

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 29th JANUARY 2024 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor C. Moreton

Councillor J. Bishop

Councillor M. Bonfield

Councillor A. Harris

Councillor D. Monkhouse

Councillor C. Tomes

Councillor W. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, seven members of the public and one Member of the local press attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

There were no matters raised on this occasion.

Major Katrina Greetham, Salvation Army, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman wished to thank Katrina and Jonathan Greetham for their valued contribution to the community and wished them the best of luck in their move from Swanage.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.05 p.m.

171.

Apologies

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Finch, Rogers and Suttle.

172.

Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct.

Agenda Item No. 16 (b) – Councillor Tomes declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of close family members being private beach hut site licensees.

Agenda Item No. 17 – Councillor Foster declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being an acquaintance of one of the concession applicants in respect of the Hardstanding: Catering Facility and the Beach: Northern Kiosk.

Agenda Item No. 18 (a) – Councillor Whitwam declared a non-pecuniary interest in the scale of charges under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a trustee of Swanage Railway.

173.

Minutes

(a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bishop, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11th December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

- (b) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Whitwam, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 18th December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

- (c) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Harris, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Annual Estimates Meeting held on 15th January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

174. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 4th December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

175. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 8th January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

176. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st December 2023 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

177. **Payment of Accounts**

In accordance with Regulations 5 and 6 of the Council's Financial Regulations, the following Payment Schedule was submitted for information:-

- Payment Schedule 9, amounting to £709,386.91.

178. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor welcomed all attendees to the first meeting of 2024 and thanked all councillors, officers and members of the public for their support during the last year. The Town Mayor reported attendance at the following events since the Council meeting held on 11th December 2024:

- The Community Awards evening, held on Friday 19th January 2024, had been a thoroughly enjoyable evening. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Reverend Dr Bird were privileged to present the prestigious glass trophies to those in the community who had gone above and beyond whilst undertaking voluntary work. The Mayor wished to thank the winners and encouraged anyone with some free time to consider volunteering to enrich the lives of others.
- On Thursday 1st February 2024, the Mayor, Tourist Information staff and members of the Carnival Committee will be attending the Dorset Tourism awards evening being held in Weymouth. The organisations could win a gold,

silver or bronze award in different categories and the Mayor looked forward to supporting all nominees.

- The Mayor also wished to highlight the launch event for the new Visit Swanage website, being held at the Mowlem Showbar on Monday 5th February 2024 at 7.00 p.m. It was noted that the tourism website was being established to showcase local businesses/organisations in the town, and business owners were encouraged to attend the event and take advantage of the initial free advertising available on the website.

179. **Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

(a) **Seafront Masterplan, 8th January 2024**

It was noted that discussions held at the Seafront Masterplan working party meeting would be considered under agenda item 9 (see Minute No. 180).

(b) **Property Panel, 10th and 24th January 2024**

It was reported that the Property Panel continued to review the Council's asset base and maintenance of properties and discussions held at the Property Panel meeting would be considered under agenda items 17 and 18 (see Minute No's 188 and 189).

(c) **Events, 16th and 24th January 2024**

Further to Minute No. 9 (d) of the Council meeting held on 30th October 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM), which outlined the proposal to change the venue of the 'Willdoes presents Swanalulu' event from King George's Playing Field to Prince Albert Gardens.

It was AGREED:-

That the Town Council approves the change of venue for the 'Willdoes presents Swanalulu' event to take place on Prince Albert Gardens, rather than King George's Playing Field on 5th to 7th July 2024.

180. **Seafront Masterplan**

(a) **Green Seafront Scheme – To consider next steps in light of response to public consultation**

Further to Minute No. 145 of the Council Meeting held on 11th December 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which outlined recent discussions at meetings of the Seafront Masterplan working party and set out the potential next steps, as follows:

- To explore the option of working in partnership with Dorset Council to take forward the Green Seafront Scheme as a joint project.
- To obtain estimates to undertake a cost analysis of the budgeted costs for each scheme as provided by WSP and set out within the public consultation.

