

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at The Swanage School, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 15th SEPTEMBER 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M. Bonfield – Chairman

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

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, eight members of the public and one representative of the local press and media attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- Comments were made regarding procedural matters, including an objection to the proposed exclusion of the press and public for Agenda Item 16 (a).
- Concerns were raised regarding the public engagement process for the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme and Shore Road options.
- A number of questions were raised about the accuracy and content of the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21st July 2025, including whether the number of members of the public present at that meeting had been accurately recorded in the draft minutes.
- A question was raised as to whether the Swanage School was supportive of the School Streets Initiative, to be considered under Agenda Item 4 (b).
- A question was raised as to why the most recent Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group minutes had not yet been published.
- A query was raised regarding why the Feasibility Study relating to the Shore Road options had not been made publicly available.
- The Council was encouraged to support the progression of the 3G pitch project at Day's Park and the related application for Football Foundation funding, noting that it would be to the benefit of youth teams.

Rev. Natalie Davis offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

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

72. **Apologies**

Apologies for her inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Vile.

73. **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.

74. **Minutes**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Foster and seconded by Councillor Coward:-

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21st July 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Upon being put to the Meeting EIGHT Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and there were TWO ABSTENTIONS, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

(b) Proposed by Councillor Moreton and seconded by Councillor Dorrington:-

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 4th August 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Upon being put to the Meeting EIGHT Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and there were TWO ABSTENTIONS, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

75. **Finance and Governance Committee**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Sutton and seconded by Councillor Tomes:-

That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on 23rd July 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Upon being put to the Meeting EIGHT Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and there were TWO ABSTENTIONS, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

76. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 4th August 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Consideration was given to the following recommendation contained in the Minutes:-

5)b) **Dorset Council (DC) – School Streets Initiative – Junction of Washpond Lane and High Street, Herston**

Proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council supports the introduction of the School Streets Initiative proposals in Washpond Lane under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, the progress of which to be overseen by the Traffic Management Advisory Committee.

77. **Planning and Consultation Committee**
(a) Proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation
Committee Meeting held on 1st September 2025 be
approved as a correct record and signed.
78. **Statement of Cash Balance**
(a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st July 2025 was submitted for information
(a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).
(b) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st August 2025 was submitted for
information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).
79. **Payment of Accounts**
In accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Council's Financial Regulations,
the following Payment Schedules were submitted for information:-
 - Payment Schedule 4, amounting to £1,182,172.28.
 - Payment Schedule 5, amounting to £682,435.88.
80. **Chairman's Announcements**
The Town Mayor reported his attendance at the following events since the
Council Meeting held in July:
 - Swanage Carnival Classic Car Show – The Town Mayor had a difficult task in
judging the classic cars at the well-attended event.
 - VJ Day 80th Anniversary – A memorial event had been held at the War
Memorial to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VJ Day, followed by a
reception at the Royal British Legion.
 - Swanage Lifeboat – The Mayor had felt privileged to present certificates at the
Lifeboat Station in recognition of 150 years of the Swanage Lifeboat.
 - Swanage Lifeboat Church Service – The Mayor and his consort had attended the
Church Service to reflect and celebrate on the 150 years of service provided by
the men and women serving at the Swanage Lifeboat Station.
81. **To review Councillor membership of Standing Committees, Advisory Committees,
Sub-committees and working parties, following election**
Further to the Town Council by-elections held in July, consideration was given to the
list of councillor members of standing committees, sub-committees and working parties. It
was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED
UNANIMOUSLY:-
That Councillor Suttle be appointed to the Finance
and Governance Committee for 2025/26.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Burridge and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That Councillor Tomes be appointed to the Health
Services Working Party for 2025/26.

Councillor Dorrington requested to step down as a member of the Planning and
Consultation Committee due to increased commitments.
82. **To review and appoint representatives to outside bodies**
Members considered the list of representatives to outside bodies as agreed at the
Annual Council Meeting in May. It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by
Councillor Dorrington and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That Councillor Vile be appointed as the Council's representative to Wellbeing Swanage and The Centre Management Board for 2025/26.

