04140819	12/02/2026	Town Hall- Annexe	643.77
26/02/2026		INV04140821	12/02/2026	Town Hall- Office	992.76
26/02/2026		INV04140822	12/02/2026	Depot	296.72
26/02/2026		INV04140820	12/02/2026	TIC	275.92
02/02/2026	water2business	6069635919	31/12/2025	Shore Road Toilets	273.44
02/02/2026		6069635893	31/12/2025	Heritage Toilets	120.46
02/02/2026		6069635900	31/12/2025	Mermond Toilets	543.02
02/02/2026		6069693911	07/01/2026	Burlington Chine Toilets	17.58
Total of Direct Debit & Standing Orders					10,700.25

Lloyds Chargecard

Date	Name	Inv Ref	Inv Date	Details	Payment Total
13/02/2026	Klarstein	4008145855	16/12/2025	Floor heating mat	46.98
13/02/2026	AAT	1674196321	16/12/2025	Fees	195.00
13/02/2026	Corfe Bakery	D2112114	16/12/2025	Sundries-Civic Service	60.00
13/02/2026	Land registry	1000009188396	16/12/2025	Land search	14.00
13/02/2026	STOOV B.V	STO-1511706	09/01/2026	Heating Wrap	149.99
Total of Chargecard payments					465.97

BACS / CHAPS

Date	Name	Inv Ref	Inv Date	Details	Payment Total
27/02/2026	123 Send Limited	2026020004653210	01/02/2026	A920Pro with SIM	158.36
27/02/2026	4C Managed Service Ltd	70077	10/02/2026	Depot IT/phone	379.56
27/02/2026		70078	10/02/2026	TIC IT	483.26
27/02/2026		70078	10/02/2026	BG phone	42.00
27/02/2026		70079	10/02/2026	Project Plan	106.74
27/02/2026		70079	10/02/2026	TH IT	781.92
27/02/2026		70079	10/02/2026	TH phone	42.00
27/02/2026		70089	12/02/2026	Concillors Laptops subscription	360.00
27/02/2026		70172	21/02/2026	Domain Hosting	38.40
27/02/2026		A.B.A. Groundcare (SW) Ltd	163686	11/02/2026	investigate/resolve leak on iszeki
27/02/2026	Ace Office Environments Ltd.	01169871	30/01/2026	Sundries	55.59
27/02/2026		01170445	30/01/2026	Stationery	26.78
27/02/2026		01171244	13/02/2026	Computer mouse	34.19
27/02/2026		01171351	13/02/2026	TIC - stationery	62.34
27/02/2026	AquAid (Southcoast)	519866	31/01/2026	Water	252.76
27/02/2026	Audit West	8504771	23/01/2026	DPO Services 2025-26	1,650.00
27/02/2026	C86 Signs & Graphics	INV-0873	03/02/2026	Beach Gardens - Artwork	85.00
27/02/2026	Central Southern Security Ltd	213758	08/02/2026	OOH CSS call out	90.00
27/02/2026	Card Geotechnics Ltd	INV025162	09/02/2026	Seafront Monitoring	1,848.00
27/02/2026	C G Ltd	Q3 25-26	31/12/2025	Management Account Q3	12,350.46
27/02/2026	Dorset County Pension Fund	Payroll M11	20/02/2026	Payroll M11- Pension	22,648.35
27/02/2026		Payroll M11	20/02/2026	Payroll M11- CAYS	120.51
27/02/2026	From Dorset with Love	INV-8191	10/02/2026	TIC - jams for retail	60.00
27/02/2026	Dorset Council	1801565192	04/02/2026	Swanage Town Tourism Data 2024	276.00
27/02/2026		2800485118	11/02/2026	Water Patrols 2025 Season	5,040.00
27/02/2026	Dorset Waste Partnership	2800483101	05/02/2026	Recycling	40.90