It was acknowledged that Dorset Council would have better access to resources and could offer more officer time and expertise to progress the project. It was noted that cost analysis of the financial estimates provided by WSP, for both the enhanced and essential schemes, would provide more robust project costings and a report would be provided to a future Council meeting.

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

That the Town Council commissions the development of a proposal for taking forward the Green Seafront Scheme as a joint project with

Dorset Council, to be presented to a relevant Council or Committee meeting in spring 2024.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Council investigates options for undertaking a cost analysis of the financial estimates provided by WSP for both the essential and enhanced options in order to develop more robust project costings and to provide a report with recommendations to full Council in early 2024.

(b) **Shore Road improvements – To consider proposal to commission Dorset Council to undertake highways modelling and design work in respect of specified options**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which explained that analysis of the feedback provided during the public consultations for both the Swanage Seafront Masterplan and the Swanage Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme had revealed a strong desire for improvements to pedestrian safety along the northern section of Shore Road. In order to explore options to address these issues, a feasibility study proposal had been received from Dorset Council, as the Highway Authority. Four highway improvement options had been proposed, each to be considered in combination with both of the proposed Green Seafront enhancement schemes, the essential and enhanced, as follows:

- a. Close with gates or features such as bus enforcement cameras to restrict vehicular access. Similar to existing closure along southern section of Shore Rd.
- b. Restrict to one-way traffic, remove parking bays and widen pavements.
- c. As option b. with additional changes to the wider traffic network around the town.
- d. As option a. but a full road closure with the removal of highways features and implementation of placemaking measures.

An estimated fee for the feasibility study had been received from Dorset Council's Infrastructure and Assets Team, at a sum of £7,966, proposed to be funded 50% by Swanage Town Council and 50% by Dorset Council. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes and seconded by Councillor Bonfield:-

That the Town Council jointly commissions (with Dorset Council) a feasibility study to investigate options to amend the layout of Shore Road and the surrounding highway network at a cost of £3,983 to be paid from the Council's general fund balance.

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

Further to a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield and seconded by Councillor Monkhouse:-

That the Town Council confirms inclusion of all of the highway modelling options (a. to d.) as listed above.

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

In order to inform the feasibility study, highway modelling works were recommended and it was suggested this be undertaken during the peak summer season. Although the extent of the work had yet to be fully determined, the cost estimates ranged from £15,600 for a desk top study up to £53,000 for a full highway model based on traffic counts across a large part of north Swanage. Dorset Council had indicated that the modelling costs would have to be borne exclusively by the Town Council.

A discussion ensued around the benefits and disadvantages of both the desk top study and the full highway modelling options and the associated costs. It was acknowledged that modelling would be desirable in order to provide risk mitigation and transparency in any decisions made to changes to the highway layout.

Members acknowledged that there would be no expenditure at this time and that the proposals would benefit from further discussion. It was therefore proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by Councillor Moreton:-

That the options for the highways modelling work be referred to the Traffic Management Advisory Committee for review, and for the Advisory Committee to make a recommendation as to the preferred option.

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

181. **Day's Park - To consider request from Swanage & Herston Football Club for funding to support development of community sports facility proposal**

Further to Minute No. 148 of the Council Meeting held on 11th December 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Town Clerk, and a letter submitted from the Board of Swanage and Herston FC Ltd. It was noted that the Football Club had identified a company with relevant experience to prepare initial plans of a new community sports facility and work with local sports clubs to refine the design of the facility, at a cost of £11,000 (plus VAT). It was noted that if Members were to support this request it could be funded from the £220,000 allocation for improved facilities at Day's Park contained within the Council's agreed capital programme.

