

Minutes of the Meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT & GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 4th MARCH 2026** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Sutton

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council (until 3.45 p.m.)

Councillor S Vile

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Mr B Cooke

National Trust

Mr D Skinner

Planet Purbeck

Mr L Luke

Planet Purbeck

Mr J Griffen

Sustainable Swanage

Mr F Roberts

Swanage Landers

Also in attendance: -

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business

Development Manager (VSBDM)

Mr M Snowdon

Assets & Compliance Support Officer

Mr A Young

Purbeck Energy Group

There was one member of the public and one member of the press present at the meeting.

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised during Public Participation Time.

1) Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Ms J Owens (Sustainable Swanage), Ms K Black (Durlston Country Park), Mr T Clarke (National Trust) and Mr D Pratten (Beach Buddies).

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.

No declarations were made on this occasion.

3) Matters arising from the Meeting of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee held on 12th February 2025

No matters were raised on this occasion.

4) Environment Action Plan – Progress Update

Further to Minute No. 5 of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 8th October 2025, Members noted the contents of the Environment Action Plan. The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) reported that works

on Priority Action 4 within the Environment Action Plan, to develop an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy and increase the provision of charging facilities in Swanage Town Council car parks was ongoing and further meetings were scheduled for March 2026 between officers and Dorset Council, to deliver the Charging Ahead scheme. It was noted that a progress report will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

5) Swanage Town Council's Energy Footprint – To receive 2025 report.

The VSBDM presented the Energy Footprint Report for 2025, which detailed energy use, water use, and waste generated by the Town Council over a 12-month period. An alternative approach to measuring the Carbon Footprint was implemented for the 2025 report using conversion factors provided by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero instead of those provided by Low Carbon Dorset. It was reported that due to the change in approach, Carbon Footprint comparisons with previous years were not currently possible. However, actual usage data indicated that there had been a reduction in the Council's energy use and it was the lowest recorded since reporting began in 2022.

It was further reported that the Council took delivery of an additional electric vehicle at the beginning of 2025, replacing one of the aging diesel vehicles and that solar panels (PV) installed at Beach Gardens and the Operations Depot had generated over 29,000kWh across the year, providing electricity for those sites and feeding surplus energy generated back into the grid.

Members noted the contents of the report. In doing so it was acknowledged that the favourable weather in 2025 would have resulted in less energy used for heating and would have resulted in lower fuel consumption from grounds maintenance activities due to the reduced grass and hedge growth compared to previous years.

6) Swanage Information Centre – Air source heat pump feasibility study

Members noted the contents of a briefing paper produced by the Assets and Compliance Manager which detailed the gas boiler system currently installed at Swanage Information Centre and some of the recent problems experienced with both the boiler and the radiators. Several options for replacement were being explored, including the installation of a new more efficient combi-boiler or the potential for the installation of an air source heat pump system which would contribute to the goal of achieving the Council's net zero 2030 target.

An expression of interest had been submitted to Low Carbon Dorset to ascertain if there was funded support available to investigate the feasibility of replacing the boiler with an air source heat pump. The submission had received a positive response and Low Carbon Dorset had awarded up to two days of free technical advice to generate a feasibility assessment, the results of which will be reported to the next meeting of this committee.

7) Consideration of Net Zero 2030 target

Further to Minute No. 7 of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 25th June 2025, the VSBDM presented a briefing paper detailing the Carbon Neutral target and the actions included within the Environment Action Plan to help achieve this. It was reported that in 2025 the carbon footprint was 39.1 tonnes of CO₂ compared to the carbon footprint of circa 100 tonnes of CO₂ in 2022. This had been achieved with several initiatives which included:

- Increasing the number of electric vehicles and reducing the reliance on Diesel (currently 4 out of 7 vehicles)
- Sourcing energy from 100% renewable energy suppliers
- Solar (PV) panels on Depot and Beach Gardens with additional battery storage system implemented at Beach Gardens
- Insulation in Swanage Information Centre and Town Hall

- LED lights throughout the estate

It was reported that further reductions in the Carbon Footprint could be realistically achieved. Investigations were ongoing into the feasibility of installing an air source heat pump within the Swanage Information Centre and the utilisation of a Building Management System within the Town Hall. The results of these investigations would be presented at a future meeting of this committee.

Members noted the contents of the report and considered the formation of a working party to further discuss the feasibility of the net zero 2030 target and identify any additional actions that could be implemented. After a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To form a task & finish group consisting of councillors and outside representatives with specialised knowledge to review the Council net zero 2030 target and identify any actions that can be implemented to further reduce the carbon footprint, with the results being presented to the Autumn 2026 meeting of this committee.

8) **Sustainable Swanage - Update**

The representative of Sustainable Swanage provided an update on recent activities which included a workshop in January 2026 to consider the groups forward strategy and how to achieve this vision. It was reported that as more initiatives were launched, to assist the Council in delivering the Environmental Action Plan, a lot more co-ordination has been required, with a growing number of projects and volunteers. It was further reported that Sustainable Swanage had identified the need to establish three volunteer groups:

- Community Marine Group
- Waste and Recycling Group
- Community Active Travel Group

Members considered the contents of a proposal received from Sustainable Swanage requesting a contribution from unallocated funds within the 2025/26 environmental budget to facilitate the appointment of a temporary Volunteer Co-ordinator. It was further requested that consideration be given to allocating funds from the 2026/27 budget, to enable the Volunteer Co-ordinator to provide ongoing support to the newly formed groups. The primary responsibility of the Volunteer Co-ordinator would be to identify local stakeholders and establish the three groups, ensuring they are able to function effectively with a defined purpose and governance structure. The Volunteer Co-ordinator would be employed by Planet Purbeck but report to the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager. The temporary contract would be for 14 days in March 2026 to facilitate the establishing of the groups and a further three days in the future to progress the sustainable tourism vision. After a brief discussion, it was proposed by the Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That unallocated funds within the 2025/26 Environmental budget be re-allocated to the contracting of a temporary Volunteer Co-ordinator for 14 days, through Planet Purbeck, to aid in the establishment of the volunteer groups.

It was further agreed that the potential for the volunteer co-ordinator to provide resource for the development of a sustainable tourism vision should be considered by the Tourism and Local Economy Committee.

9) **Swanage Streams Partnership update**

The representative for Planet Purbeck gave a presentation on recent actions which included involvement with several projects in the surrounding area, improving ditches and installing log breaks to help adjust the flow of surface water during periods of heavy rainfall and the speed with which it reaches the water courses. Work to identify opportunities to advise and assist with the implementation of flood management improvements were actively being sought and via engagement with the Environment Agency, Wessex Water and large estate owners in Purbeck.

It was noted that public engagement continued to receive strong support and practical activities had continued with the assistance of volunteers and National Trust staff, including fly monitoring surveys, River Morphology surveys and the establishment of a Storm Photo Patrol group.

An update was also provided on forthcoming activities which included:

- Investigating the possibility of a collaboration with Dorset Wildlife Trust to set up a Water Guardians scheme.
- Working with volunteers to conduct further River Fly surveys in Swan Brook
- Exploring potential opportunities to expand the scope of areas covered by Swanage Streams Partnership to include Durlston Stream.
- Planned walks of Ulwell Stream.

10) **Herston Community Field Engagement – Update from Planet Purbeck**

Further to Minute No. 11 of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 8th October 2025, the representative for Planet Purbeck provided an update on the progress of the Herston Community Field Engagement. Members noted the update provided and considered the contents of a proposal received from Planet Purbeck, detailing the public engagement consultation events planned to be carried out in March and April 2026, with a final report to be submitted by the end of April 2026. The results contained within this report would be presented to the next meeting of the Environment Committee.

After a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To approve the proposed actions as detailed within the Planet Purbeck consultation plan for Herston Community Field, with a final report to be provided to Council by 30th April 2026.

11) **Swanage Greenspace Strategy 2025 - Action plan update**

Further to Minute No. 13 of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 8th October 2025, Members considered a report, produced by the Assets & Compliance Manager detailing the progress to date of the Swanage Greenspace Strategy 2025 Action Plan which included:

- 105 trees obtained from Dorset Wildlife Trust and 43 trees purchased by the Council had been planted, 90 new shrubs had been planted, and hazel hedging has been procured for Godlingston Cemetery.
- The match funding application submitted to Dorset Community Tree Fund towards additional tree, plant and wildlife information boards was successful and the new signage had been installed at Day's Park. Plans were being developed for additional information signage in other greenspace locations.
- Exploring the potential to enter Godlingston Cemetery for consideration for the Cemetery of the Year award.

It was further reported that the Council had launched an initiative to tackle dog waste and litter, one of the most critical issues for residents as identified in the recent public greenspace consultation. Councillors will attend local primary schools to engage children, aged 5-12, to design a poster encouraging people to use the litter bins and pick up dog waste. Some of these designs would be turned into permanent signage that would be placed in local greenspaces. Members considered whether this signage could also be used in residential areas and locations that have a high volume of foot traffic to further increase public awareness.

Members noted the progress to date and the proposed new additions to the Swanage Greenspace Strategy 2025 Action Plan, to develop a nature corridor in Journeys End and to develop a Swanage Town Council Tree Warden scheme.

12) Consideration of proposed seaweed management project

The VSBDM presented a proposal received from Lantern Consulting, a local marine sector consulting company, offering to conduct a free seaweed management project. The project would look at the current seaweed management plan implemented by Swanage Town Council, the costs involved, and would engage with stakeholders and the current contractors carrying out associated activities. In addition to this, the project would explore other methods of seaweed management to identify if a more effective, sustainable and cost-effective approach may be suitable for Swanage. A report of findings would be brought to the next meeting of this committee. After a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Sutton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

To accept the proposal for a free consultation and report of findings, regarding seaweed management and disposal activities undertaken on Swanage beach.

13) Environmental Budgets

Further to Minute No. 14 of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 8th October 2025, the VSBDM provided an update on the Environmental Community Engagement budget approved for the 2025/26 financial period of £20,000. It was reported that the current forecast indicated that £13,650 of the budget would be utilised by the end of the 2025/26 financial period. It was further reported that a budget allocation of £15,000 had been approved for the 2026/27 financial period. This figure included allocations for supporting:

- Sustainable Swanage in the provision of a bi-monthly programme of public information and educational meetings
- Swanage Streams Partnership public engagement activities (subject to project proposal and approval by this committee at a future meeting)
- The implementation of the Council Greenspaces Strategy, Neighbourhood Plan and Environment Action Plan
- Public engagement projects.

Members noted the contents of the report and the forecast spend for the 2025/26 financial year.

14) Waste Management

a) Update on activities from Beach Buddies

An update was provided by the Chairman on behalf of Beach Buddies which reported that in 2025, there have been a total of 50 beach cleans carried out with a total removal of 960kg of litter and debris. It was also reported that in 2026, there have been a total of 9 beach cleans carried out so far with a total removal of 230kg of litter and debris, much of which was brought ashore during the recent storms.

b) Update on activities from Swanage Landers

The Committee offered thanks and recognition to Frank Roberts for his leadership in establishing and sustaining the Swanage Landers which is currently approaching their 10-year anniversary in July 2026. During that time, the Swanage Landers have made a clear and practical contribution to the town by regularly volunteering to clean rubbish from local roads and public areas. The Chairman noted that their work reflects a strong sense of community responsibility and pride, with Frank's commitment playing a key role in their continued success.

The representative of Swanage Landers provided an update on their activities. It was reported that, although they had not formally met for four years, Swanage Landers was re-forming and in 2026, a team of 5 people have already removed a total of 75kg of litter and debris. It is anticipated that towards the end of spring 2026, their road cleaning activities would have covered over 50 miles of the roads in and around Purbeck. Additionally, they had continued to provide encouragement and support to volunteers to conduct activities independently. Some of the heavier work had continued to be carried out using the Mechanical Road Sweeper (MRS) with the support of the Town Council's Operations Department.

c) Dorset Council Waste Services Update

The VSBDM presented an update from Dorset Council Waste Services stating that at present they were still seeking additional cover to provide waste collection services post 2.30pm on weekdays in the summer season. It was further reported that a proposal for Council to procure the services of a Seasonal Waste Operative will be presented to the Personnel Committee on 22nd April 2026. Members noted the information provided in the update and briefly considered potential actions that could be implemented to ensure waste collection for the summer service would be maintained at a sufficient level.

15) Items of information and matters for forthcoming agendas

No matters were raised on this occasion.

16) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting had been provisionally scheduled for 2.15 p.m. on Wednesday 24th July 2026.

The Meeting closed at 3.50 p.m.

Swanage Town Council

Environment Policy Action Plan

Version 15

The draft Environment Policy agreed by Council in March 2020 provided six distinct policy areas (as listed below) and the actions have been categorised under each of these. Swanage Town Council has taken the approach of producing a short action plan with a small number of key actions that can be developed quickly. This is seen very much as an iterative action plan that can grow and develop as we better understand what is required to meet the challenges of the climate crisis. Completed actions are retained at the bottom of the document.

Decisions required

The Committee is asked to consider the various actions below and note progress to date.

