

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 21st JULY 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M. Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor S. Brookes

Councillor M. Coward

Councillor J. Dorrington

Councillor J. Lejeune

Councillor T. Foster

Councillor C. Moreton

Councillor C. Sutton

Councillor C. Tomes

Councillor S. Vile

In addition to Members of the Council, officers and Cllr G. Suttle (Swanage Ward Member, Dorset Council) approximately 42 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:-

- Concern was expressed regarding the proposals for Shore Road and the implications for alternative routes should Shore Road be permanently closed or restricted to one-way traffic. It was stated that approximately 2,000 vehicles exit the ferry into Swanage each day, and that, should Shore Road be closed, these vehicles would be redirected onto residential streets.
- Concern was expressed that closing Shore Road could lead to increased pollution levels on surrounding roads, particularly affecting residents of St Aldhelm's Court, one of whom had initiated a petition.
- Support was expressed for removing parking along Shore Road to enable a safer two-way traffic system to be retained.
- A question was raised as to whether sufficient accurate data would be collected via the public survey to properly inform the decision-making process.
- A former member of the Jurassic Coast Finder project suggested that contributions made by Dorset Council towards beach replenishment schemes had previously been justified by the need to protect Shore Road as critical infrastructure. It was therefore questioned whether, if the road were to be closed, this would have a significant detrimental impact on the funding of future beach recharge schemes.
- Concern was expressed about the potential impact of the cost of the proposed options for the Green Seafront stabilisation scheme.
- A query was raised regarding the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee, specifically where to access its agendas and minutes, and enquiring about a current vacancy on the sub-committee.

In light of concerns raised with the Town Council regarding the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme options and potential changes to Shore Road, the Town Mayor read the following statement:

Thank you for coming along this evening and for making us aware of your views. As you know, this is not an agenda item for tonight's meeting and there will be no discussion of these matters this evening. However, I would like to briefly take this opportunity to clear up some potential areas of misunderstanding.

Firstly, the recent round of public consultation brought together two separate proposals, one about the stabilisation of what we've called the Green Seafront, and the other about potential changes to Shore Road. The seafront land slippage has to be addressed in some shape or form regardless of whether any change is proposed for Shore Road. As the Council has made clear all along, the availability of funding will be a big factor in determining which option for the Green Seafront will be taken forward.

The only reasons for asking for feedback on both Shore Road and the Green Seafront at the same time is that Shore Road will be closed while the ground stabilisation work is completed and therefore there would be less disruption to the town and opportunities for cost savings if any work on both areas is done at the same time. However, they remain two distinct and separate schemes.

Secondly, I want to provide clarity around the process that is being followed. The question about how best to improve pedestrian safety on Shore Road has been raised by the Town Council because local residents have raised the issue with us. Listening to the responses to previous engagement exercises, the Town Council asked Dorset Council, as the highway authority, to draw up some options that we could ask local people about to help inform next steps. When we did so we were clear that 'do nothing' had to be one of those options, even though that won't address the safety issues. The Town Council does not have a preferred option and genuinely wants to hear the views of local residents and visitors to the town. That was the reason why the recent public engagement process was organised.

Looking ahead, there is a long journey before any decisions are taken on Shore Road. The Town Council will feedback its views to Dorset Council highways, taking into account the response of local residents to the four options. DC will then consider whether to work up one or more of the options, refining the design to take into account the feedback received, before again seeking the views of local residents. Before any works can be implemented on Shore Road there will be a formal legal consultation process on a clearly defined, fully worked up proposal. In respect of the Green Seafront, the Town Council is likely to refine its proposals in light of feedback received from the public. The Town Council will continue to explore funding options prior to a decision being made as to which option to proceed with. At all times it is mindful of its duties to efficiently manage public funds.

Looking ahead, we currently anticipate the report on the public engagement process to be available in mid to late September and once received it will be included on a future agenda. You will be most welcome to join us at that meeting and I look forward to seeing you again in the autumn, if not before. Thank you for listening, you are welcome to either stay or leave before the meeting gets underway.

Rev. Karen James offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.35 p.m.

51. **Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

52. **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.

53. **Minutes**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Coward, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on
23rd June 2025 be approved as a correct record and
signed.