The letter, attached as an appendix to the briefing paper, clarified that the £11,000 (£13,200 incl. VAT) would be the first part of a total grant request for £33,102 (£39,722 incl VAT), which would be required to take the proposals through to a full planning application. The Council's representatives on the Day's Park Development Forum, had suggested that the Council may wish to indicate their support for this larger sum, subject to the supply of further information demonstrating that the project is deliverable, including confirmation of funding availability and clarification of the legal structure of the entity that will lead on the project.

Members acknowledged the vast amount of work undertaken by the working party and the representatives of the football club and noted that this had demonstrated the benefit of working together to progress this vital community project. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves the grant request from Swanage and Herston FC Ltd for the sum of £13,200 (inc. VAT) to fund the development of plans for a community sports facility at Day's Park

and makes a larger commitment to grant a further £26,522 (inc. VAT) towards the design fees for planning, subject to the supply of further information that demonstrates that the project is deliverable, that question to be determined by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing working party.

182. **Swanage Town Council (Off-Street) Parking Places Order 2024 – To approve consultation on draft Order**

Further to Minute No. 149 of the Council meeting held on 11th December 2023 and subsequent Car Parking Working Party meetings, Members reviewed the draft Statement of Reasons which detailed a number of proposed changes to parking arrangements in the Town Council's car parks. These included:

- Introduction of free overnight parking in long-stay car parks, 9 p.m. to 8 a.m.
- Consistency with Dorset Council car parks in preventing overnight parking of motorhomes.
- Removal of the hardstanding on Shore Road, Sandpit Field and Queen Elizabeth II (Forres) Field from the Off-Street Parking Order.
- Introduce 'multi-use' spaces for longer vehicles in long-stay car parks.
- Clarify qualifying criteria for a resident's permit.
- Introduce no return periods in short stay car parks.
- Introduce winter charging in North Beach car park.
- Peveril Point parking scheme to be all year round.
- The provision of free parking for resident permit holders in North Beach car park at school drop off/pick up times.

It was noted that the next step was to publish the draft Order, followed by a three-week public consultation period. The responses would be considered by the Car Parks Working Party. It was noted that discussions would be held with Accessible Swanage to engage and inform the process. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Bishop and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves publication of the draft Swanage Town Council (Off-Street) Parking Places Order 2024 for consultation, to be carried out in accordance with the Local Authority Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, and provides authority to the Car Parks Working Party to consider any objections and make recommendations about modifications to the draft order accordingly.

183. **Reports from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillor Trite:

- It was reported that Dorset Council would review its finances at the cabinet meeting being held on Tuesday 30th January 2024. The 3rd quarter of the financial year had seen a reduction in the in-year deficit to £3m, which equated to 1% of the total annual budget.
- It was noted that the savings target from the "Our Future Council" project would be significantly reduced following funding, circa £4m, from central government.
- Dorset Council's Local Transport Plan consultation was noted with drop-in events planned across the county. The deadline to respond would be 3rd March 2024.

- Dorset Council had a new grant scheme to support local communities planting and caring for trees, funded by the Dorset National Landscape team. The fund is open to Town and Parish Councils, schools and established community groups.
- An online Q&A session would be hosted by Dorset Councillors to discuss the Council's budget on 8th February 2024 at 6 p.m.

184. **Reports from Council Representatives on Outside Organisations**

(a) **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership**

It was noted that a meeting would be held on 6th February 2024 at which the future of the Swanage to Wareham service would be discussed.

(b) **Swanage Pier Trust**

It was noted that Councillor Whitwam had come to the end of his term as a trustee and therefore a new trustee would need to be appointed at the Annual Council meeting in May.

185. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There were no matters to report on this occasion.

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

(a) **To note recipients of Community Awards 2023**

Further to the Chairman's announcements, under Minute No. 178, the Mayor reiterated the town's appreciation for the valuable work undertaken by the town's volunteers.

(b) **Shore Road between Victoria Avenue and the Mowlem – confirmation of year-round closure order**

It was noted that following an 18-month experimental traffic regulation order, DC had determined that the southern section of Shore Road would remain permanently closed to vehicles.