Culvin Milmer
Visitor Services and Business Development Manager
June 2026

Swanage Town Council: Environment Policy Action Plan – V15

1. The Town Council's Environment Policy includes the following policy areas

1. **Managing the Town Council in an environmentally sustainable manner:** We shall ensure that sustainability is at the heart of how we manage the Town Council and its functions.
2. **Managing our built environment sustainably:** We are directly responsible for both historic and modern buildings and infrastructure which will be managed sustainably.
3. **Protecting and enhancing the natural environment:** We are directly responsible for a wide range of natural environments and shall work to enhance these and look to support initiatives that enhance other natural areas within the town.
4. **Encouraging, educating and embedding environmental best practice:** We shall work with the community and other stakeholders to encourage environmental best practice.
5. **Protecting local infrastructure:** By working with the community and stakeholders we shall strive to protect and enhance local infrastructure to retain a vibrant and sustainable town.
6. **Supporting Sustainable Tourism:** We shall support the town's tourism economy through the promotion of sustainable tourism.

2. Priority Actions

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	Policy Area
1.	Review the Carbon Neutral target for 2030	Liaise with other authorities to see what they have undertaken. Consider options to achieve target.	Not Known (£25,000 has been put aside each year to support environmental actions)	2030	Tracking our use of carbon	ONGOING – The Councils carbon footprint has reduced from circa 100 tons to just under 40 tonnes in 2025. A report was included in the March 2026 Committee detailing progress against this target. Councillors agreed that a ‘task and finish group’ would meet in September 2026 to consider what more might be done and if the 2030 date remains realistic with a view to take a recommendation to the October 2026 Environment Committee.	Managing our built environment sustainably
2.	Implement the Tree Warden Scheme	Work with the Tree Council to identify what is required.	None	2026	Scheme set up and actions undertaken	COMPLETED – The Tree Warden Scheme is not operational in Swanage.	Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
3.	Implement the Motion for the Ocean Action Plan	Develop the Action Plan and put in place a mechanism to ensure this is delivered.	See Action Plan	See Action Plan	Action Plan approved	ONGOING - Action Plan is approved and is now being implemented. Sustainable Swanage ran an event called ‘Beyond the Sand’ to promote the bio-diversity of the bay. Out of this 9 people have asked to be part of a new local group, operated under Sustainable Swanage, to lead on these issues.	Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
4.	Develop Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy to increase the number of charging facilities in STC car parks.	Consider options and bring a report to Committee.	Not known	2026	Chargers installed.	ONGOING - STC is working with Dorset Council to deliver the Charging Ahead scheme in three car parks in Swanage – various delays have been incurred	Protecting local infrastructure

						although work continues with officers. It is hoped that a final proposal will be presented to the Council in summer 2026.	
5.	Develop a sustainable tourism vision.	Work with stakeholders to develop a vision of what a sustainable destination might mean for Swanage.	£0	Ongoing	Report to Tourism Committee	ONGOING – Work will be undertaken over the next year to establish how the Town Council can develop such a vision. This is also included in the draft Corporate Plan.	Supporting Sustainable Tourism
6.	Promote sustainable transport and walking in and around the town to reduce the need for visitors to use cars.	Look at alternative forms of transport and promote these on website and digital media. Work with Dorset Council and other partners	-	Ongoing	Customer feedback and uptake.	ONGOING – This will be done through the support of PTAG and the current discussions on a Purbeck tourism strategy. In addition the Town Council is currently undertaking a review of and repainting of the heritage pedestrian signs in the town. And Sustainable Swanage held a ‘active travel’ event on 18 June.	Supporting Sustainable Tourism
7.	Implement the Green Spaces Strategy	Volunteers could be used from Sustainable Swanage depending on type of work required.	Not known	tba	tba	ONGOING - Refer to the Action Plan which is included in the 24 th June Committee.	Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

3. Standard Actions

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required	How will we measure this?	Progress to date	Policy Area
8.	Provide climate crisis training for all STC staff and councillors.	External providers.	£2,000	2025-26	All staff and officers trained	ONGOING – An accredited ‘Carbon Literacy’ course was delivered to a majority of staff and Councillors during	Managing the Town Council in an

						the spring of 2025. Those that were unable to take the course during this first round will be offered an online course during the next 12 months.	environmentally sustainable manner
9.	Consider options for reducing water use and harvesting rainwater.	Report detailing water use and proposals to reduce.	Not Known	2025-26	Reduction in water use as measured by water bills	<p>ONGOING - Water use has been reduced significantly with the move away from annual bedding flowers and more drought resistant plants. Engagement with Wessex Water has been undertaken and a survey was undertaken of water use in public toilets in 2025. Unfortunately, this has provided very few options to improve on what is already being done.</p> <p>Water butts are being considered for the TIC and Cemetery to use to water plants.</p> <p>Water use increased during 2025, probably due to the dry summer and the number of visitors using toilets etc</p>	Managing our built environment sustainably
10.	Consider ways to improve the information provision regarding the water quality of the Swanage bathing beach	Engage with the public	Unknown at this stage	Ongoing	Sea users are better informed	<p>ONGOING: A noticeboard providing a daily update to water quality and further information has been installed outside the TIC. The main beach signs have been updated in June 2026 to include additional information about water quality. The Council will continue to run engagement sessions with the public in conjunction with Wessex Water.</p>	Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

11.	Support the Swanage Streams Partnership to improve the water quality of the three streams in the parish.	Work with National Trust and Planet Purbeck, provide funding and support	£6k in 2024-25 ? in 2025-26	Ongoing	Partnership set up and engagement being delivered	The Swanage Streams Partnership was launched in November 2024 to 140 people. Over the year Planet Purbeck will start to deliver a wide range of engagement activities supporting the improvement of the streams. This was highlighted in the Swanage News article on 14 December 2024. A report is submitted to each Environment Committee.	Protecting and enhancing the natural environment
12.	Continue to support Sustainable Swanage and other partners to deliver community based environmental improvements.	Through the implementation of an ‘Environmental Community Engagement Action Plan’	£6,000	Ongoing	Successful projects being delivered through Sustainable Swanage or directly by the Town Council	ONGOING - Costs included in 2026-27 budget. An update will be provided to each Environment Committee.	Encouraging, educating and embedding environmental best practice
13.	Enhance electric facilities on event fields and the market site to eliminate the requirement for fossil fuelled generators.	Report produced detailing costs of upgrades to sites.	Not known	Ongoing	Upgrades undertaken	ONGOING - Further work required for PAG and Sandpit Field – now included in the Green Seafront Scheme.	Supporting Sustainable Tourism

4. Completed actions archive

Completed Actions 2024-25							
1.	Implement energy reduction measures.	Produce report which details various possible measures.	Not known	March 2024	Energy use reduction will be tracked by officers	COMPLETED - LED lights have now been installed across all council buildings. Solar panels have been installed at the depot and garage and will be installed at Beach Gardens Pavilion during October/ November. It is noted that there are	OPS1

						now no more ‘quick wins’ with regards energy reduction measures	
2.	Identify two further sites to be enhanced by Sustainable Swanage	Work with Sustainable Swanage to develop plans	Not known	March 2024	Action Plan developed and work undertaken at sites	COMPLETED - Northbrook Copse and the former St Mark’s Playing Field identified for enhancement. For Northbrook Copse a management plan and enhanced information signage has been produced. For Herston Community Field, the National Trust has been engaged.	OPS1
3.	Work with partners to implement actions identified within the Swanage Green Infrastructure Strategy.	Identify areas within Strategy that can be developed.	Not known	March 2024	Action Plan developed	REMOVE AND REPLACE WITH ACTION BELOW– Need to develop Action Plan for Committee. The Green Infrastructure Strategy is included in the Purbeck Local Plan and will be reviewed during the current preparation of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.	OPS1 / TIC 1
2.	Support businesses in their efforts to be more sustainable	Working with Sustainable Swanage to provide information and support to businesses	None	Ongoing	Positive feedback from businesses.	REMOVE - All new leases between Swanage Town Council and its business partners include a section on environmental considerations. Sustainable Swanage works with businesses to identify effective ways to provide support. With the change of emphasis of Sustainable Swanage, this is no longer a reasonable expectation.	TIC1
3.	Support, where possible, the establishment of a community bus in Swanage.	Review options around a community bus for Swanage	Not yet known	Ongoing	Options exist around improving the route of the Durlston Bus but a community bus serving the whole community could take some time to develop.	REMOVE – This has been the subject of much discussion over the years, but at the current time there does not seem to be a viable solution available. Therefore, this will be removed and subsumed within the ‘sustainable transport’ action below	TIC1
Completed Actions 2023-24							
1.	Review vehicle & equipment needs and where possible move to electric machines.	Equipment asset list to be reviewed and	Not known	March 2023	Review undertaken.	DONE - Officers to produce asset list of machines, including power source, during	OPS1

		options for change considered.				2022/23 and take report to Committee at the end of 2023.	
2.	Develop an environmental monitoring system for the Town Council’s business which includes tracking carbon use.	System to be set up and managed by officers.	None	March 2023	System set up.	DONE: The Council publishes annually usage for the following: gas, electricity, waste tonnages, petrol, diesel, and water.	OPS1
3.	Develop a system to monitor the Council’s waste streams and undertake review.	Identify waste streams and review options for reduction.	Not known	June 2023	Waste tonnages monitored through Management System.	DONE – Linked to 2 above.	OPS1
4.	Reduce the amount of paper documents printed by the Town Council	Review printing volumes and work towards reducing, beginning with introduction of councillor laptops.	Total not known. Budget for Councillor s’ laptops agreed.	June 2023	Monitor through Environment Management System	DONE – Laptops have now been procured and training provided to Councillors. Printed copies of Council reports are no longer issued to Councillors.	TH1
6.	Move to a fully renewable energy contract for the electric supply to the Town Council	Reviewing green options and undertaking a procurement exercise.	-	October 2023	New contract set up.	DONE – Fully renewable energy contract is now in place – Sep 2023.	TH3
2.	Consider options for renewable energy on the Town Council estate.	Undertake research and produce report.	Not known	March 2024	Report produced detailing relevant options.	DONE: Solar Panels are being procured.	OPS1 / TIC1
1.	Review options to reduce or eliminate pesticide/herbicide use.	Current use will be reviewed and alternatives considered.	Not known	March 2023	By monitoring amount used.	DONE - Report provided to February Committee detailing current use and explanation of some available alternatives. Committee agreed to continue current approach and review in the future	OPS1

2.	Reduce quantity of bedding plants and develop more drought resistant plantings.	Planting more drought resistant plants.	Not known	June 2023	Reduction in water use and more hardy plants	DONE - Trial of more drought-resistant plantings is ongoing.	OPS1
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Completed Actions 2022-23

No.	Action	How will we do this	Cost	Date required by	How will we measure this?	Responsible Committee	Progress to date	
1.5	Make climate impact a determinant in all grant giving.	Add section to grant application form.	None	31 st March 2021	Revised application form	Full Council	COMPLETE – Criteria now included within application form.	NIKI
2.1	Undertake an energy audit of all Town Council buildings and identify ways to reduce energy consumption.	Review options to procure a consultancy to undertake this work.	£2,000	31 st March 2021	A report will be produced once complete	Operations	COMPLETE - A report was procured which provided a range of options for the installation of LED bulbs and solar panels across the Council’s estate. This will be incorporated in further work being undertaken by the Council in 2022-23.	CULVIN
3.5	Develop The Downs as a Local Nature Reserve.	Continue to work with Sustainable Swanage to deliver this.	Not yet known	31 st March 2023	Nature Reserve established	Operations	COMPLETE - Customer survey released in January. Sustainable Swanage Open Meeting in early 2021. A Management Plan is complete.	OPS1
5.1	Support a Rights of Way survey to encourage walking in the area	Identify solution and work with partners or other stakeholders	£250	Summer 2021	Survey completed with areas for improvement identified. STC will present findings to Dorset Council for implementation, if necessary	Operations	COMPLETE – Survey complete, Rights of Way Open Meeting on 21 st June 2022 – setting up volunteer hub to undertake grading of ROWs.	TIC1

6.3	All events held on Town Council land to be single use plastic free	No single use plastic will be permitted	£0	Nov 2021	No single use plastic in use	Tourism	COMPLETE - 1 st November 2021 - Full Council confirmed that all events should now be single use plastic free	TIC1
6.5	Enhance the supply of free drinking water solutions across the town	Produce signage for current drinking water taps to make them more obvious and consider if any further are required	Budgeted in 2020-21	31 st March 2021	Signage implemented	Tourism	COMPLETE - Signs have been added to all drinking water taps to make them more visible. A water refill station has been installed on the seafront; part funded by a grant from 'Sea Changers.'	TIC1 / OPS1
6.6	Work with event organisers to ensure that sustainability is embedded into their events	All event applications to detail what positive and negative impacts their events will have on the local environment	£0	Immediate	Event application form updated	Tourism	COMPLETE - All events during 2021 were required to complete an 'Environmental Impact Assessment'. These will be reviewed at year end and a report produced	TIC 1

Swanage Information Centre – Air source heat pump grant application

1. Air source heat pump for Swanage Information Centre

At the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 4th March 2026, it was noted that Swanage Town Council had been awarded two days of free technical advice from Low Carbon Dorset to support the potential installation of an air source heat pump at the Swanage Information Centre. It was suggested that this could reduce the Council's annual carbon footprint by around four tonnes of CO₂.

It should also be noted that the current gas boiler and radiator system within the Swanage Information Centre is experiencing ongoing issues due to the age and condition of the radiators. This has resulted in metal particulates entering the system, which in turn have caused operational issues with the boiler. A magnetic filter has been fitted to help alleviate these issues. The boiler itself is now 10 years old.