27/02/2026	Flowbird Smart City UK Ltd	UI00023201	19/02/2026	WebOffice incl Airtime	286.73	
27/02/2026		UI00023201	19/02/2026	Gateway transaction BR and MB	366.44	653.17
27/02/2026	GH Print Management	INV-8179	28/01/2026	Beach Gardens - printing		96.00
27/02/2026	Greenham Trading Ltd.	04/546838	02/02/2026	Padlock	399.39	
27/02/2026		04/547074	04/02/2026	Washing up liquid, Cable ties	208.13	607.52
27/02/2026	Hardy Signs	SI-109594	31/01/2026	Day's Park Interpretation Panel.		272.16
27/02/2026	A.R. Harris & Son	36953	27/01/2026	Electrical services	62.59	
27/02/2026		36983	30/01/2026	Electrical services	72.00	
27/02/2026		37001	05/02/2026	Electrical services	75.76	
27/02/2026		37041	11/02/2026	Electrical services	102.23	
27/02/2026		37046	12/02/2026	Electrical services	3,510.61	3,823.19
27/02/2026	Heritage Seeds	21076	11/02/2026	Wildflower Seed mixture		50.09
06/02/2026	HMRC	VAT	06/02/2026	HMRC VAT Qtr Dec 25	18,869.17	
27/02/2026		Payroll M11	20/02/2026	Payroll M11- PAYE/NI	21,867.63	40,736.80
27/02/2026	ICTHUS Event Solutions Ltd	0905	30/01/2026	Festive lights		1,464.00
27/02/2026	Impact (Boston) Ltd	111-131280	17/02/2026	Co-op Car Park stock tickets		804.96
27/02/2026	J&P Cleaning Services Limited	INV-0040	01/02/2026	TIC cleaning	325.00	
27/02/2026		INV-0040	01/02/2026	Beach Huts- winter cleaning	185.00	510.00
27/02/2026	JONES & PRIOR OF SWANAGE L	INV-1214	28/01/2026	Shore Road WC		912.00
27/02/2026	J.D. Facilities Ltd	INV-2064	01/02/2026	Depot - cleaning	197.59	
27/02/2026		INV-2063	01/02/2026	Depot - deep clean staff area	230.62	
27/02/2026		INV-2065	01/02/2026	TH-cleaning	614.39	
27/02/2026		INV-2066	01/02/2026	Public Toilet- cleaning	7,958.09	9,000.69
27/02/2026	King Ramps Ltd	1930	29/01/2026	skate park installation		45,000.00
27/02/2026	The Little Map Co & Fernhill Who	2876	24/12/2025	TIC - souvenirs for retail	114.00	
27/02/2026		2876	24/12/2025	TIC - Tide Times Tables 2026	130.00	244.00
27/02/2026	Metric Group Ltd.	4944	12/01/2026	Monthly charge Aslan	84.00	
27/02/2026		5537	12/02/2026	Monthly charge Aslan	84.00	168.00
27/02/2026	MiddlePeak Engineering Limited	SI-1349	04/02/2026	Finger Arm signs		1,686.60
27/02/2026	National Express	AREXT/00248246	31/01/2026	January Agency tickets		39.75
27/02/2026	Newitt & Co Ltd	SALE-1863024	19/02/2026	Beach Gardens - putters		107.71
27/02/2026	Newlands Training Ltd	INV-1644	12/02/2026	Training	888.00	
27/02/2026		INV-1648	13/02/2026	Training	1,512.00	2,400.00
27/02/2026	Newsquest Southern	48711683	23/01/2026	Advertisement	185.05	
27/02/2026		48790735	06/02/2026	Advertisement	1,516.03	1,701.08
27/02/2026	NFP Workshops	4482	27/01/2026	Training		95.00
27/02/2026	Nisbets Plc	51668245	27/01/2026	Beach Gardens - chairs		455.95
27/02/2026	Nixons Hardware Ltd	125411	02/01/2026	key cutting and lubricants	20.29	
27/02/2026		125422	05/01/2026	doorbell	19.99	
27/02/2026		125430	08/01/2026	threadlock & nuts	17.30	
27/02/2026		125462	16/01/2026	wd40,reflective tape	27.58	
27/02/2026		125473	20/01/2026	Kilrock descaler	3.99	89.15
27/02/2026	Ofcom	78821429	03/02/2026	Radio charge fees		75.00
27/02/2026	Openings	A75426	13/02/2026	TH Gate service		210.00
20/02/2026	Swanage Town Council	Month 11 Payroll	20/02/2026	Net Wages - Month 11		65,261.81
27/02/2026	Personnel Hygiene Service	71961009	14/02/2026	Hygiene services		2,518.48
27/02/2026	Pipefix	139292	12/02/2026	Pipe repair		2,571.10
27/02/2026	Planet Merchant Service Ltd	PP4000681IE2601	31/01/2026	Gateway fees		204.29
27/02/2026	Pod Point Ltd	ADF-33105	08/02/2026	Admin Fees Mer	17.45	
27/02/2026		ADF-33858	08/02/2026	Admin Fees MB	21.10	38.55
27/02/2026	PSTAX	INV-00021750	28/01/2026	CIS		252.00
27/02/2026	Purbeck Gazette	43872	02/02/2026	Purbeck Gazette	486.00	
27/02/2026		43958	06/02/2026	Stour & Avon	486.00	972.00
27/02/2026	Purbeck Media Group	INV-5772	04/02/2026	TIC - uniform for staff		156.00
27/02/2026	Recruit Local Ltd	2727	09/02/2026	TIC - Recruitment		40.00
27/02/2026	SECURITY PLUS LIMITED	1149128	31/01/2026	Cash Collection	382.37	
27/02/2026		1149750	31/01/2026	Cash Processing	67.54	449.91
27/02/2026	DWG Smith	26073	28/01/2026	remediation works	252.00	
27/02/2026		26072	28/01/2026	Tarmac new footpath	1,476.00	1,728.00
27/02/2026	St. Michaels Garage	4850	31/01/2026	Diesel Jan		293.69
27/02/2026	Swanage News	1284	31/01/2026	News paper Jan		48.50
27/02/2026	Swanage Regatta & Carnival	2026/006	05/02/2026	Carnival Programme advert - 2026		275.00
27/02/2026	Telefonica O2 UK Ltd	42680189	24/02/2026	SIM Charges		203.86
27/02/2026	Toasty Products Limited	TP4568	29/01/2026	Beach Gardens - paninis		840.00