(c) **Armed Forces Covenant – proposed signing May/June 2024**

It was noted that the Town Council had been approached about signing the Armed Forces Covenant, which would demonstrate the Council's commitment to equal opportunities for employment for ex-service personnel and their families returning to civilian life. It was suggested this be placed on the agenda of an upcoming meeting of the Personnel Committee for further consideration.

(d) **D-Day 80th anniversary commemorations**

It was reported that the National Trust and Studland Parish Council had announced D-day anniversary commemoration events, and it was suggested that Swanage residents could support Studland in these endeavours.

(e) **Potential for Extraordinary Council Meeting during February 2024**

It was noted that an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council may be required prior to the next scheduled meeting on 25th March 2024. The Mayor would call the meeting if deemed necessary and a date would be circulated in due course.

(f) **Emergency Health Services**

It was noted that a letter had been drafted to SWAST to request data for the period July to December 2023 in relation to the number of call outs and staffing levels, as an FOI request. An update would be provided to a future meeting.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Harris and AGREED:-

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 to

18 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

187. **Procurement**

(a) **Council Buildings - Installation of PV panels and LED Lighting**

Further to Minute No. 159 (c) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 18th December 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager which set out the current situation in connection with the procurement of PV panels and LED lighting as well as access to grant funding from Low Carbon Dorset.

In relation to the quote for LED lighting that had been considered on 18th December, it was reported that the electrical contractor had been asked to provide detailed information about the wattage outputs of the current and proposed lighting installations, but that despite several requests that information had not been forthcoming. Therefore, in order to comply with the terms of the Low Carbon Dorset grant scheme an alternative quote had been sought. Mindful that the Council had been informed that the grant funding provided by Low Carbon Dorset was available on a first-come first-served basis and that there had recently been an increase in the demand for funding, it was proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

To suspend Standing Order 9 in order to reverse Minute No. 159 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 18th December 2023 to the extent required to recognise that the Council cannot place an order as envisaged due to the non-compliance of the quotation submitted with the Low Carbon Dorset grant criteria.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED:-**

To suspend Financial Regulation 11.11 on the grounds of urgent action being required to obtain Low Carbon Dorset grant funding, to allow an order to be placed with AR Harris and Son Electrical Contractors Ltd for the sum stated in the briefing note, subject to confirmation of 50% grant funding by Low Carbon Dorset.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 172 Councillor Tomes left the room during consideration of the following item.

(b) **Main Beach - Replacement of Private Beach Hut Site Staging**

It was reported that storms and adverse weather conditions in late autumn 2023 had caused significant damage and the loss of large sections of the timber staging that is used seasonally to station a number of privately-owned beach huts. It was noted that, despite best endeavours, only two quotes had been received to carry out the repairs required, not three as required by Financial Regulation 11.11. Given the urgency of commissioning the work so that it could be undertaken in advance of the Easter holidays, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council waives Financial Regulation 11.11 in order to authorise the placing of an order with DWG Smith Limited to supply and replace

large sections of the timber staging on Main Beach for the sum of £13,300.

Councillor Tomes re-entered the meeting.

(c) **Operations Depot – Construction of external store and installation of EV charging points**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper that explained the benefits of providing an external store/shelter at the Council's Operations Depot, with additional EVCPs that would be required as the council transitioned further towards a full fleet of electric vehicles. It was noted that a budget allocation of £15,750 for these works had been included in the Capital Programme 2023/24. Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council delegates to Officers authority to place an order in excess of £10,000 to construct an external store at the Operations Depot on the basis that such works are within the budget allocation of £15,750 as set out in the Capital Programme 2023/24.

188. **Award of Seafront Concessions – Update and consideration of draft Heads of Terms**

Further to Minute No. 158 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 18th December 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper prepared by the VSBDM which detailed the latest proposals regarding the new seafront concessions.