2. Low Carbon Dorset advice

Officers met with Low Carbon Dorset, who have advised that the building would be suitable for the installation of an air source heat system and that a grant of up to 50% of the cost would be available. It should be noted that the Council would not be able to apply for any further Low Carbon Dorset grants in 2026/27 should it proceed with this initiative, although it would be eligible to apply again in future financial years.

3. Costs and funding of the system

Budget figures for such a system have been identified as being in the region of £18,000. This includes the removal and installation of new radiators in the building, noting that heat pumps, which run at a lower temperature than gas boilers, often require slightly larger radiators. The heat pump itself would be installed at the rear of the building on a concrete plinth. Costs to install the concrete plinth at the rear of the building would be at an additional cost and would not be part funded by Low Carbon Dorset. Further investigation would be required to assess if this work could be completed in house or if an external contractor would be required.

In addition, given the nature of the Swanage Information Centre, it has been recommended by Low Carbon Dorset that an air curtain is installed above the door due to the challenges of heat escaping the building every time the door is opened. It was noted that this would actually save energy, as it will help to maintain a more balanced temperature downstairs. A quotation for this is being sought, however this would not be subject to grant funding and would be funded from current budgets.

The work to install a heat pump would take circa four to five days to complete and at this stage it is assumed that the Swanage Information Centre would be closed for the works. Ideally therefore the work would be done in a quieter period over autumn/winter 2026/2027. This might be revisited once further installation advice is received from a successful contractor.

With a 50% grant, the cost to the Town Council would be approximately £9,000, plus any additional costs associated with the installation of the concrete plinth and air curtain. It is anticipated that this expenditure would be funded from the Council's Environment and Energy Reserve, to which funds have been allocated in recent years to support the delivery of its carbon neutral ambitions. As at 31st March 2026, the balance of this reserve stood at £92,000.

4. Next Steps

In order to take this project forward, the Council would need to complete an application to Low Carbon Dorset to access the grant funding, following which officers would undertake a competitive procurement exercise. As the value of the works exceeds £10,000, final approval for the award of any contract would be made by the Council.

5. Decision required

To consider authorising officers to submit an application to Low Carbon Dorset for grant funding and, if successful, to undertake a competitive procurement exercise for the installation of an air source heat pump and radiators at the Swanage Information Centre.

Culvin Milmer
Visitor Services and Business Development Manager
June 2026

Town Hall Annex – Heating system replacement

1. Current boilers at the Town Hall

The Town Hall currently operates with three gas boilers, two serving the Town Hall and one serving the annex. The one that operates in the annex is over 13 years old and at the end of life, advice noting that it is very unlikely to last for a further winter. Hot water usage in the annex is low and is provided via point of use electric hot water systems.

2. Options for replacement

Two options exist in terms of replacing the boiler. The first is to replace the system with an air source heat pump and the second is to replace it with a gas boiler.

Air source heat pumps work well with well insulated buildings but tend to be large and relatively noisy for buildings such as the Town Hall. Previous studies requested by the Town Council have suggested that such a system may not be feasible for the Town Hall at the current time. Consideration of insulation and the external space required for such a system will be required. In addition, given the Grade II listed status of the building a range of consents will be required. Officer time required to install a heat pump system, likely alongside the replacement of radiators would be significant and if this route was preferred it is suggested that such works be considered for 2029/30 after the completion of the Green Seafront works. It is very unlikely that the current boiler would continue to operate until this period.

The second option would see the gas boiler replaced by a more efficient gas boiler. Modern boilers tend to be around 20%-30% more efficient than older models. The installation of more appropriate heating controls, which are not possible on the current system given its age would also be possible, again improving efficiency.

Therefore, it is recommended that the current gas boiler in the Annex is replaced with a new more efficient gas boiler.

3. Carbon neutral target

The Town Council retains a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, although this is due to be reviewed in September 2026. While a heat pump system would support this target, a replacement gas boiler would make this target challenging to achieve. However, the Council currently has a ‘green gas’ supply through Ecotricity. At the current time, UK carbon accounting rules do not have any guidelines for the treatment of biomethane gas (green gas) and therefore this is not included in the council’s carbon footprint. It should be noted that in 2025, only 1% of the gas supplied by Ecotricity came from biomethane and the rest from fossil fuels, although there are plans to increase this. Further information can be found here: [Green gas | Ecotricity](#)

4. Costs and funding of the system

The Council's capital budget for 2026/27 contains a sum of £10,000 in respect of the Town Hall annex heating system. A new gas boiler is estimated to cost circa £6,000, this sum including associated works and the installation of more appropriate heating controls. It is anticipated that a proportion of this cost will be recovered from Dorset Police under the terms of the annex lease. The feasibility of installing a combi boiler to deliver hot water as well as heating has also been explored. However, given the low amount of hot water required it is proposed that electric point of use heating of water is retained with a recommendation that the current system serving the upstairs kitchen is replaced due to its age and efficiency. This would be at an additional cost to the boiler. The Council currently purchases all electricity from renewable sources. Some liaison will be required with the Conservation Officer as there will be a requirement to change the location of the flu vent piping and reinstall in a new location. This change is associated with the switch from a floor to a wall mounted boiler and will involve creating a new vent aperture in the rear elevation Purbeck stone wall.

5. Decision required

To consider instructing officers to undertake a competitive tender exercise for the replacement of the current gas boiler at the Town Hall annex, along with improved heating controls and a replacement electric point of use system serving the kitchen.

Culvin Milmer
Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

Gail Percival
Assets and Compliance Manager

June 2026

Dorset Active Travel Plan - Proposed cycle route to Studland

This report recommends that Swanage Town Council supports the creation of a cycle route along Ulwell Road, which is maintained by Dorset Council, as the Highways Authority.

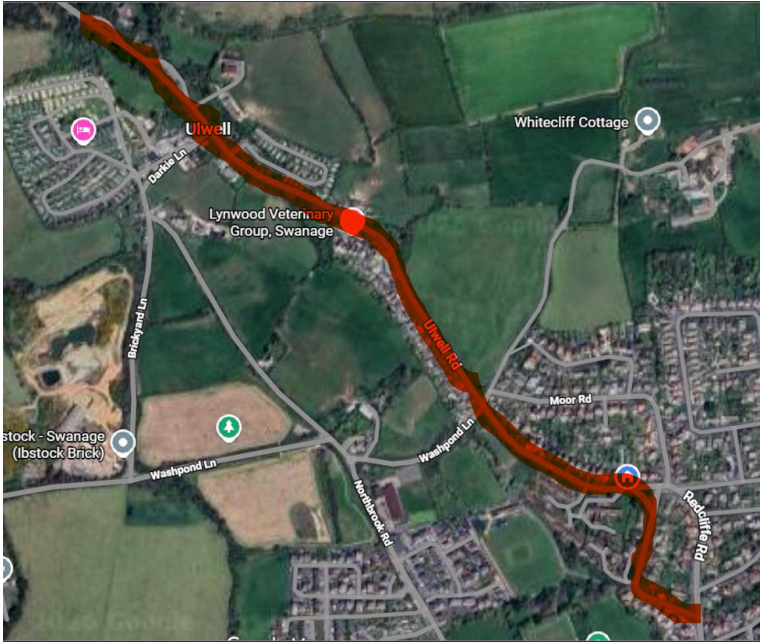
Ulwell Road is a well-used route for cyclists travelling between Swanage, Studland, and onward connections to Poole and Bournemouth via the Sandbanks Ferry. The route is utilised by both local residents and visitors, including families and less experienced cyclists. The carriageway is relatively wide by Swanage standards and there appears to be potential to accommodate dedicated cycling infrastructure.

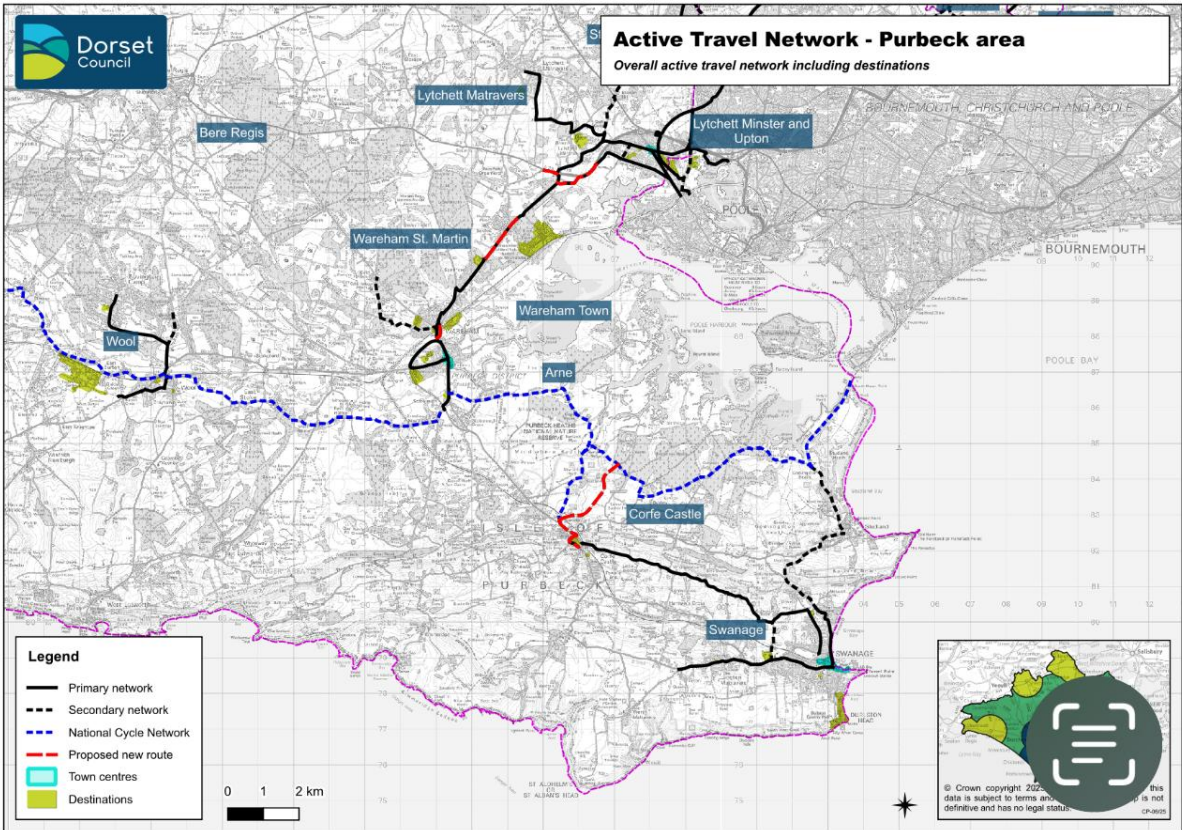
The uphill section of Ulwell Road presents particular challenges. Cyclists typically travel at slower speeds when ascending, which can give rise to safety concerns, particularly where there is a mix of abilities and group cycling. There is evidence that vehicle speeds on this road can exceed the speed limits, notwithstanding the presence of a Speed Indicator Device (SID), thereby increasing the level of risk.

In contrast, the downhill section is less problematic, as cyclists generally travel at higher speeds, resulting in fewer conflicts with motor traffic.

This route has been identified by Dorset Council as part of its Active Travel Strategy ([Dorset Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#) Page 44), recognising its importance as a key link within the wider cycling network. Improved provision could also encourage greater use by visitors, including those staying at local accommodation such as Ulwell Caravan Park. This proposal also links to the Town Council’s Environment Action Plan.

With the proposed Shore Road improvements being undertaken by Dorset Council, there may be an opportunity to explore whether this work could be progressed alongside that project.





Decision required

To consider requesting Dorset Council to investigate the provision of a dedicated uphill cycle lane on Ulwell Road.

Culvin Milmer
Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

June 2026

Sustainable Swanage

Update to the Environment & Green Spaces Committee

March to June 2026

This note summarises Sustainable Swanage activity since the Committee meeting on 5 March 2026.

1. Volunteer Coordinator

Isabel Zanconato (Izzy) joined us on a temporary basis as our paid Volunteer Coordinator. She was contracted through Planet Purbeck and funded from the STC Environment & Green Spaces budget.

Since starting, Izzy has:

- Done the ground work for setting up new volunteer community groups in marine, active transport and recycling (areas identified by the SusSwan steering group as being of particular concern to residents)
- organised and run community meetings for the Marine and Transport groups (with the recycling meeting later this month)

The feedback about her work has been positive and we expect that it will be impactful. We will provide an update on this at the next meeting.

Having secured a full time role she is no longer available to work on SusSwan projects.

2. National Emergency Briefing Film Screening

Izzy also contributed to the NEB event, which was the biggest event we have held.

- We would like to thank the committee members for their contributions to making it a success
- 220 people signed up and 180+ people attended
- 21 people volunteered to help put the event on
- Lloyd Hatton, Nick Ireland, Chris Tomes and Ben Wilson all spoke
- 91 people signed up to the SusSwan mailing list

The top 3 themes in the breakout groups were [1] the need to support the transition to clean energy; [2] protection of the local environment and improving local stewardship and [3] local food and low impact consumption.

3. "Swanage Responds" - NEB Follow-up Session

Building on the momentum of the NEB screening, we are organising a community follow-up session called "Swanage Responds" on 8 July 2026 at Swanage School. The session will help local people translate concern into practical action.