27/02/2026	Travis Perkins	1037025400	29/01/2026	Materials & Equipment	75.94	
27/02/2026		1037225443	02/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	95.45	
27/02/2026		1037244657	03/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	46.94	
27/02/2026		1037361719	04/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	40.56	
27/02/2026		1037361720	04/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	16.34	
27/02/2026		1037361717	04/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	115.06	
27/02/2026		1037361718	04/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	14.57	
27/02/2026		1037496651	06/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	190.22	
27/02/2026		1037521660	06/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	17.45	
27/02/2026		1037632620	09/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	25.40	
27/02/2026		1037708950	10/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	14.28	
27/02/2026		1037753167	11/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	210.00	
27/02/2026		1037830535	12/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	13.92	
27/02/2026		1037830534	12/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	39.78	
27/02/2026		1037956251	14/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	78.91	
27/02/2026		1038031900	16/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	16.34	
27/02/2026		1038045969	17/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	101.03	
27/02/2026		1038078829	17/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	214.90	
27/02/2026		1038160002	18/02/2026	Materials & Equipment	5.96	1,333.05
27/02/2026	Thrid Parties	Payroll M11	20/02/2026	Payroll M11- Third Party Deductions		328.72
27/02/2026	Violet Farm Foods Ltd	187298	27/01/2026	TIC - tea for retail		112.20
27/02/2026	Westmade Ltd	1015993	29/01/2026	Plumbing Services	568.25	
27/02/2026		1016061	12/02/2026	Plumbing Services	780.00	
27/02/2026		1016076	12/02/2026	Plumbing Services	727.09	
27/02/2026		1016141	18/02/2026	Plumbing Services	665.40	2,740.74
Total of BACS/CHAPS Payments						238,816.07

<i>BACS Payment issued 6th February 2026</i>	18,869.17
<i>BACS payroll payment issued 20th February 2026</i>	65,261.81
<i>BACS supplier payments issued 30th January 2026</i>	154,685.09
	238,816.07

Total of Payments 250,182.22

Investments - Cash Movements

Date	Name	Inv Ref	Inv Date	Details	Payment Total
27/02/2026	DMADF	transfer	27/02/2026	DMADF	350,000.00
Total of Investments					350,000.00

Total of Payments & Investments 600,182.22

Cultural Purbeck – To consider request for support for submission of an Expression of Interest for Swanage and the Isle of Purbeck to be the UK Town of Culture 2028 (small town category)

**Cultural Purbeck CIO
A Proposal to Swanage Town Council, March 2026**

Proposal

This is a proposal for Swanage Town Council in partnership with Cultural Purbeck (CP) to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to DCMS for Swanage and the Isle of Purbeck to be the UK Town of Culture 2028.