It was noted that Councillor Foster no longer wished to be considered for the role of Trustee to Swanage Pier Trust. It was suggested that Councillor Suttle, as an existing trustee on behalf of Dorset Council, be appointed to also represent Swanage Town Council. It was agreed that the Pier Trust be approached in the first instance to confirm whether this arrangement was permissible under their constitution.

Councillor Sutton requested to step down as the Council's representative to the Purbeck Community Rail Partnership (PCRP). It was suggested that Mr. Whitwam, as a co-opted member of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee, could report back to the Town Council in that capacity. As the appointed Town Councillor currently holds voting rights, it was agreed that PCRP would also be consulted to establish whether, under the partnership's constitution, a non-councillor could vote on behalf of the Town Council.

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

(a) **Establish a Task and Finish Group to review Fees and Charges**

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

That a Task and Finish Group be established to review Fees and Charges comprising Councillors Bonfield, Sutton and Tones.

(b) **Establish a Task and Finish Group to inform prioritisation of maintenance works to public conveniences**

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

That a Task and Finish Group be established to inform prioritisation of maintenance works to public conveniences comprising Councillors Bonfield, Moreton and Vile.

(c) **Beach Concessions Task & Finish Group - Report of meeting held on 1st September 2025 and to consider recommendations regarding forthcoming tender process**

Members considered a briefing paper prepared by the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM), which outlined the discussions held by the Task and Finish Group and its recommendations as set out below:

- That a five-year term be applied to the concessions, ending in October 2030.
- That the two licences be combined into a single Beach Hire Concession, to include deckchairs, sunbeds, pedalos, kayaks, paddleboards, etc.
- That the area defined for the use of pedalos and sunbeds be sited with the northern boundary before the start of the Shore Road beach huts, and the southern boundary in line with the sauna. The precise area would be proposed by potential concessionaires as part of their submissions and determined during the concession award process.
- That the hire of windbreaks and parasols be included in the concession.
- That arrangements to ensure safety boat cover be included in the licence.
- That the scoring approach used by the Town Council for the previous seafront concessions during 2023/24 be applied to tender submissions, including the 40/60 finance/quality split.

It was noted that historically the Town Council had operated two seafront concessions, one for the hire of deckchairs and sunbeds and the other for the hire

of pedalos and kayaks. Both concessions were due to end in October 2025, after a seven-year term. It was further noted that, in line with current arrangements, the successful concessionaire would not be provided with exclusive use of any part of the beach.

Members considered whether the concessions could be separated should a prospective concessionaire wish to operate only one part of the concession. In response, it was noted that this would probably require the tender exercise to be re-run.

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

That the recommendations as set out above be
agreed and that delegated authority be provided to
officers to undertake the tender.

(d) Sport, Leisure & Wellbeing Working Party - Report of Meeting held on 1st September 2025 and to consider next steps in respect of artificial pitch project and condition of existing buildings at Day's Park

Further to Minute No. 230 of the Council Meeting held on 28th April 2025, Members considered the content of a briefing paper which detailed progress relating to the Day's Park 3G pitch project, including a summary of the draft business plan prepared by Swanage & Herston Football Club, financial projections, and potential funding arrangements.

The Football Foundation (FF) had indicated that it was willing to consider an application for up to 70% of the estimated £1.2m project cost. If successful the FF would also provide extensive professional support for tendering and project delivery, although not for project management. The FF's preference for the Town Council to act as the primary grant applicant to enable VAT recovery and, therefore, provide the most tax-efficient means of delivering the project was highlighted. In order to pursue a grant application the FF also required the Council to sign a Framework Joining Agreement and Framework Fee Undertaking Agreement. In doing so it was noted that the Town Council would be liable to repay £35,000 to the Foundation in respect of project development costs if the Council withdrew from the project due to 'an event that is within its control', although it was also noted that the FF guidance stated that this was highly unlikely to occur. The Council could also be liable for additional survey costs if these proved to be necessary.