4. Working Groups

Marine Group - Beyond the Sand

The Beyond the Sand group held its first public community meeting on 11 June 2026 at the Focus Centre. The group is exploring ocean health, water quality and what local people and

businesses can do to protect Swanage's marine environment. 9 people have signed up to join the action group, which will meet later this summer.

Travel & Transport Group

The Travel & Transport group held its first public meeting on 18 June 2026 at the Focus Centre, with PTAG's Nick Ward presenting on buses, cycling and sustainable travel across Purbeck.

Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

1. People have been invited to attend the next Repair Café meeting to discuss extending the remit of the work undertaken.
2. The Repair Cafe continues to run regularly with a 63% repair success rate, close to the national average of 66%.
3. Updated local recycling information has been added to the SusSwan website.

5. Communications and Mailing List

We have rebuilt our mailing list on a fully GDPR-compliant basis, with a re-engagement campaign carried out in May and June 2026. Our website has been refreshed with updated content across all working groups, and the June 2026 newsletter has been distributed.

6. Mission Statement

The Steering Group voted to adopt a mission statement at its meeting on 2 June 2026, completing a process of community consultation that had begun earlier in the year.

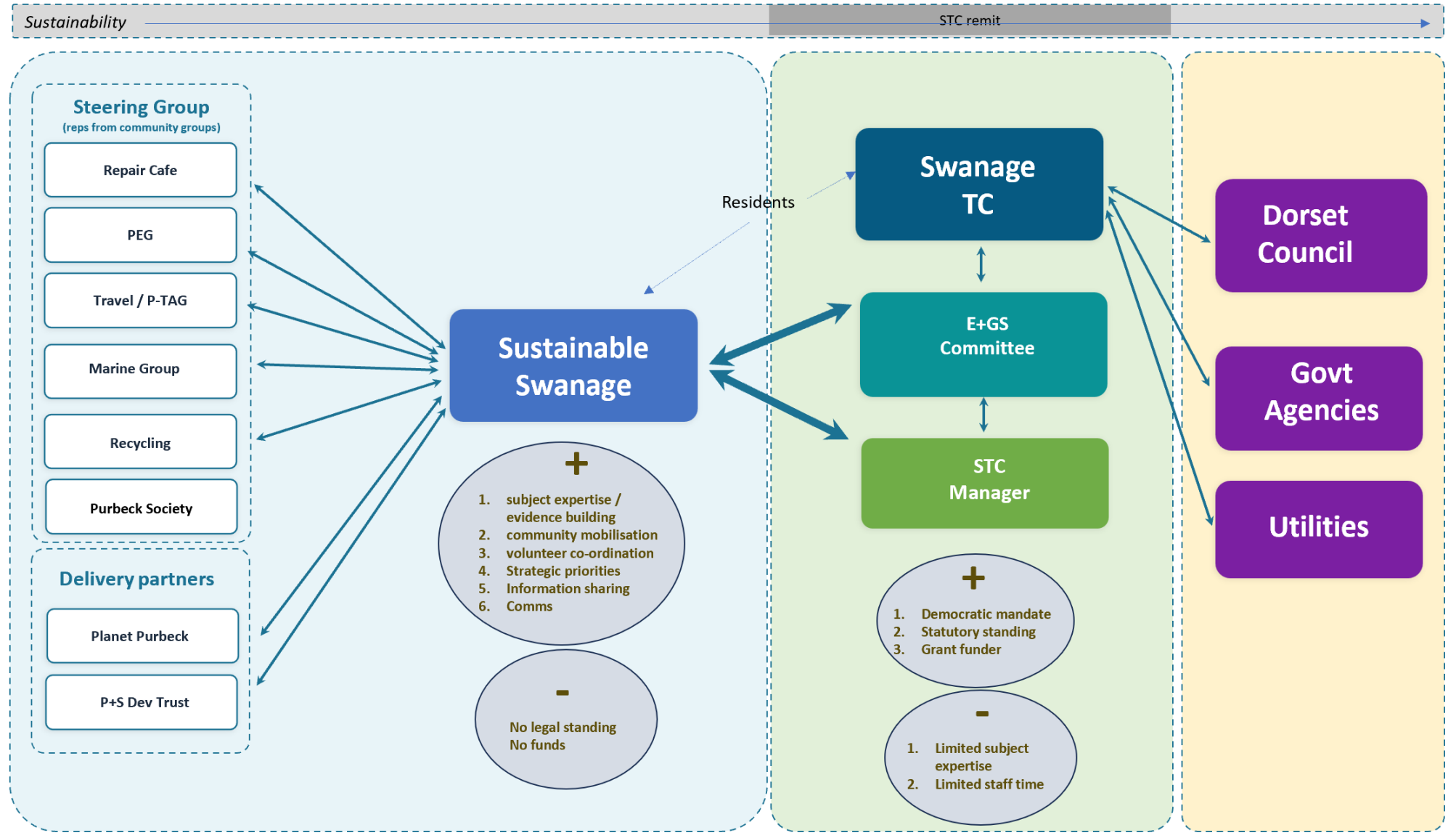


Together, we turn community ideas & energy into action that helps both people & nature thrive

We have also undertaken work to clarify the unique position SusSwan occupies in the local sustainability ecosystem. This highlights the value of group and its activities (see the next page).

7. Staffing

We have had a very productive few months. This has been possible because we were able to employ a volunteer co-ordinator / project officer to help us support the implementation of STCs environmental plan and the concerns of residents. Without this resource, progress will slow, as it did when Sarah Spurling left. So, we would like to discuss potential solutions at the next Committee meeting, including STC funding a part-time role.



Herston Community Field - Community Engagement Report 2026

Planet Purbeck was commissioned by the Town Council to undertake community engagement around the Herston Community Field and to develop a range of potential options for improvement.

The report is attached as Appendix 1.

It is noted that Planet Purbeck have offered two additional pieces of work at no cost to the Council, which are described within the report as follows:

- a. Following the inspiring workshop sessions with Swanage Youth Club, Planet Purbeck would like to commit £1,000 from a youth-focused Dorset Council grant to support a youth-led improvement project at Herston Community Field, subject to the Town Council's permission.
- b. In addition, Planet Purbeck would be willing to contribute three days of coordination time (or equivalent hours) including on-the-day support, to help strengthen the 2027 Herston Community Picnic. This would be fully funded by Planet Purbeck.

In section 16 of the report, Planet Purbeck have suggested the following for the Council to consider:

1. Approving further scoping of the Youth-Led Phoenix Project, especially with £1,000 already offered to kickstart it (as per item a. above)
2. Agreeing whether Planet Purbeck can support the next Herston Community Picnic (as per item b. above)
3. Deciding whether to pursue 'Acorn Actions' only, or explore 'Strong Sapling' & 'Big Oak' options
4. Determining whether a budget should be identified to deliver actions in either 2026/27 or 2027/28
5. Deciding separately whether top access, hard-court review and levelling feasibility should be explored
6. Inviting Planet Purbeck to support the next stage, if appropriate

Decision Required

To consider the attached report and review each of the recommendations set out in Section 16 (points 1-6 above) regarding the Council's approach to implementing a range of improvements at Herston Community Field.

Culvin Milmer
Visitor Services and Business Development Manager
June 2026

Herston Community Field

Community Engagement Report & Suggested Next Steps

Prepared By: Planet Purbeck for STC (Environment Committee)
 Submission Date: 9 June 2026
 Project Date: Spring 2025 - Spring 2026



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1. Opening Summary

Keep the middle open. Make the edges work harder.

Planet Purbeck was commissioned by Swanage Town Council (STC) to carry out community engagement and develop practical improvement suggestions for Herston Community Field (HCF).

The work explored how HCF is currently used, what local people value, what prevents wider use, and what light-touch improvements could support both people and wildlife.

The consultation found that HCF is valued as an open, flexible green space, but is also widely seen as underused, under-promoted and lacking simple reasons for people to visit, stay and return.

The strongest message was not that HCF should become something completely different. It was that HCF should become a better-loved version of itself:

Open in the middle, richer at the edges, easier to enter, more comfortable to spend time in, more alive with community use, and more welcoming to wildlife.

Across the engagement, people repeatedly asked for:

- The open grass space to be retained;
- Better access & clearer welcome signage;
- More seating, bins, shade & basic comfort features;
- Simple play and activity features for children & young people;
- More community events;
- More colour, planting, wildlife features & nature-rich edges;
- Better use or review of the hard-court area;
- Opportunities for young people & local volunteers to help care for the space.

Planet Purbeck also identified a clear opportunity for rapid action.

Following the inspiring workshop sessions with Swanage Youth Club, Planet Purbeck would like to commit £1,000 from a youth-focused Dorset Council grant to support a youth-led improvement project at HCF, subject to STC's permission.

In addition, Planet Purbeck would be willing to contribute three days of coordination time (or equivalent hours) including on-the-day support, to help strengthen the 2027 Herston Community Picnic. Fully funded by Planet Purbeck.

This report therefore does not simply present consultation findings. It does not only ask, "what did people say?" It asks, "what can we do next?"

Welcome to

Herston Community Field

Community Engagement at a Glance

Thank you to everyone who shared their ideas and helped shape the future of Herston Community Field.



OUR ENGAGEMENT REACH		
	2025 Skate Jam community engagement	27 interactions
	2025 Herston Community Picnic conversations	89 interactions
	2026 on-site observation / traffic count sessions	3 sessions
	Herston Fish Bar pop-up engagement	40 interactions
	Swanage Youth Club workshop participants	39 young people
	2026 Herston Community Picnic interactions	61 interactions
	Costcutter pop-up engagement	45 interactions
	Adjacent / nearby resident conversations	15 residents
	Stakeholder conversation strands	6 strands

WHAT PEOPLE VALUE ABOUT HCF

- Open grass
- Trees
- Space
- Peace and relaxation
- Community use
- Nature and wildlife

WHAT PEOPLE SAID NEEDS TO CHANGE

- ✓ Better access & clearer welcome signage
- ✓ More seating, bins, shade & basic comfort
- ✓ Simple play & activity for children & young people
- ✓ More community events
- ✓ More colour, planting & nature-rich edges
- ✓ Review & better use of the hard-court area
- ✓ Opportunities for young people & volunteers to help care for the space

OUR SHARED VISION

Keep the middle open. Make the edges work harder.

- Easier to enter
- More comfortable to stay
- More community use and events
- More nature, colour and wildlife
- Community care and ownership

FROM ACORN TO BIG OAK: A 100 / 200 / 300 DAY PLAN

- 0-100 DAYS ACORN ACTIONS**
Rapid, visible improvements that show we care.
- 100-200 DAYS STRONG SAPLING**
Build structure, comfort and community use.
- 200-300 DAYS BIG OAK AMBITIONS**
Explore larger, longer-term transformation.

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Progress the Youth-Led Phoenix Project (with £1,000 kickstart funding offered)
- ✓ Support the 2027 Herston Community Picnic
- ✓ Decide on the level of ambition: Acorn, Strong Sapling or Big Oak
- ✓ Identify an indicative budget range & constraints
- ✓ Explore top access, hard-court review & levelling feasibility
- ✓ Invite Planet Purbeck to support the next stage

For STC Environment Committee
June 2026



By



2. The Story of Herston Community Field

HCF is not an anonymous patch of grass. It carries decades of local memories.

Known locally as the old St Mark's playing field, the site is associated with school sports days, football, family use, Youth Club activity and everyday Herston life. One respondent recalled a family photograph of themselves taking part in an egg-and-spoon race on the field, while others spoke about years of football and informal play. Councillor Tomes also has a close family connection to the land, adding another human thread to the story of the place.

STC must, of course, consider HCF's future neutrally and in the public interest. However, the consultation shows that the site holds a deeper value than its simple appearance may suggest. It is a place of memory, local identity and future possibility.

The Herston Community Picnic has already given us a glimpse of what HCF can become when activated by community energy. Bringing together local residents, families, Herston Village Hall, Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust, National Trust, local groups and volunteers, it demonstrates that HCF can be more than a passive green space. It can be a gathering place, a wellbeing space and a local celebration space.

The opportunity now is to build on that foundation.

3. Project Background

STC asked Planet Purbeck to undertake community engagement and develop improvement suggestions for HCF.

The original proposal recognised that HCF should remain a multi-use green space, supporting informal sport and ball games, leisure and relaxation, community events, nature connection, local wellbeing and biodiversity improvement.

HCF is held by STC on a 21-year lease from Dorset Council, understood to have started in 2021. This time-limited lease means major investment should be carefully considered, but it also leaves enough years to justify meaningful, proportionate improvement.

Doing nothing would miss an opportunity to strengthen a valued community asset. The consultation therefore points toward a phased approach:

Start small. Show visible care. Build confidence. Keep ambition alive.

4. Ecological Context

Site photos and visual observations are included in Appendix E to show HCF's current character, including the open grass, tree corner, boundary vegetation, exposed fencing and wider visual context.

Planet Purbeck reviewed the preliminary ecological survey for nearby King George's Field and Forres Field, kindly shared by STC. It provides a useful local reference point, but HCF should not be treated as having the same habitat complexity.

King George's Field and Forres Field include modified and neutral grassland, woodland, scrub, wetland, river/stream habitat, tall ruderal vegetation, tree lines, individual trees and a wetland area.

HCF is much simpler: mainly a large grassed amenity space, with a small number of trees in one corner. Three sides have plant life growing through or along the fence line, while the road-facing boundary is an exposed wire fence. There are no wet areas.

The ecological opportunity is therefore not about protecting complex existing habitats. It is about making simple, realistic improvements to a currently low-diversity green space while preserving open, flexible community use.