54. **Environment and Green Spaces Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Sutton and seconded by Councillor Dorrington:-
That the Minutes of the Environment and Green
Spaces Committee Meeting held on 25th June 2025 be
approved as a correct record and signed.

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.

55. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Foster and seconded by Councillor Lejeune:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation
Committee Meeting held on 7th July 2025 be approved
as a correct record and signed.

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.

56. **Tourism and Local Economy Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Tomes and seconded by Councillor Vile:-
That the Minutes of the Tourism and Local Economy
Committee Meeting held on 9th July 2025 be approved
as a correct record and signed.

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.

57. **Community Services Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Moreton and seconded by Councillor Sutton:-
That the Minutes of the Community Services
Committee Meeting held on 16th July 2025 be
approved as a correct record and signed.

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

58. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 30th June 2025 was submitted for
information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

59. **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 3, amounting to £1,195,140.67

Questions were raised regarding payments under a staff training agreement and the purchase of items for re-sale at the Visitor Information Centre. The Town Clerk reminded Members that queries regarding payments should be raised with Officers prior to Council Meetings to ensure that a thorough response could be provided.

60. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported his attendance at the following events since the Council Meeting held in June:

- Clifftop Care Home – The Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor had attended a wonderful summer event at the care home.
- Herston Halt – The Mayor had unveiled a plaque to mark the important contribution of the Royal Corps of Signals to the development of the Swanage Railway across 40 years.
- Swanage Sea Rowing Club – The Mayor had felt privileged to present the awards at a rowing event.
- Wareham Civic Service – The Mayor and his consort had attended the Wareham Civic Service.

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

(a) **Tender for Beach Concessions (Deckchairs and Pedaloos) autumn 2025 – To establish task and finish group.**

It was reported that the concessions for deckchairs and pedaloos will expire in October. Further to a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Lejeune and seconded by Councillor Moreton:-

That a Task and Finish Group be established comprising Councillors Bonfield, Sutton and Tomes together with the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager to consider the Tender process for Beach Concessions (Deckchairs and Pedaloos).

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.

62. **Fishers' Huts, Peveril Point – To review timescale for implementation of new hut allocation policy, further to Minute No. 10 of the Minutes of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee, 19th March 2025 and to consider appointment of task and finish group**

Further to Minute No. 10 of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting held on 19th March 2025, consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined the changes to the hut allocation policy that had been agreed at that meeting and the need to address some anomalies that had arisen during the licence renewal process.

It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Coward and seconded by Councillor Vile:-

That a Task and Finish Group be established to consist of Councillors Bonfield, Sutton and Tomes, together with the Town Clerk, to review the implementation of the new fishers' hut allocation policy.

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.

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

(a) **Mowlem Theatre**

It was reported that the Mowlem Theatre Trustees were seeking to take forward a grant application (under the Arts Council's Creative Foundations Fund) and had approached the Town Council for a statement of support. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Brookes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Town Council should write a letter in support of the Mowlem Theatre's grant application to the Arts Council.

(b) **Purbeck Transport Action Group (PTAG)**

It was reported that a meeting had been held to discuss 'active travel', which had been attended by Accessible Swanage and the National Trust. An update regarding Dorset Council's Active Travel Policy would be provided to a future meeting.

(c) **Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)**

It was reported that a meeting had been held with CAB representatives the previous week, during which they had stated that CAB continues to provide advice at Herston Village Hall, Swanage Friday Market, and Swanage Library. It was noted that discussions would be held between the CAB and the Town Council about future arrangements for the delivery of the service, and that an update would be provided to a future meeting.

(d) **Swanage Chamber of Trade**

It was reported that donation boxes had been placed in venues around the town to raise funds for the 'Switch on Swanage' Christmas lights fundraising appeal.

(e) **Swanage Disabled Club**

It was noted that Swanage Disabled Club was seeking a councillor representative, and that a town councillor had recently volunteered with the organisation to gain a clearer understanding of its work.

64. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillor Suttle:

- Swanage Recycling Centre – It was reported that the proposed booking system for Swanage Recycling Centre would not proceed, however an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system might be progressed.
- Children's Services – It was noted that Dorset Council's Children's Services had received an Ofsted rating of Outstanding, with only one area, Care Leavers, rated as Good.
- Dorset Local Plan – It was stated that the next round of consultation on Dorset Council's Local Plan would commence in mid-August for eight weeks. All were encouraged to respond to help shape the plan.
- Public Space Protection Orders – It was noted that the current PSPOs relating to various areas around the county had expired in June 2025 and would now be extended for a three-year period.

65. **Reporting of delegated matters**

Further to Minute No. 47 of the Council Meeting held on 23rd June 2025, it was reported that the Council had entered into a licence agreement with Mr Joe Burns for the provision of Punch and Judy shows on Swanage beach for the 2025 season.

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

(a) **Swanage Neighbourhood Plan – Update on proposed public engagement**

Further to Minute No. 45 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 23rd June 2025, it was reported that Members of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had met on 15th July to review the content of the planned public survey and dedicated website. The process of finalising the maps and supporting documents to accompany the survey and website was in progress. The dates and details of face-to-face information events would be issued in due course. It had been anticipated that the engagement would commence in early August. However, as reported by Councillor Suttle, Dorset Council had since confirmed that it would be consulting on the draft Dorset Local Plan from 18th August for a period of eight weeks; therefore, the launch date might be changed to align with the Dorset Local Plan timeline.

(b) **Aster Housing Group**

It was stated that some properties in Swanage owned by Aster Housing Group were to be sold at auction. Concern was raised over the potential for the proceeds of these sales to be invested outside of Swanage. It was noted that Lloyd Hatton M.P. had been made aware and that direct contact with Aster had been established. An update would be provided to a future meeting.

(c) **Dorset Explorer**

It was reported that information about the Town Council's greenspaces had been added to Dorset Council's Nature Recovery Dorset network interactive map. Thanks were provided to the Assets and Compliance Manager for her assistance in this work.

(d) **Royal British Legion**

It was noted that the Royal British Legion would be holding a day of remembrance to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day on Saturday 16th August, from 1.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m., with refreshments, entertainment, and displays. Members were asked to contact the Democratic Services Officer if they wished to attend.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

That, under Standing Order No. 1 c), in the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda item 14 for reasons of commercial confidentiality.

67. **Tennis Courts 4 and 5, Beach Gardens – To award contract for installing dressed sand synthetic turf surface and associated works**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined the ongoing partnership with Swanage Tennis Club to convert tennis courts 4 and 5 from tarmac to a dressed sand synthetic turf surface. The Capital Programme 2025/26 included a sum of £15,000 as the Council's contribution to these works, scheduled for September 2025, with the balance of costs to be met by Swanage Tennis Club.

It was reported that the Council had engaged Sports Facility Planning and Design Ltd (SFPD) to provide professional services for the project, including pre-site inspection, preparation of specification, assessment of submissions, and two site inspections (pre- and post-carpet installation).

It was noted that the compliant tender submissions had been reviewed by SFPD, assessed on a 70:30 cost/quality basis, and that SFPD had recommended awarding the contract to Chiltern Sports Ltd for the sum of £39,205.

The Council received confirmation from Swanage Tennis Club of their commitment and ability to fund the shortfall in the cost of the works, noting that the Council's contribution was limited to £15,000. In addition to this, Swanage Tennis Club had requested that the Council also consider meeting the cost of the consultants (SFPD) for the sum of £1,435.

Members considered the recommendation from SFPD and acknowledged the importance of investing in the facilities at Beach Gardens for residents and visitors. It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Lejeune, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To enter into a contract with Chiltern Sports Ltd for the installation of a sand dressed synthetic turf surface and associated works to tennis courts 4 and 5 at Beach Gardens for the sum of £39,205.

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

To fund the payment to SFPD in the sum of £1,435.

68. **Managed Print Services – To consider award of contract**

Consideration was given to the procurement of a new managed print services contract to replace the Council's ageing printing and photocopying equipment across all departments. Quotations had been sought from six suppliers, and all had submitted valid responses.

As further time was required to evaluate the quotations and variable factors, it was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That delegated authority be provided to officers to award the contract to the highest scoring tender against the agreed criteria and commit to the necessary expenditure.

The Meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.