Background

At the meeting of Swanage Town Council held on Monday 18th November 2024, it was resolved unanimously that the Council should support Swanage and Purbeck submitting an expression of interest to be the Dorset Town of Culture 2026 and in principle committing up to £30,000 to support the bid.

The bid was not successful, but a Steering Group of organisations which had worked on the proposal decided to build on the work undertaken. This group organised a successful workshop in November 2025 at which around 60 representatives from over 30 organisations enthusiastically supported the establishment of an umbrella organisation called Cultural Purbeck (CP) to encourage better networking, the sharing of good practice and joint working on creative projects. Such an organisation would also help celebrate what Purbeck has to offer, better raise the profile of the area and its organisations, build capacity and raise skill levels and so support local economic and social objectives.

In order to access grant funding, Swanage Town Council requires that CP should be constituted as a registered organisation, and in December 2025 a proposal was submitted to the Charity Commission. Four initial shadow Trustees were recruited; a Business Plan developed and a funding proposal submitted to the Talbot Village Trust. In January 2026 the Cultural Purbeck Steering Group handed over their responsibilities to the prospective charity.

UK Town of Culture 2028

In January 2026, DCMS announced a competition to select a Town of Culture 2028. There are three bands depending on the size of population and a town can include its neighbouring areas where the area has some recognisable coherence. Cultural Purbeck propose to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by the closing date of 31st March with Swanage and the Isle of Purbeck as the named area. This area would be in the under 20,000 population category.

The initial evaluation will focus on the story of the area and what makes it special. Cultural Purbeck, with the support of the 30+ organisations which attended the February workshop, will have as its theme “From Stone to Sea”. This will note the Jurassic Coast, the use of Purbeck stone and marble, how Swanage and Purbeck’s villages grew on the basis of the stone industry, how the geology creates such a diverse landscape and the greatest biodiversity in England and how our wide range of Festivals and Carnivals can work even closer together to celebrate what our very special area has to offer.

The EOI will also cover inclusivity, how it will boost the area’s profile and how we will make it happen in terms of programme and financial management. The winning town will be awarded £3

million to deliver a cultural programme in 2028 of around six months. Additionally, the two finalists from their category will receive £250,000 each to deliver elements of their bid. CP has developed and takes responsibility for the EOI. If we are shortlisted, then CP will receive some £60,000 to develop a full proposal and will harness local expertise and organisations to help in that process.

The DCMS Guidance Document states that: “We expect bids to be from a partnership for your bidding place and include the relevant local authorities.” DCMS has since clarified that as Cultural Purbeck is constituted and supported by the Local Council, the lack of charity registration should not be an issue. The Charity Commission has subsequently said they are able to fast-track our application for charitable status. Hence it would seem appropriate for Cultural Purbeck to submit the EOI while showing that STC is fully supportive. The Parish Councils of Corfe Castle, Church Knowle, Worth Matravers, Langton Matravers and Studland have all expressed their support for the EOI to be submitted and we hope Arne Parish Council will also support. Dorset Council officers have also offered their support.

There are two responsibilities on the applicant, namely to be:

- The Accountable Body
- The Delivery Body.

The former involves the responsibilities set out in the Annex to this proposal. The latter covers the planning, procuring, commissioning and delivery of the planned UK Town of Culture programme. CP will have £60,000 funding to augment its capabilities and should also be a fully constituted CIO with the relevant policies and procedures in place. Submitting an EOI does not involve any financial or resource commitments from Swanage Town Council.

Irrespective of the EOI for UK Town of Culture, Cultural Purbeck will develop in partnership with Swanage Town Council and a wide range of local organisations a cultural programme that will support better networking, promote more regenerative tourism, greater involvement by young people and those who may feel excluded and the other themes Swanage Town Council is setting out in its Corporate Plan.