The clearest opportunities are:

- Edge planting
- Wildflower or longer-grass margins
- Native shrubs and edible hedging
- Bird boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels & hedgehog homes
- Seasonal colour
- Small, safe water features, such as raised bird baths or wildlife water stations
- Tree & shade planting
- Community growing or edible planting in appropriate areas

The guiding ecological principle is simple:

Keep the middle open. Make the edges work harder.

5. Engagement Approach

Planet Purbeck used a mixed engagement approach to understand how HCF is currently used, what local people value, what prevents wider use, and what improvements could support both community use and biodiversity.

Engagement included:

- Hard-copy questionnaire forms
- Online & paper survey-style questions
- Community event conversations
- Youth Club workshops
- Pop-up engagement outside local businesses
- Stakeholder conversations
- Adjacent resident conversations
- Site observation & traffic-count sessions
- Informal conversations with hall users & local groups

This was a community-led qualitative process, not a statistically representative survey. Its purpose was to gather local insight, understand how HCF is experienced by different users and non-users, and identify realistic improvement themes for STC to consider.

Core questions used

Across the engagement process, Planet Purbeck used a consistent set of core questions:

- Do you use the space
- If yes, for what & how often
- If no, why not & what are the barriers
- If improvements are made, what three best features must stay
- What improvements for wildlife & people would you like to see
- What age range, gender & occupation best describe you
- Any other comments, hopes, fears or bright ideas
- Optional email address, only where people were happy to be contacted about their ideas

The format was adapted by context. Youth Club sessions allowed more discussion and creativity. Pop-up sessions were shorter and more conversational. Community events allowed families, children and residents to contribute in a relaxed way.

See Appendix A for the original consultation question set, Appendix B for the engagement activity table, and Appendix C for the hard-copy survey summary, including coded theme counts, demographic spread and selected anonymous quotes.

6. Engagement Reach

The consultation reached a wide range of people, groups and everyday users.

Herston Community Field Engagement Reach

A wide range of people, groups and everyday users shared their views to help shape the future of Herston Community Field.



	2025 Skate Jam community engagement	27 interactions	
	2025 Herston Community Picnic conversations	89 interactions	
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	Herston Fish Bar pop-up engagement	40 interactions	
	Swanage Youth Club workshop participants	39 young people	
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	Costcutter pop-up engagement	45 interactions	
	Adjacent / nearby resident conversations	15 residents	
	Stakeholder conversation strands	6 strands	
	Thank you to everyone who shared their ideas and helped shape the future of Herston Community Field.		

See Appendix B for dates, locations, methods, reach and evidence captured across the engagement activity

Youth Club engagement

The Youth Club engagement took place on 24 April 2026. A total of 39 young people took part, with participants aged approximately 10 to 16, from Year 6 to Year 11. Three Youth Club staff adults were present, plus Planet Purbeck.

Ideas were captured through maps, post-it notes, group discussions and questionnaire forms. The bulk of each session took place in HCF. The young people included primary school pupils from St Mark's, St Mary's and The Swanage Primary School, with secondary school pupils from The Swanage School and The Purbeck School.

Adjacent resident engagement

Planet Purbeck spoke to 15 adjacent residents:

- 5 x Across Leeson Close & Alderbury Close
- 5 x Across Higher Days Road & Marsh Way
- 5 x From Jubilee Road

There was a mix of support for improving HCF. Access was mentioned by the majority of those living to the south or "above" the park, particularly the desire for a gate or improved access from the upper path. Some residents in Marsh Way and Jubilee Road raised concerns about groups of older teens / young adults gathering to smoke and drink.

This should be balanced with police feedback. Planet Purbeck spoke to the police on Thursday 23 April and again in person on Friday 24 April (they called in at the Youth Club following our conversation the day before). While the police occasionally drive by the area during routine visits in Swanage, they do not currently deem HCF a priority area or a specific concern for antisocial behaviour.

Event engagement

At the 2025 Herston Community Picnic, Planet Purbeck recorded 89 interactions, including 54 with local residents and 35 with people visiting Swanage, a 60 / 40 split.

At the 2026 Herston Community Picnic, Planet Purbeck recorded 61 interactions. Approximately 75% were with local residents, equivalent to around 46 local resident interactions and 15 visitor interactions.

This shows a shift toward stronger local engagement in 2026, while still capturing views from visitors.

Pop-up engagement

Outside Herston Fish Bar, Planet Purbeck recorded 40 interactions in just over 90 minutes, showing strong engagement in a short informal session.

Outside Costcutter at 208 High Street, Planet Purbeck held two 60 to 90 minute sessions. Engagement averaged approximately 15 interactions per hour, equating to around 45 interactions in total.

These pop-up sessions helped reach people who had not attended the other events noted.

7. What People Value About HCF

The strongest “keep” themes were clear.

People value:

- Open grass
- Trees
- Space
- Quietness
- Views
- Community event potential
- Children’s freedom to run, play & use bikes
- Safe enclosed character
- Link to Herston Village Hall
- History as the old St Mark’s playing field

Several respondents specifically asked that the large open green space be retained. People repeatedly said improvements should not cover the field in tarmac, remove its natural feel, or overfill it with equipment.

The message is simple:

Make it better, but do not take away what makes it valuable.

8. What People Said Needs to Change

Although HCF is valued, many people described it as underused, under-promoted or lacking things to do.

Recurring comments included:

- "There's simply nothing here."
- "It's green, but it's not very alive."
- "We didn't know this space was here."
- "People don't know that they can come into this park."
- "The place is okay because it looks green, but actually there's nothing really here."
- "We do not want to lose this space."
- "We'd love to see more people love this place."

The consultation suggests HCF is not disliked. It is under-inviting.

People can imagine using it more, staying longer and bringing children, friends or groups if small improvements can make it feel more welcoming, purposeful, comfortable and alive.

9. Key Findings

The findings below are drawn from the full engagement process, including event conversations, pop-up engagement, the Youth Club workshops, adjacent resident conversations, stakeholder input, site observations and the coded hard-copy survey themes summarised in Appendix C.

Several of these findings are supported by site photos and visual observations in Appendix E, particularly in relation to access, boundary, the slope, and the scorched picnic area.

Finding 1: HCF should remain open & flexible

The open grass is one of HCF's greatest strengths. People want space for:

- Running
- Football
- Ball games
- Frisbee
- Picnics
- Community events
- Informal play
- Family gatherings
- Safe bike practice for younger children

The central field should remain open, flexible and uncluttered, with improvements avoiding loss of space for informal play and events.

Finding 2: The edges are the biggest opportunity

The strongest design opportunity is around HCF's boundaries, corners and underused edges. People suggested:

- Wildflower strips
- Shrubs & bushes
- Edible hedging
- Fruit trees
- Herbs
- Seasonal flowers
- Wildlife strips
- Mini nature areas
- Bird boxes
- Bat boxes
- Bug hotels
- Hedgehog homes
- Tree trunk seating to define nature zones
- Planting outside the fence to avoid conflict with ball games

This strongly supports the principle:

Keep the middle open. Make the edges work harder.

Finding 3: Access & welcome are major barriers

A repeated theme was that people do not know HCF is public, or do not feel invited in.

Comments included:

- "We thought it was private"
- "You can't tell from the end of the road that this is an open space"
- "It needs a welcome sign at the end of the road"
- "We walk around it, whereas we would enjoy walking through it if there was a gate"

The strongest access issue is the desire for a gate or improved access from the upper path / Marsh Way side.

At the 2026 Herston Community Picnic, one discussion involving 17 people showed strong support for improved "top access", with 15 in favour and 2 against. Concerns focused on dog cut-through use and child supervision. Supporters felt better access would increase legitimate use, connect more residents with HCF and make the space feel more cared for.

A top gate is understood to be technically possible, but STC is believed to have practical concerns. This should be treated as a clear feasibility issue.

Finding 4: Seating, shade, bins & water matter

Many people asked for simple comfort features:

- More benches
- Picnic tables
- Seating in shaded areas
- Seating at the top of the field for the view
- Seating around nature areas
- Bins
- Drinking water, such as a timed push tap / water fountain
- Shade for toddlers & families, such as a shelter or seasonal sail

These are not glamorous interventions, but they are central to making HCF usable. If people cannot sit, shelter, dispose of rubbish, drink water or spend time comfortably, they are less likely to stay.

Finding 5: Young people want HCF to feel like their space too

Youth Club feedback was one of the strongest parts of the consultation. Young people asked for:

- Football space to be kept & improved into a more level central playing area
- Seating
- Bins
- Drinking water
- Shelter
- Swings / rope swings / obstacle courses / In-ground trampolines
- Skate ramps or activity in the hardstanding area
- Wildlife strips
- Bird boxes & bug houses
- Edible planting
- Signage they could help design
- Art, sculptures or a graffiti wall
- More colour & life

They also explained why outdoor spaces matter: young people spend so much time online or on screens, and need safe places to meet friends, build confidence and develop social skills.

With a new Youth Club intake each year, children born in 2032 could join aged 10 in 2042, the final year of the current STC lease. Planet Purbeck believes this makes a strong case for investment of some scale.

See Appendix D for the Youth Club workshop summary and quote bank.

Finding 6: The hard-court area needs review

The hard-court / basketball area was raised repeatedly. Some people described it as locked, unused or disconnected from HCF. Young people and adults both questioned why it could not be better used.

Local reporting has described the old school playground as a previously popular basketball court for Herston Youth Club. The hard-court area is understood to be part of the same lease area.

This does not mean STC should immediately commit to resurfacing or reopening it. However, the consultation strongly suggests it should be reviewed as part of the wider HCF opportunity.

Finding 7: The slope is a barrier, but also an opportunity

Several respondents, especially young people, identified the slope as a barrier to football, running, events and safe play.

Ideas included:

- Levelling the central space
- Creating a better playing area
- Using landscaped grass banks as informal seating
- Creating an amphitheatre-style event space
- Maintaining the open centre while defining wildlife edges

This is ambitious and would need proper technical assessment, but it could be transformative. A level central activity lawn with grass banks on three sides could support football, picnics, outdoor classes, performances, community events and informal gathering, while defining the people-focused centre and nature-focused edges.

Finding 8: Community growing is a light-touch opportunity

Food, flowers and growing came up repeatedly. Ideas included:

- Herbs
- Fruit & Nut trees e.g. apples & hazelnuts
- Raspberries / Blackcurrants
- Edible hedges
- Pumpkins
- Community growing beds including more inclusive/accessible raised beds
- Flowers around the edges
- Growing food as an education piece for young people

With Greengage Community Garden offering plants and advice, and Planet Purbeck supporting community growing work in Langton, there is clear potential for learning, volunteer support and partnership knowledge to be shared.

HCF should not become a formal allotment site. However, a small, well-supported growing or nature-learning feature could add colour, biodiversity, food education, intergenerational volunteering and community care. The scale would be for STC and the community to define.

Finding 9: Dogs are a mixed issue

Dogs are currently not allowed on HCF.

Feedback was mixed. Some respondents would use HCF more if controlled dog access or a dog pen were provided. Others asked for larger no-dogs signs and valued the space being dog-free.

This should be treated as a policy decision for STC, not as a straightforward recommendation from Planet Purbeck.

Finding 10: HCF needs visible care

The fire damage to the picnic bench area created a scorched and unsightly patch within the field.

Rather than leaving the space looking neglected, a swiftly implemented youth-led “Phoenix Project” could turn the damaged area into a visible symbol of renewal.

A small act of repair could become a visible act of care.

10. Stakeholder Feedback

Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust

Planet Purbeck engaged with Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust, including CEO Ali Tuckey and informal conversations with trustees.

The Development Trust was keen to see HCF better connected to Herston Village Hall and the groups and events that already bring people together in Herston.

A key theme was multi-generational appeal. Improvements should support children, young people, families, older residents, community groups and people with different access needs.

Accessibility was discussed broadly, including mobility and sensory accessibility. This supports quieter areas, sensory planting, seating, shade, clear routes and spaces that feel welcoming to people with different needs.

With Ali Tuckey's conservation background in mind, there was also support for biodiversity improvements. This could be achieved by allowing selected areas of HCF to become wilder, supported by appropriate planting and management, without losing the field's open community function.

Herston Village Hall & Community Pantry

Hall users were spoken to directly. Community Pantry organisers were interested in linking activities inside the hall more closely with HCF, especially if a small-scale growing project became possible.

This supports the idea of HCF as an extension of Herston's community infrastructure, not just a separate green space.

Seahorses Toddler Group

Considerations with Swanage Seahorses Toddler Group in mind highlighted the value of:

- Shade from the sun
- Muddy play
- A large sandpit
- A water fountain or push tap for drinking water & hand washing

Small, practical changes could make HCF more usable for families with very young children without requiring major redesign.

11. Planet Purbeck's Proposed Commitments

Planet Purbeck does not want this report to be static. We want it to help create momentum.

Subject to STC's permission and agreement, Planet Purbeck is willing to offer two practical commitments.

11.1 The Phoenix Project: a youth-led £1,000 quick win

One of the strongest parts of the HCF consultation was the engagement with Swanage Youth Club.

Young people responded with energy, imagination and care. Their ideas ranged from practical improvements such as bins, seating, shelter, football space and water, through to wildlife areas, edible planting, bird boxes, bug hotels, signage, art and opportunities to help look after the field.

Planet Purbeck was so encouraged by this feedback that we would like to offer a practical next step.