In relation to the Hardstanding: Activity Facility consideration was given to a location plan and image of the proposed sauna, which is to be powered by electricity, not wood as initially proposed. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

To confirm the award of the Hardstanding: Activity Facility concession to Tracey Waters, subject to agreement over the terms of the required legal contract, and to approve the draft Heads of Terms for a 7-year lease, subject to contract.

Further to her declaration under Minute No. 172 the Town Mayor left the room during consideration of the following business. In the absence of the Chairman, it was agreed that Councillor Moreton would assume the Chair.

Consideration was next given to the proposal for the Hardstanding: Catering Facility concession. Further to scrutiny of the proposals submitted by Carve Coffee Roasters by the Property Panel it had been agreed that any features around the perimeter of the proposed seating area would be removed so as not to create a sense of 'exclusivity' within this public space. It was noted that the seating area would be dealt with through a licence, separate from the lease agreement for the kiosk. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

To confirm the award of the Hardstanding: Catering Facility concession to Carve Coffee Roasters, subject to agreement over the terms of the required legal contract.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED:**

To approve the draft Heads of Terms for a 7-year lease, subject to contract, and to agree to enter into a licence agreement for the seating area, for a maximum of 40 seats.

In relation to the North Beach Kiosk concession, it was noted that legal advice had been sought in connection with proposed changes to the business proposal submitted as part of the expression of interest process. In light of this, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To proceed with discussions with the business that submitted the highest scoring expression of interest for the North Beach Kiosk to conclude negotiations, subject to contract.

The Town Mayor re-entered the meeting and re-assumed the chair.

Further to concerns having been expressed by councillors over the use of the word 'Hardstanding' to describe the area adjoining the Information Centre on Shore Road (also known as the former shelter site), it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Bishop and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That delegated authority be granted to officers to re-name the area known as the Hardstanding, after seeking the advice of the Property Panel and with engagement from the two proposed concessions.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 172 Councillor Whitwam left the room during consideration of the following item.

189. **Property-Related Legal Matters**

(a) **Swanage Railway – consideration of landlord's consent for proposed changes to facilities at Swanage Station, including future of former Taxi Office**

Further to Minute No. 130 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 30th October 2023, and a meeting held between representatives of the Town Council and Swanage Railway on 10th January 2024, consideration was given to a paper submitted by the Swanage Railway Trust, entitled 'Swanage Station Facilities: Introduction and Overview'.

Members noted the Railway Trust's vision for the future of the Station Building and acknowledged that the rearrangement of the internal offices could bring significant benefits to the existing occupiers. However, Members re-iterated their position in respect of the former taxi office, as set out in the Council's resolution of 30th October 2023. It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Harris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, in accordance with Minute No. 130 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 30th October 2023, the former taxi office should be let to Swanage Railway under a short-term lease, excluded from the security of tenure provisions under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.

Consideration was also given to outline proposals for the construction of a new toilet block on the northern side of the station platform. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That approval in principle be given to the construction of a new toilet block at Swanage Station, final approval to be subject to the consideration of detailed plans.

Councillor Whitwam re-entered the meeting.

(b) **Bus Depot – Rent Review**

Further to Minute No. 160 (a) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 18th December 2023, consideration was given to a letter supplied by the Town Council's surveyor dated 25th January 2024 which had been sent following a meeting with the Property Panel. Having given careful consideration to the matter it was proposed by Councillor Bishop, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the surveyor's advice not to pursue an uplift in rent of the Bus Depot any further at the current time be accepted.

(c) **Peveril Point Road Garage – to consider solicitor's advice**

Further to Minute No. 87 of the Council Meeting held on 24th July 2023, Members considered the content of a briefing paper prepared by the Town Clerk which set out legal advice received in relation to the future occupation of a garage situated on Peveril Point Road. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That delegated authority be granted to officers to engage further professional advice as required in order to inform negotiations with the occupier of the garage at Peveril Point Road and, in consultation with the Property Panel, to agree arrangements to regularise occupation of the property pending determination of its long-term future.

The Chairman thanked all those for their attendance at the meeting.

The Meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.