At the meeting of the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing working party, Members had considered other key considerations, including fundraising responsibilities, annual pitch maintenance contributions of £30,000 p.a., and Town Council resource implications for project oversight, legal agreements, planning, and contract management. The working party agreed to bring the matter before council to decide whether the Town Council is content to act as joint applicant to the FF and enter the necessary legal agreements.

A discussion ensued during which the option of deferring the decision was raised in order for a joint meeting between representatives of the Town Council, Football Club and CIO to take place prior to the matter being determined. Some concern was expressed that as this would in effect defer the decision this could be interpreted by the Football Foundation as demonstrating a lack of commitment to the project.

During the debate, Members noted the benefit that a 3G pitch would provide to all of those playing for the Football Club, including the youth and women's teams, enabling matches to be played in all weathers. It was furthermore stated that this project would remove the need for local people to travel to Wareham to use similar facilities. The provision of circa £800,000 from the Football Foundation was noted as a large investment into the provision of sport in the town.

It was proposed by Councillor Tomes and seconded by Councillor Lejeune:-

That the Town Council is content to act as joint applicant to the Football Foundation under the Artificial Grass Pitch funding programme and to sign up to the relevant legal agreements, subject to the satisfactory outcome of a joint meeting between representatives of the Town Council, Football Club and CIO.

Councillor Sutton proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by Councillor Foster:-

That the Town Council agrees to act as lead applicant of a joint application to the Football Foundation under the Artificial Grass Pitch funding programme and sign up to the relevant legal agreements, subject to receipt of a report by the Council confirming the satisfactory outcome of a joint meeting between representatives of the Town Council, Football Club and CIO.

Upon being put to the Meeting, FIVE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Amended Proposition and FIVE AGAINST. The Chairman exercised his casting vote AGAINST, and the Amended Proposition was therefore declared NOT CARRIED.

The original Motion was then put to the meeting and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council is content to act as joint applicant to the Football Foundation under the Artificial Grass Pitch funding programme and to sign up to the relevant legal agreements, subject to the satisfactory outcome of a joint meeting between representatives of the Town Council, Football Club and CIO.

Consideration was then given to what actions should be taken in respect of the existing football club buildings at Day's Park, in acknowledgement that it is likely that the construction of new facilities is at least 3-5 years in the future. The working party recommended that further professional advice should be sought about the condition of the buildings. It was noted that the cost of this advice would most likely be between £3,000 and £4,000. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes and seconded by Councillor Sutton:

That Council officers should instruct appropriate professional advice in respect of the condition of the buildings and if necessary bring recommendations forward to a future Council meeting.

Upon being put to the Meeting, NINE Members voted IN FAVOUR of the Proposition and there was ONE ABSTENTION, whereupon the Proposition was declared CARRIED.

84. **Conclusion of audit 2024/25 – To note receipt of Section 3, External Auditor's Report and Certificate**

Members noted receipt of Section 3, External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2024/25. The only matter highlighted in the Audit Opinion was that the Town Council should not have indicated 'yes' to section 1, Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance

Statement regarding electors' rights. This was because the Council had been unable to upload the interim external auditor's report and certificate for 2023/24 by 30th September 2024 due to a website outage, it having been issued by the auditor close to the deadline. It was noted that this requirement had been complied with in respect of the 2024/25 audit.

Aside from that matter the auditor had concluded that the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was in accordance with Proper Practices. The auditors further confirmed that no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2024/25 be received and accepted, and the matter contained therein noted.

The Finance Manager was thanked for her work in the preparation of the audit submission.

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

(a) **Swanage Chamber of Trade**

It was reported that fundraising for the Christmas Lights was progressing well.

(b) **Swanage Carnival**

It was reported that the Swanage Carnival had been a huge success, with the Red Arrows' display contributing to the busiest Carnival day on record. Thanks were given to the Assets & Compliance Manager, VSBDM, and their teams for their management of waste during this busy week, working alongside Dorset Council.

86. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillors Suttle and Tomes:

- Dorset Local Plan – It was stated that a public drop-in event would be held on 30th September 2025 between 2.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m. at the Emmanuel Baptist Church, Swanage. It was noted that the draft plan proposed sites for 484 additional homes for Swanage, although one landowner had not been made aware that their land had been included.
- Aster Homes – It was reported that the selling of Aster properties was occurring in Preston and Littlemoor as well as in Swanage, as had previously been highlighted. Dorset Council were aware, with work underway to determine appropriate actions.
- Street Lighting – Dorset Council had approved its updated Street Lighting Policy at the cabinet meeting on 9th September. The policy would see the introduction of warmer-toned lights to reduce light pollution, protect wildlife, and support health and wellbeing. Cabinet had also agreed a plan for a £6.5 million upgrade funded by the council's lighting service provider, who would cover the upfront costs and retain part of the energy savings until 2032. This would enable the improvements to begin immediately without extra cost to residents and it was anticipated that ongoing savings to Dorset Council would be circa £100,000 per year.
- Commercial Lane – Dorset Councillors had met with Dorset Highways regarding improvements to Commercial Lane and it was anticipated that a meeting would be organised between Dorset Council, the Town Council and the 'Heart of Swanage' group to further discuss matters.

87. **Reporting of delegated matters**

Further to Minute No. 68 of the Council Meeting held on 21st July 2025, it was reported that the Council had awarded the print services contract to Canon in accordance with the scoring mechanism approved by the Council.

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

- (a) **Swanage Neighbourhood Plan – Update on public engagement**
Further to Minute No. 66 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 21st July 2025, it was reported that the public engagement survey was now live, available both online and via paper copies. Several in-person drop-in events were scheduled as follows:
Thursday 25th September 2025, 3.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m., at The Focus Centre
Wednesday 1st October 2025, 10.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m., at All Saints Church Hall
Wednesday 8th October 2025, 3.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m., at Herston Village Hall
Wednesday 15th October 2025, 10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m., at Emmanuel Baptist Church
It was anticipated that the draft Swanage Neighbourhood Plan would be available in early 2026 and would be subject to further review. The Chairman of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group encouraged all Members to attend the events to support the public engagement.
- (b) **Casual Vacancy – Matters arising in relation to potential by-election/co-option**
It was reported that following Councillor Brookes' recent resignation a by-election had been called by 10 residents of the north ward. The cost of a by-election had been estimated at £8,500, a sum which would have to be paid entirely by the Town Council. Dorset Council Electoral Services had indicated that the Town Council could determine whether or not to issue poll cards, which accounted for approximately £3,150 of this total. Members indicated that they would want polling cards to be issued as usual, because they provided a prominent way to encourage participation in the election.
- (c) **DAPTC – Fresh Start report and survey**
It was noted that the Fresh Start report and survey, relating to the working relationship between Dorset Council and the town and parish sector, would be an agenda item at an upcoming meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee with any further update provided to a future Council meeting.
- (d) **Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme/Shore Road Options – Update on timeline for receipt of report on public engagement**
The Chairman read a statement which had been released on the Town Council's website and Facebook page earlier in the day, as follows:
Following the recent public survey on the Green Seafront stabilisation scheme and options for potential changes to the traffic flow on Shore Road, Dorset Coast Forum are continuing to analyse the large number of detailed responses received.
In respect of the proposals to stabilise and enhance the seafront land, the Town Council will use the information received to identify which changes to the proposals suggested by participants in the public engagement should be incorporated into revised proposals for both the essential and new options. It is currently anticipated that the report in respect of these proposals will be published in advance of the Council meeting scheduled for 20th October, although that remains subject to review.
The results of the survey in relation to Shore Road will be considered by Dorset Council in the first instance to inform a recommendation as to which of the four options should be taken forward for further consideration. A report will then be presented to the Town Council later in the autumn, and the survey report published in advance of consideration at a future Council meeting.
No decisions will be made as to which options to take forward in respect of either scheme prior to consideration at a future meeting of the Town Council. Both the papers and the discussion will be open to the public.
The next item on tonight's agenda is to consider a draft agreement between Swanage Town Council and Dorset Council which, if approved, will formalise the

arrangements for joint working on these projects. This includes the supply of project management support by Dorset Council on the green seafront stabilisation scheme and further early contractor involvement to provide updated cost estimates in respect of the green seafront proposals for both the essential and new options. Thank you for your ongoing interest in this project.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Coward and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, under Standing Order No. 1 c), in the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda items 16 and 17 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