Subject to STC's permission, Planet Purbeck would like to commit £1,000 from a youth-focused grant recently secured from Dorset Council to support a youth-led improvement project at HCF this summer.

The purpose would be to work with Swanage Youth Club to identify a realistic, permissible and high-impact improvement that enhances HCF for both people and wildlife.

This could become a Phoenix Project: a youth-led quick win where something beautiful, useful and nature-positive rises from an unfortunate incident.

The project would be developed with young people and brought back to STC for approval before any spending or installation takes place.

Possible ideas could include:

- Youth-designed welcome signage
- Wildlife homes
- Bird boxes or bug hotels
- Planting
- Edible growing
- Natural seating
- A small nature / welcome zone
- A creative feature that adds colour, life & care to the space

This would show young people that their ideas have been heard, build momentum following the consultation, and send a clear message to the wider community:

HCF is loved, cared for and worth investing in.

See Appendix D for Youth Club evidence. Photos of the scorched picnic bench area are included in Appendix E and show why this location could provide a visible and symbolic starting point for the Youth-Led Phoenix Project.

11.2 Support for the Herston May Day / Community Picnic

The Herston Community Picnic is already a proven community event.

In place since 2023, it has been supported by partners including Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust, Herston Village Hall committee, National Trust and Planet Purbeck.

Planet Purbeck would be willing to commit three days of coordination time, or equivalent hours including on-the-day support, to help strengthen the 2027 Herston May Day / Community Picnic. Funded by Planet Purbeck.

The aim would be to work with existing stakeholders to elevate the event, strengthen participation, and help HCF become more treasured through regular positive use.

The picnics already prove that HCF can come alive. The opportunity is to make that happen more intentionally, more often, and with wider community benefit.

12. Suggested Proposals: Acorn, Strong Sapling & Big Oak

The consultation produced many ideas, from simple quick wins to ambitious long-term improvements.

Planet Purbeck believes the right response is not to reduce aspiration, but to phase it carefully.

While we would not want to rule out larger investment, HCF does not need an expensive redesign to become more loved, useful and nature-rich. It needs practical steps that build confidence, demonstrate care, and allow the community to see progress.

Each list is ordered as a practical journey: start with decisions and momentum, move into visible improvements, then progress toward actions needing more planning, budget or feasibility work.

We therefore suggest grouping possible actions into three tiers.

Acorn Actions

Low-cost, low-complexity quick wins that could be started rapidly and show visible care for the space. Possible Acorn Actions include:

- Agree & launch the Youth-Led Phoenix Project, with £1,000 already secured by Planet Purbeck
- Agree PP support for the next Herston Community Picnic
- Remove, repair or transform the scorched picnic bench area
- Install clearer entrance signage or youth-designed temporary welcome / wildlife signage
- Explore bin provision & management
- Install bird boxes, bug hotels or hedgehog homes
- Trial small wildlife planting
- Identify edge zones for planting or wildlife buffer
- Start a volunteer interest list for HCF care

Indicative budget range: £1,500–£5,000

This figure is indicative only and would require scoping, permission and agreement.

Strong Sapling Steps

Medium-scale improvements requiring more planning, budget, permissions or partnership working. Possible Strong Sapling Steps include:

- Improve entrance signage & road / path approach signage
- Install improved seating or picnic benches
- Add natural log seating to define nature zones
- Create a nature-rich edge zone or wild buffer
- Trial edible planting, herbs or a small fruit feature
- Review maintenance arrangements for planting
- Explore a simple perimeter walking route
- Assess seasonal shade or shelter options
- Explore safe water features such as raised bird baths or wildlife water stations
- Create a simple HCF events calendar with Herston Village Hall, Youth Club & SPDT
- Clarify dog policy & signage
- Explore top gate / upper path access improvements

Indicative budget range: £5,000–£25,000

This figure is indicative only and would require scoping, permission and quotes.

Big Oak Ambitions

Larger, longer-term ideas requiring feasibility work, external funding or serious STC commitment.

Possible Big Oak Ambitions include:

- Commission design / costing work for a larger scheme
- Build an external funding case using the consultation evidence
- Create a level central activity lawn
- Develop grass banks / amphitheatre-style seating
- Create a natural play or activity trail
- Develop fuller community growing, orchard or edible hedge features
- Review & potentially activate the hard-court / basketball area
- Explore resurfacing of the hard-court area
- Review or replace fencing where needed
- Explore hardstanding-area youth activity, such as removable ramps

Indicative budget range: £25,000+

This figure is indicative only and would require formal quotes, technical assessment and budget decisions. Please see Appendix F for expanded indicative budget scenarios and caveats.

13. Indicative Notes on Larger Cost Areas

Hard-court surface & fencing

Planet Purbeck has not seen any quotes STC may already hold for resurfacing the hard-court area or replacing fencing. Any figures included here are therefore indicative placeholders only and should not be treated as formal cost estimates.

The consultation suggests the hard-court area is seen by many people as an underused opportunity. However, before any proposal could be developed, STC would need to consider:

- Ownership & lease details
- Current condition / Maintenance
- Surface specification / Fencing requirements
- Access e.g. supervision requirements
- Safety e.g. lighting
- Insurance
- Likely cost of upgrades / Potential funding routes

This should be treated as a Big Oak Ambition unless STC already has existing plans or quotes.

Levelling works

Several consultation responses identified the slope of HCF as a barrier to informal ball games, community events and wider use of the field. Young people repeatedly asked for the central grass area to be made more usable for football, while some residents suggested that a level area could also support picnics, performances, gatherings and community events.

Planet Purbeck has not seen or investigated any technical surveys, ground-level data, drainage information, engineering advice or quotes that STC may already hold in relation to levelling works. Any figures or concepts included here are therefore indicative placeholders only and should not be treated as formal cost estimates.

Based on visual assessment only, one possible longer-term option could be to explore a level central activity lawn within the existing field. There was no suggestion to level the whole site.

These works could potentially provide a more usable surface for:

- Informal ball games
- Children's play
- Picnics
- Outdoor classes
- Performances
- Community events
- Informal gathering

If designed carefully, earthworks could also create grass banks on three sides, forming informal amphitheatre-style seating. This would give HCF a clearer community centrepiece while naturally defining the open, human-focused central space from the more wildlife-friendly edges.

Such an approach would support the guiding principle:

Keep the middle open. Make the edges work harder.

Before any levelling proposal could progress, STC would need to consider:

- Topographical survey requirements
- Drainage implications
- Cut-and-fill requirements
- Whether soil could be reused on site or would need removing
- Safety of any slopes or grass banks created
- Accessibility & maintenance implications
- Impact on existing trees, roots & boundary vegetation
- Suitability for informal sport & events
- Likely cost, including design, machinery, labour, turfing, drainage & aftercare
- Whether the remaining lease length, and any aspiration to extend it, justifies the investment

Planet Purbeck recognises that any levelling works would need to be properly specified, costed and project managed to STC's satisfaction.

However, there may be potential for significant community support if this option is explored further. During the consultation, several people expressed a strong desire to improve the central playing area, and some indicated that local skills, plant machinery and practical support may be available.

Subject to proper oversight, specifications, insurance, safety requirements and STC approval, Planet Purbeck would be willing to explore whether community-backed delivery could reduce costs or increase value. This could include skilled local contractors, access to plant machinery, discounted labour, volunteer support for non-specialist tasks, fundraising or sponsorship.

This should be treated as a Big Oak Ambition: potentially high-impact, but requiring proper scoping, technical advice and budget consideration.

See Appendix F for wider indicative budget scenarios

14. Water Supply & Volunteer Stewardship

If planting, edible growing or nature-focused areas are incorporated into HCF enhancements, Planet Purbeck would seek to support two practical next steps.

14.1 Water Supply

We would explore with Wessex Water whether a limited water supply could be provided by them as a community project, potentially through a push-tap or similar controlled-use arrangement. This would need to be assessed for practicality, cost, permissions, safety and long-term responsibility.

14.2 Volunteer Group

Planet Purbeck would seek to help establish a light-touch volunteer group to support the care, watering and stewardship of any planting or nature-focused areas.

This would be essential to ensure that improvements remain manageable for STC and do not create unrealistic maintenance expectations.

This approach would allow HCF to benefit from more colour, biodiversity and community growing, while building the sense of local ownership and stewardship by keeping ongoing care practical.

15. From Acorn to Big Oak: A 100 / 200 / 300 Day Plan

First 100 days: Acorn Actions

Rapid, visible, low-cost signs of care.

Suggested actions:

- Agree scope, permissions & STC parameters for the Youth-Led Phoenix Project
- Confirm whether the scorched picnic bench area can become the first renewal site
- Run a youth co-design session with Swanage Youth Club
- Develop a short youth-led project proposal for STC approval
- Review immediate signage improvements
- Explore bin provision & management
- Identify quick wildlife features, such as bird boxes, bug hotels, hedgehog homes & small planting
- Install or plan improved seating, picnic benches or log seating
- Agree Planet Purbeck's three-day support role for the next Herston Community Picnic
- Identify volunteer interest for light-touch care
- Confirm whether top-gate feasibility can be formally reviewed
- Agree whether STC wishes to pursue Acorn, Strong Sapling or Big Oak options

First 200 days: Strong Sapling Steps

Build structure, comfort & community use.

Suggested actions:

- Develop outline layouts for edge zones, seating, planting & community use
- Improve welcome signage & road / path approach signage
- Create a first nature-rich edge zone or wild buffer
- Trial edible planting, herbs, fruit trees or seasonal flowers
- Explore a simple perimeter walking route
- Explore safe water feature options
- Explore water supply options with Wessex Water
- Create a simple events calendar with Herston Village Hall, Youth Club, SPDT & other partners
- Review hard-court options & constraints
- Clarify dog policy & signage
- Identify potential external funding sources

First 300 days: Big Oak Ambitions

Explore larger, longer-term transformation.

Suggested actions:

- Explore upper-path / top-gate access options
- Commission or obtain topographical / feasibility advice for levelling options
- Explore whether grass banks / amphitheatre seating are feasible
- Consider natural play / activity trail options
- Develop a fuller community growing, orchard or edible hedge proposal
- Consider safe lighting options for organised youth or event use
- Review hard-court resurfacing & fencing requirements
- Develop a larger funding proposal if STC wants to pursue more ambitious improvements
- Confirm delivery roles for STC, Planet Purbeck & other partners
- Create a clear phased implementation plan

16. Recommended Next Decision for STC

Planet Purbeck recommends that STC does not treat this report as a choice between “do nothing” and “do everything”.

The consultation produced a wide range of ideas. Some are simple, some ambitious, some need testing, and some may prove unsuitable or unaffordable. Together, they show a clear community desire for HCF to be more loved, useful, accessible and nature-rich.

The next decision for STC is therefore:

What level of ambition does STC want to pursue for HCF, and over what timeframe?

Planet Purbeck suggests that STC considers:

- Approving further scoping of the Youth-Led Phoenix Project, especially with £1,000 already offered to kickstart it
- Agreeing whether PP can support the next Herston Community Picnic
- Deciding whether to pursue Acorn Actions only, or explore Strong Sapling & Big Oak options
- Identifying an indicative budget range
- Confirming any non-negotiable constraints
- Deciding separately whether top access, hard-court review & levelling feasibility should be explored
- Inviting Planet Purbeck to support the next stage, if appropriate

17. Conclusion

HCF is a simple space, but not a small opportunity.

It is a former school field, a community picnic site, a Youth Club space, a safe place for children to run, a quiet green pause for nearby residents, and a field with views, trees and memories.

At present, it is also underused, under-promoted and not yet reaching its potential.

The consultation suggests that HCF does not need to become something else. It needs to become a better version of itself.

The community has shown what that could mean:

- Keep the open heart
- Welcome people in
- Make the edges richer for wildlife & nature
- Add colour, seating, shade & care
- Give young people a stake
- Connect the field to the hall
- Bring the picnic & community life into the space more often
- Explore bigger ambitions carefully

Based on this small-scale consultation process, Planet Purbeck believes HCF can become a more treasured community field: practical, playful, peaceful, nature-rich and genuinely useful.

The first step does not need to be huge.

An acorn is enough.

But it needs planting!

18. Appendices

Appendix A: Original consultation questions

Appendix B: Engagement activity table

Appendix C: Hard-copy survey summary

Appendix D: Youth Club workshop summary

Appendix E: Site photos & visual observations

Appendix F: Indicative budget scenarios

Appendix A: Original consultation questions

The survey form / question set used across our engagement.

ENHANCING SWANAGE'S GREENSPACES
Share your views with Swanage Town Council
How can the following spaces be improved for wildlife AND people?

Which area/s are you commenting on? Please tick
 King George's & Forres Field Herston Community Field Both
*If you've ticked 'Both' - Noting **KGF** or **HCF** against specific comments will be really helpful*

1. Do you use the space?
 YES - Move to 2a NO - Move to 2b

2a. If YES: For what & how often?

2b. If NO: Why not - what are the barriers?

3. If improvements are made - What THREE 'best features' MUST stay?

4. What improvements for wildlife & people would you like to see?
Think about wellbeing, community use, beautiful spaces for the park's wild residents + us humans who visit! Go for it...