The Trustees of Cultural Purbeck propose that they submit an Expression of Interest to DCMS for Swanage and the Isle of Purbeck to be the UK Town of Culture 2028 and highlight that this has the full support of Swanage Town Council. They invite Swanage Town Council to offer a letter of support to reinforce Cultural Purbeck’s bid, potentially commenting as follows:

‘Culture in all its many facets plays a key role in fashioning and enhancing the life, health and well-being of our community. Promoting culture, regenerative tourism, community engagement and inclusivity are key themes of our Corporate Plan. We look forward to partnering with Cultural Purbeck on this exciting opportunity for the local area which promises a significant and sustainable legacy to benefit our Town and surrounding villages’.

Cultural Purbeck Trustees, March 2026

Annex

Accountable Body: A place's chosen party, who are the recognised Accountable Body in relation to a planned UK Town of Culture programme e.g. the relevant local or regional public authority. If successful, the Accountable Body will have overall responsibility and ownership for the programme. The responsibilities of the Accountable Body may include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring the safe and successful delivery of a UK Town of Culture programme;
- Managing the financial and legal requirements associated with the delivery of a UK Town of Culture programme;
- Taking responsibility for the organisation of a UK Town of Culture programme, including leading on the necessary coordination between relevant partners;
- Taking responsibility for any grant funding associated with a UK Town of Culture programme, for which the Accountable Body is the recipient organisation; and
- Monitoring delivery of a UK Town of Culture programme and undertaking relevant reporting as may be required by DCMS.

Mowlem Theatre – To consider grant request for hearing loop

The Town Council has recently received the following grant request from the Mowlem Theatre to provide funding towards the provision of new hearing loops for the auditorium and studio.

At the Council Meeting held on 17th November 2025 it was agreed to award a grant of up to £15,000 in support of the Mowlem's 'Raise the Roof' campaign. In effect, this was a reallocation of the £15,000 budgeted for 2025/26 for the unsuccessful Dorset Town of Culture bid. That work has now been completed and £12,406 has been drawn down by the Mowlem from the Town Council's grant.

This further grant request is for the remainder of that £15,000 budget (£2,594) to be allocated towards new hearing loops, together with an additional £1,106. Were Members to support this it could be funded from the underspend on the Council's community grants fund. It would support the Council's objective to encourage participation in sporting and cultural activities and its commitment to provide grant funding in support of educational, social and cultural activities.

Martin Ayres
Town Clerk

March 2026

Sent: 13 March 2026 12:05

To: Councillor Chris Tomes <cllrtomes@swanagecouncillors.uk>

Subject: The Mowlem's new Hearing Loops & Accessible Signage

Dear Chris,

I am writing to let you know that the work on our roof is fully complete! (I've added a video of the roof and how it looks now - so different to all the cracks and lumps that were up there before). Thank you again for making this happen for us. We feel such a sense of security knowing that it's done and don't have to worry about the several winters to come.

Also, I wanted to let you know that we've had a successful result from the Linbury Trust who have agreed to fund £7,500 towards new hearing loops for the auditorium and studio. This will also pay for new accessible signage inside the building.

This is fantastic news and a major part of making the Mowlem accessible for all. We've had so many comments over the years about audiences being disappointed about not being able to hear our events and screenings properly. It's so exciting to be able to install the most up to date system and revolutionise the experience of visiting the Mowlem.

The full project cost is £11,276, which means we still need to fundraise for the additional £3,700 to close the gap.

I would like to ask whether STC would consider supporting us with this? STC awarded us £12,406 towards our roof with the ability to access up to £15,000 to cover contingency. We

won't now be needing that contingency of £2,594 so technically the ask is whether we could secure this for the hearing loops instead and an additional £1,106.

The time and energy it will take to raise the money at our end is huge. It would be such a relief to be able to secure the remaining amount and get the hearing loops and signage sorted as soon as possible. It's such a shame to be awarded the money and then see a long delay in the work coming to fruition.

Do let me know what you think. I'm very happy to come in for a meeting about it as needed.

Very best,

Kate McGregor (she/her)

Executive Director

The Mowlem