Prior to the press and public leaving the meeting, the Chairman briefly adjourned proceedings under Standing Order No. 1) p) to enable a member of the public to address the meeting regarding the future options for Shore Road.

89. **Procurement – To consider entering into a Collaboration Agreement with Dorset Council for the following services in connection with the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme and confirming the associated budget requirement for 2025/26 in light of cost estimates received:**

(a) Schedule 1 – Project management

Further to Minute No. 69 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 22nd July 2025, Members considered a briefing paper which set out Dorset Council's proposal to regularise access to its services, frameworks, and contracts through a Collaboration Agreement, a draft copy of which had also been circulated prior to the meeting. The agreement provided a framework for engaging Dorset Council contractors, that had previously been procured via competitive tender, for works and services related to the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme. It was noted that future schedules could be added as the project progressed.

In respect of project management services provided by Dorset Council's in-house Highways Team, it was noted that estimated costs for 2025/26 were £35,720, to be funded from the Green Seafront Enhancement Scheme Reserve. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To enter into a Collaboration Agreement with Dorset Council in respect of the Green Seafront scheme to regularise existing arrangements and provide access to Dorset Council contracts; furthermore, to enter into an agreement under Schedule 1 of the draft Collaboration Agreement to engage project management support for 2025/26 up to £35,720, noting that this forms part of the professional fees element of the Green Seafront project cost allocation.

(b) Schedule 2 – Early Contractor Involvement

Members considered Schedule 2 of the draft Collaboration Agreement, in respect of Early Contractor Involvement. It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Burrige and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To enter into an agreement with Dorset Council in respect of Schedule 2 of the draft Collaboration

Agreement to engage Heidelberg Materials UK via the Dorset Council Framework contract NEC3 TSC /HMEP for post engagement early contractor involvement on both the essential and new Green Seafront options for the sum of £6,940, noting that this forms part of the professional fees element of the Green Seafront project cost allocation.

90. **Property-Related Legal Matters**

(a) Swanage Beach Kiosk, Shore Road – To consider granting landlord’s consent for installation of staff toilet facility

Further to Minute No. 88 of the Council Meeting held on 16th September 2024, consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined the requirement of the tenant to regularise matters under their lease prior to making alterations to the refreshment kiosk on the corner of Shore Road and Victoria Avenue. The proposed works would provide a staff toilet facility, as set out in planning application P/FUL/2025/00819 which had recently been approved by Dorset Council as the local planning authority. No objections were raised to the proposed alterations and consequently it was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council grants landlord consent for the alterations to the kiosk on the corner of Shore Road and Victoria Avenue, in accordance with planning consent P/FUL/2025/00819, and enters into the requisite legal agreements, subject to the Council’s professional fees being recharged to the tenant.

(b) Boundary Wall Marsh Way/Victoria Terrace – To note update and agree procurement of professional services in advance of repair works

Further to Minute No. 95 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 16th September 2024, and a discussion held at a meeting of the Capital Projects Sub-committee held earlier in the day, Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which provided an update on the development of proposals to repair the wall and ongoing discussions with the property owner, as well as outlining proposed next steps in commissioning professional services in connection with the works required. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Sutton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That an invitation to provide a quotation in respect of professional services be issued in advance of repair works to the boundary wall at 1 Victoria Terrace/Land at Marsh Way and that further enquiries be made regarding this historic boundary feature, the outcome of which to be reported to a future meeting of the Capital Projects Sub-committee.

The Meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.