A bit about you: This simply helps us demonstrate we've spoken to a wide audience

5. Age
 Under 12 12 - 17 18 - 24 25 - 39 40 - 54 55 - 69 70+

6. Gender
 Female Male Non-binary Prefer not to say

7. Occupation

8. Do you have any other comments, hopes, fears or bright ideas to share?

9. Email address
Entirely optional as this survey is confidential. It's just in case we (*Planet Purbeck*) wish to follow up on your great ideas!
>

Appendix B: Engagement activity table

Date / period	Location	Method	Reach	Evidence captured
12 April 2025	Skate Jam / youth activity setting	Community engagement with young people / local users	27 interactions	Early views on use of local outdoor space, youth activity, play, access and improvement ideas
5 May 2025	Herston Community Picnic, HCF & Herston Vi	Informal event conversations	89 interactions	54 local resident conversations and 35 visitor conversations, capturing early views on community use, barriers, events, play, wildlife and access
6 April 2026	HCF	On-site observation / traffic count, 2pm to 6pm	1 session	Chilly spring day. One group of four young people using bikes, estimated ages 12 to 14
10 April 2026	Outside Herston Fish Bar	Pop-up street engagement	40 interactions	High-volume informal feedback over just over 90 minutes, including views from local residents and passers-by
24 April 2026	Swanage Youth Club & HCF	Youth workshops, maps, post-it notes, group discussion and questionnaire forms	39 young people	Ideas from young people aged approximately 10 to 15 across two age brackets, including pupils from St Mark's, St Mary's, The Swanage Primary School, The Swanage School and The Purbeck School
26 April 2026	HCF	On-site observation / traffic count, 10am to 3pm	1 session	Dry and mild spring day. 11 users observed, including two families meeting as a group of 8 and a separate group of three young adults
2 May 2026	HCF	On-site observation / traffic count, 11am to 4pm	1 session	Pleasant, dry day with sunshine, scattered clouds and light to medium breeze. No users observed during the session
4 May 2026	Herston Community Picnic, HCF & Herston Village Hall	Informal event conversations, consultation questions and community discussion	61 interactions	Approximately 75% local resident interactions. Strong feedback on access, top gate, planting, wildlife, community events, colour, seating, water and making HCF more used
24 May 2026	Outside Costcutter, 208 High Street	Pop-up street engagement	21 interactions	Local shopper and resident feedback gathered through short informal conversations
7 June 2026	Outside Costcutter, 208 High Street	Pop-up street engagement	24 interactions	Second Costcutter session, contributing to 45 total interactions across both sessions
Spring 2026	Leeson Close, Alderbury Close, Higher Days Road, Marsh Way and Jubilee Road	Adjacent / nearby resident conversations	15 residents	Views from residents closest to HCF, including support for improvement, interest in top access and concerns about perceived antisocial behaviour
Spring 2026	Herston Village Hall, Community Pantry and local stakeholder settings	Stakeholder conversations	6 strands	Feedback from Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust, Herston Village Hall committee, Community Pantry, Seahorses Toddler Group and related stakeholders

Appendix C: Hard-copy survey summary

This appendix summarises the hard-copy questionnaire responses gathered during the HCF engagement process.

These forms should be understood as part of the wider consultation evidence, not as additional engagement reach. Many were completed during the engagement sessions already counted elsewhere in this report.

A total of 75 **hard-copy forms** were reviewed and coded for recurring themes. Responses were coded by topic, meaning one form may appear under several themes. The figures below are therefore **indicative theme counts**, not single-choice votes.

C1. Indicative theme counts

Theme	Indicative count	What this included
Play, activity & things for children to do	46	Play equipment, obstacle courses, swings, slides, trampolines, natural play, bike use
Planting, flowers, trees & biodiversity	42	Wildflowers, trees, shrubs, wildlife areas, bird boxes, bug hotels, hedgehog homes
Seating, tables & places to stay	31	Benches, picnic tables, seating by trees, seating with views, quiet seating
Community events & social use	18	Picnics, gatherings, more events, hall-linked activity, local celebrations
Growing, food & edible planting	18	Herbs, fruit trees, edible hedges, community growing, raised beds
Access, welcome & signage	16	Better signs, clearer entrance, top gate, upper path access, people not knowing HCF is public
Water, ponds or wildlife water features	15	Raised pond ideas, bird baths, wildlife water points, drinking water
Dogs / dog policy	11	Requests for dog access or dog pen, alongside requests for clearer no-dog signage
Bins, rubbish & basic care	9	Bin requests, less rubbish, keeping the space cleaner
Hard-court / basketball area	7	Requests to review, reopen or improve the hardstanding / basketball court
Paths, walking & accessibility	7	Perimeter path, accessible routes, safe short walks for older residents
Levelling / better playing surface	7	Making the central space more usable for football, ball games & events

C2. Demographic spread

Across the 75 hard-copy responses reviewed we gathered data for 97 respondents because some forms were completed on behalf of more than one person or household member. The hard-copy responses included a broad spread of ages, from children under 12 through to residents aged 70 plus.

The strongest representation came from adults aged **25 to 54** (52.6%), with additional responses from young people, older residents and retired residents.

Age ranges recorded:

Age range	Count	%	Representation in responses
Under 12	16	16.5%	Several responses, often linked to Brownies, family use or children's play
12 to 17	2	2.1%	Youth responses, including Youth Club-linked use
18 to 24	9	9.3%	Young adult responses, including non-users and dog-related comments
25 to 39	22	22.7%	Parents, working adults and family users
40 to 54	29	29.9%	Strong representation from parents, local residents and working adults
55 to 69	15	15.5%	Retired residents, local stakeholders and regular / occasional users
70+	4	4.1%	Older residents, including comments on seating, quiet use and fears about losing the space

Gender responses included female, male and prefer not to say. Female respondents were the largest group (62%), but the forms included a mix of genders and some family / group responses.

Occupations and roles recorded included students, parents and homemakers, retired teachers, nurses and NHS staff, an artist, a gardener, carers, a therapist, a local business owner, finance workers, a hall committee member and a community nurse.

This spread suggests the hard-copy responses captured views from children, young people, parents, older residents, nearby residents, local workers, community volunteers and occasional users.

C3. What people most wanted to keep

The strongest “keep” themes were:

- Open grass
- Trees
- Space for running, play & ball games
- Community events
- Quietness
- Seating where it already exists
- Safe enclosed character
- Link to Herston Village Hall
- History as the old St Mark’s playing field

A clear message emerged: people want HCF improved, but not overfilled or overdesigned.

C4. What people most wanted to change

The strongest change themes were:

- More for children & young people to do
- Better seating & picnic provision
- More colour, planting & wildlife
- Clearer welcome signage
- Better access, especially from the upper path
- More events & community use
- Small-scale growing or edible planting
- Safe water features or drinking water
- Review of the hard-court / basketball area
- Better basic care, including bins

C5. Selected anonymous quotes

"We do not want to lose this space"

"If communal spaces disappear, then the children have little space to play games and enjoy the outside in a safe space"

"There's simply not a lot to do in this space"

"The space is boring"

"Did not know this space was here"

"A nice clear sign to welcome people to the space"

"The question I have is why does Swanage Town Council keep taking away our parks?"

"It would be good if we could have a small space where we are allowed dogs"

"Some planting around the sides or the edges, possibly for children to contribute and grow things"

"More community events would help bring more people to this space"

"The space definitely could do with some more simple, low-maintenance planting"

"How about suggesting a small or micro woodland?"

"It would be good to see more natural, nature-based trail activities and information about the wildlife that lives here"

"The field is not very interesting"

"Food and flowers would be my number one suggestion for wildlife and people"

C6. Summary interpretation

The hard-copy responses support the wider findings of the consultation.

People value HCF's open grass, quietness, safety, trees and community history. However, many also see it as underused, under-promoted and lacking simple reasons to visit or stay.

The responses point toward a balanced approach:

Keep the open heart of the field, improve access and welcome, add comfort basics, create nature-rich edges, and give children, young people and local volunteers a practical role in helping the space feel loved and cared for.

Appendix D: Youth Club workshop summary

This appendix summarises the Swanage Youth Club workshop held as part of the HCF consultation.

The workshop was one of the strongest parts of the engagement process. Young people responded with energy, care and imagination, and showed a clear interest in HCF becoming a more useful, welcoming and nature-rich place.

D1. Method

The Youth Club engagement took place on **24 April 2026** and included both indoor and outdoor activity.

The session used:

- Group discussion
- Maps of HCF
- Post-it note ideas
- Simple questionnaire prompts
- Outdoor exploration of HCF
- Staff-supported conversations
- Creative idea gathering

Most of the session took place in or around HCF, allowing young people to respond directly to the space rather than discussing it only in the abstract.

The approach was informal, visual and discussion-based, helping young people share practical ideas as well as more imaginative suggestions.

D2. Participant numbers

The workshop involved **39 young people**.

Participants were aged approximately **10 to 16**, from **Year 6 to Year 11**.

Young people involved included pupils from:

- St Mark's Primary School
- St Mary's Primary School
- The Swanage Primary School
- The Swanage School
- The Purbeck School

The session was supported by Youth Club staff and Planet Purbeck.

D3. Key ideas from young people

Young people wanted HCF to remain open, safe and useful, but also felt it needed more reasons to visit, stay and spend time there.

Key ideas included:

Theme	Ideas raised
Keep the open space	Keep football space, open grass, room to run, safe bike practice & informal play
Improve play & activity	Swings, rope swings, obstacle course, in-ground trampolines, better football area, removable ramps or activity in the hardstanding area
Make it more comfortable	Seating, bins, shelter, shade, water & places to meet friends
Add nature & wildlife	Wildlife strips, bird boxes, bug houses, hedgehog homes, trees, flowers & more colour
Add growing & food	Edible planting, herbs, fruit, growing beds & food education
Improve welcome & identity	Youth-designed signs, clearer welcome, colourful features & stronger sense that the field is for the community
Add art & creativity	Art, sculptures, graffiti wall or youth-designed creative features
Review the hard-court area	Better use of the hardstanding / basketball area, including possible youth activity
Make the field easier to use	More level central area for football, running, games & events

D4. What young people valued

Young people valued HCF because it is:

- Quiet
- Open
- Safe-feeling
- Good for football
- Good for bikes
- Close to the Youth Club
- A place to meet friends
- A place with potential

They did not want the field to be lost or overfilled. The strongest message was that HCF should be improved while keeping its open character.

D5. What young people felt was missing

Young people repeatedly said that HCF currently lacks things to do.

They described the space as green and quiet, but not especially inviting. Several felt that people do not know they are allowed to use it, or that there is not enough there to make people stay.

The strongest missing features were:

- More activity
- Better seating
- Bins
- Shelter
- Drinking water
- More colour
- Wildlife features
- Clearer signage
- Better use of the hard-court area
- A stronger sense that young people are welcome

D6. Quote bank

Selected anonymous quotes from young people included:

"It's so important for kids like me and my friends to have a space where we can go to help us develop our social skills"

"We spend so much time online or on our screens"

"We love that this space is really nice and quiet, and it feels safe for us"

"Please keep the football pitch"

"The place is okay because it looks green, but actually there's nothing really here"

"We need to invite people into this lovely space"

"We'd love to see more people love this place"

"It would be good to have somewhere to sit"

"More people would come if there was more to do"

"Can we help make the signs?"

D7. Summary interpretation

The Youth Club workshop strongly supports the main recommendation of this report:

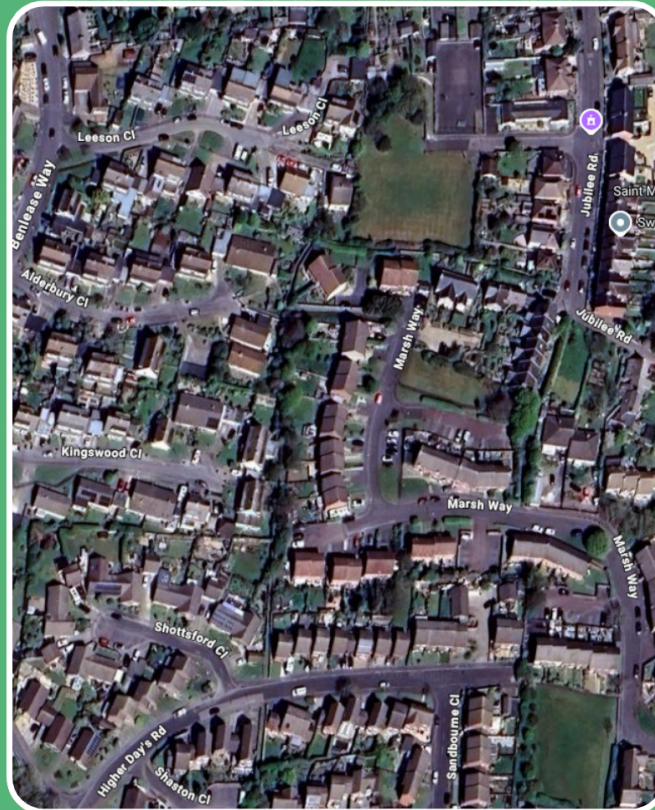
Keep the middle open. Make the edges work harder.

Young people want HCF to remain a flexible open space, but they also want it to feel more cared for, colourful, useful and welcoming.

Their feedback gives STC a clear opportunity to involve young people in a practical first step. This is why Planet Purbeck has proposed the **Phoenix Project**: a youth-led £1,000 quick win that could turn the damaged picnic bench area into something beautiful, useful and nature-positive, subject to STC approval.

Appendix E: Site photos & visual observations

E1: Shows HCF location in relation to adjacent roads. Also shown are paths from Higher Day's Road, Alderbury Close & Jubilee Road as well as the view from the Marsh Way path where additional access was requested.



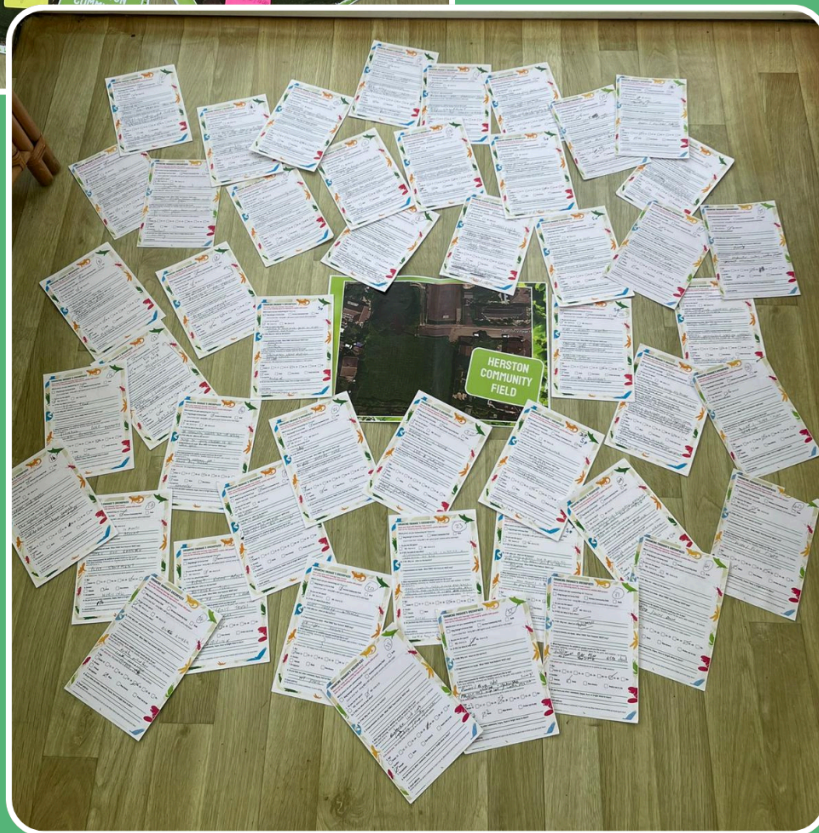
E2: Shows Poster for 2026 community picnic, HCF in use at a busy community event, Luke from Planet Purbeck briefing a group from the youth club, young people busy 'designing' their ideal HCF. Plus general images of HCF.



E3: Shows the scorched patch left by the recent fire at HCF. Planet Purbeck see this as an opportunity to act swiftly, creating a 'Phoenix' project to turn this unfortunate incident into a positive for people and wildlife at HCF.



E4: Shows images of some of the maps and postnotes used as part of the youth club workshop alongside a selection of the hard-copy surveys we completed across various aspects of the consultation.



Appendix F: Indicative budget scenarios

This appendix sets out indicative budget scenarios for possible HCF improvements.

These figures are **not formal cost estimates**. They are broad planning ranges only, intended to help STC consider possible levels of ambition.

All figures would require further scoping, permissions, supplier quotes, maintenance planning and STC approval before any work could proceed.

F1. Scenario 1: Acorn Actions

Indicative range: £1,500 to £5,000

Acorn Actions are low-cost, low-complexity improvements that could show visible care for HCF quickly.

Possible items could include:

- Youth-Led Phoenix Project
- Repair, removal or transformation of the scorched picnic bench area
- Temporary or permanent welcome signage
- Youth-designed wildlife or welcome signs
- Bird boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels or hedgehog homes
- Small-scale planting
- Initial edge-zone improvements
- Volunteer group set-up
- Basic event support for the next Herston Community Picnic

Planet Purbeck has already offered **£1,000 from a youth-focused Dorset Council grant** toward a Youth-Led Phoenix Project, subject to STC permission.

This scenario would not transform the whole field, but it would show that the consultation has led to action.

F2. Scenario 2: Strong Sapling Steps

Indicative range: £5,000 to £25,000

Strong Sapling Steps are medium-scale improvements requiring more planning, permissions, partner input or budget.

Possible items could include:

- Improved entrance signage
- Approach signage from nearby paths or roads
- Commissioned visual reimagining of HCF from the consultation findings
- Additional seating or picnic benches

- Natural log seating
- Defined nature-rich edge zones
- Wildflower or longer-grass margins
- Edible planting, herbs or small fruit features
- Small-scale growing or nature-learning area
- Safe water feature, such as raised bird baths or wildlife water stations
- Seasonal shade or simple shelter options
- Simple perimeter walking route
- Events calendar development with local partners
- Feasibility review of top gate / upper path access
- Initial review of hard-court constraints and opportunities

This scenario would make HCF feel more welcoming, usable and cared for, while keeping the central grass space open.

It would also give STC a stronger basis for community testing, partner involvement and future fundraising.

F3. Scenario 3: Big Oak Ambitions

Indicative range: £25,000 plus

Big Oak Ambitions are larger, longer-term options requiring technical assessment, formal quotes, external funding or significant STC commitment.

Possible items could include:

- Formal landscape design work
- Topographical survey and levelling feasibility
- Creation of a level central activity lawn
- Grass banks or amphitheatre-style seating
- Natural play or activity trail
- Larger community growing, orchard or edible hedge scheme
- Hard-court / basketball area review and possible resurfacing
- Fencing review or replacement
- Youth activity options in the hardstanding area
- Wider access improvements
- Drainage, surfacing or infrastructure works
- Larger external funding application development

This scenario could significantly change how HCF is used, but it would also carry greater cost, risk and long-term responsibility.

Before any Big Oak option progressed, STC would need to consider technical feasibility, lease length, maintenance requirements, insurance, safety, accessibility, procurement, partner roles and long-term value for money.

F4. Important caveats

The budget ranges in this appendix are indicative only.

They do not include formal design fees, technical surveys, planning advice, legal advice, procurement costs, VAT considerations, contingency, future maintenance or long-term replacement costs unless specifically scoped later.

Any physical works would require appropriate permissions and STC approval.

Any community-led delivery would need to meet STC requirements for safety, insurance, safeguarding, accessibility, procurement and long-term maintenance.

The consultation evidence supports further exploration, but it does not remove the need for proper costing and decision-making.

F5. Suggested budget approach

Planet Purbeck suggests that STC considers the budget scenarios as a phased ladder rather than a single decision.

Scenario	Indicative range	Best use
Acorn Actions	£1,500 to £5,000	Quick wins, visible care and youth-led momentum
Strong Sapling Steps	£5,000 to £25,000	Practical improvements, comfort, access, nature and community use
Big Oak Ambitions	£25,000+	Larger transformation, technical works and external funding bids

The recommended next step is to agree which level of ambition STC wishes to explore first, then scope that option properly.

We suggest a sensible route would be:

Start with Acorn Actions.

Use Strong Sapling Steps to build confidence.

Keep Big Oak Ambitions alive only where they are feasible, fundable & proportionate.

Swanage Greenspace Strategy 2025 – Action Plan Update

The Swanage Greenspace Strategy 2025 sets out the Council’s vision for the current and future management and development of the diverse range of greenspaces it owns and manages.

It contains an action plan, set out below that was informed by the results of a public greenspace survey undertaken by the Council in early 2025. At the Environment and Greenspaces Committee meeting held on 4th March 2026 it was agreed to add two further actions to the plan, these are indicated and marked. *

Swanage Greenspace Strategy Action Plan				
	Timetable 2025/6 and 2026/7			
Action	Environment and Greenspaces Committee October 2025	Environment and Greenspaces Committee March 2026	Environment and Greenspaces Committee June 2026	Environment and Greenspaces Committee October 2026
Develop an initiative to tackle dog waste and owners not picking up after their pets		Proposal to be presented	Action completed: considerations of future initiatives to remain on the plan	
Prioritise locations for accessibility improvements such as footpath enhancements		Locations identified	Ongoing	
Seek opportunities for external funding to deliver green space actions set out within this plan	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	
Install signage at greenspaces setting out the key features of the location	Present proposals		Signage implemented at Day’s Park. Signage at Beach Gardens in design.	
Planting of additional wildflower areas/shrubs/bulbs		Bulb planting completed	Wildflower and shrub planting completed	
Complete management plans for Day’s Park and the Recreation Ground		Management plan completed for the Recreation Ground	Management plan completed for Day’s Park	

Review options for additional seating			Ongoing	
Continue tree planting in accordance with the Council's Tree Strategy 2022	Numbers and locations identified	Planting completed		Numbers and locations identified
Receive and review Planet Purbeck engagement reports in respect of King George's and Forres Field and Herston Community Field	Reports received	Proposals to be presented	Herston Community Field report presented to June 2026 committee.	
Explore proposal to enter Godlingston cemetery into Cemetery of the Year award		Decision taken on entering cemetery for award	Godlingston Cemetery entered into BRAMM Cemetery of the Year Awards	
Retain Green Flag award for Beach Gardens	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	
* Develop a nature corridor in Journey's End adjacent to the Ulwell Stream			In progress – see information below	
*Develop a Swanage Town Council Tree Warden scheme			In progress – see information below	
Continue to monitor and revise if appropriate, existing greenspace management plans	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing	

Detailed below is a progress update setting out the actions taken to deliver the plan since the Environment and Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 4th March 2026.

Develop an initiative to tackle dog waste and owners not picking up after their pets

The Council received 31 creative and colourful competition entries from local children aged 5-12 to design a poster to encourage people to put litter in the bin and pick up dog poo. Councillors Bonfield and Sutton judged the awards and a presentation was made to the four winners from two local schools. These designs have now been made into four signs, 16 signs in total, and at present three signs of each design have been installed in a range of Swanage greenspaces.

Management plan completed for Day's Park

The management plan for Day's Park and Journey's End has been completed and will be uploaded onto the Council's website.

Install signage at greenspaces setting out the key features of the location

Greenspace signage for Beach Gardens is in design and will be implemented in the coming months.

Retain Green Flag award for Beach Gardens

The outcome of the submission for the 2026/27 Green Flag Award for this location will be announced in July 2026.

Explore proposal to enter Godlingston cemetery into Cemetery of the Year award

Goldington Cemetery has been entered into the BRAMM Cemetery of Year Awards 2026 in Category 3- Parish, Town and Community Councils. Following the close of the competition on 30th June 2026 the top scoring entrants will be invited to submit photographs to enable extra marks to be awarded for maintenance and overall appeal with finalists for the gold and silver places being notified in September.

Receive and review Planet Purbeck engagement reports in respect of King George's and Forres Field and Herston Community Field

Planet Purbeck have completed the Herston Community Field engagement and a report is included on this agenda.

It has been agreed that Planet Purbeck are no longer in a position to provide the engagement report scheduled for King George's and Forres Field. In lieu of this a light touch review of options for this area will be undertaken noting that the proposals from Wessex Water for Tunnel 3 improvements are likely to impact timescales for this action.

Develop a nature corridor in Journey's End adjacent to the Ulwell Stream

This has commenced, mowing lines have been moved and the existing wildlife corridor adjacent to the stream has been widened by approximately 2 metres.

Develop a Swanage Town Council Tree Warden scheme

Further to Sustainable Swanage's 'Big Community Tree Meet-Up' event held on Wednesday 25th February, a group of six volunteer Tree Wardens has been established. Initial meetings and a training session have been undertaken with Dorset National Landscape and Dorset Council Nature Recovery Officers. Further training sessions are scheduled, with roles and responsibilities currently being developed and agreed.

Action Required

To note the progress made to date to deliver the Swanage Greenspace Strategy Action Plan along with the proposed new additional actions.

To note that the action plan will be updated and future actions incorporated to ensure both a record of achievement and objectives for future developments.

Gail Percival, Assets and Compliance Manager
June 2026

Environment and Greenspaces Committee – 2026-27 budget

1. Current year: Environmental Improvement Engagement Plan 2026-27 budget

A budget of £15,000 was approved for 2026-27. It is currently forecast that £15,000 of this will be spent by the end of the year.

Members are asked to note the forecast spend for the current year 2026-27 below.

Culvin Milmer, Visitor Services and Business Development Manager, June 2026

No.	Project	Detail	Indicative Budget
1.	Lead on the education component of Sustainable Swanage, i.e. develop a two-monthly programme of interesting public Open Meetings.	5 or 6 sessions led by Planet Purbeck. The management of the Sustainable Swanage website and the social media page will be undertaken by volunteers from 1 st April 2026.	£5,000
2.	Improving water quality – Freshwater and ocean.	The ‘Swanage Streams Partnership’ is led by the National Trust and works with Planet Purbeck. This contribution will enhance the public engagement work and support cleaner and more environmentally beneficial streams in Swanage. While this budget is notionally set aside for the project, a formal request outlining the outcomes to be achieved will need to be considered by this committee before any approval is made.	£6,000
3.	Support the implementation of the Greenspaces Strategy, Neighbourhood Plan and Environment Action Plan.	Various projects to enhance green spaces stemming from the Greenspaces Strategy, Neighbourhood Plan and Environment Action Plan	£2,000
4.	Support engagement projects as they arise from time to time.	Friends of the Downs, Motion for the Ocean etc Finalisation of Herston Community Field Engagement by Planet Purbeck	£750 £1,250
	Total - £15,000		£15,000