

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 30th OCTOBER 2023 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor T. Foster – Chairman

Councillor C. Moreton

Councillor M. Bonfield (until 8.30 p.m.)

Councillor D. Monkhouse (until 7.50 p.m.)

Councillor N. Rogers

Councillor G. Suttle

Councillor C. Tomes

Councillor W. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam (until 8.25 p.m.)

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, 13 members of the public and one Member of the local press attended the Meeting

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- In respect of agenda item 4 (b) concern was expressed about the potential effect of toxins released from the proposed Portland Energy Recovery Facility on the biodiversity of the area and the possible detriment to the health of adults and children in Swanage and the surrounding areas. It was stated that the tourism industry and recycling targets for the area could also be compromised and Members were urged to support the campaign to oppose the building of the facility on Portland. In addition, it was requested that the Town Council donate £1,000 to support the campaign in opposition to the facility on Portland and support a neighbouring parish.
- Regarding agenda item 8, two pupils from St Mary's Primary School gave a presentation outlining the Fairtrade principles and how this was implemented in their school. It was reported that the Fairtrade ethos was embedded in the school and a commitment was made for Fairtrade goods to be used at all events. It was noted that the school hosts a Fairtrade Fortnight annually and reported that 120 pupils had accessed a Fairtrade breakfast. A Fairtrade recipe book had been produced and the children had brought along their Fairtrade chocolate brownies to share at the meeting, which were well received!
The Chairman thanked the pupils for their informative presentation, the Fairtrade leaflet, and the brownies!
- In respect of agenda item 9 (a) a request was made for the Town Council to enter into a 100-year lease directly with Swanage Town & Herston Football Club for the premises at Day's Park. It was noted that a long lease would enable the club to secure alternative funding streams.

Reverend Karen James, Minister at the Methodist Church, Swanage, offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

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

111. **Apologies**
Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Bishop, Finch and Harris.
112. **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. 17 (a) - Councillor Bonfield declared a disclosable pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being an employee of a local taxi company.
Agenda Item No. 17 (a) - Councillor Whitwam declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a trustee of the Swanage Railway.
Agenda Item No. 10 (a) – It was reported that Councillors Foster, Moreton, Bonfield, Monkhouse, Rogers, Suttle, Tomes, Trite and Whitwam had formally requested dispensations to participate in this item by reason of being representatives of the King George's Field Charitable Trust. The dispensations were being sought under section 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct because otherwise the number of members prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business.
It was proposed by Councillor Rogers, seconded by Councillor Trite and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That Grants of Dispensation be provided to Councillors Foster, Moreton, Bonfield, Monkhouse, Rogers, Suttle, Tomes, Trite and Whitwam in order to participate in discussions and vote on Item No. 10
(a) - the consideration of entering into a Management Agreement with King George's Field Charitable Trust.
113. **Minutes**
(a) Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Moreton, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 18th September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.
114. **Planning and Consultation Committee**
(a) Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 11th September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.
(b) Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Rogers and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 2nd October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.
- Consideration was given to the following recommendation contained in the Minutes:-

4) **To consider making a financial contribution of £1,000 to the Portland Association in support of their objection to the planning appeal lodged by the promoters of the Portland Energy Recovery Facility**

Members acknowledged the concerns raised during public participation time. It was noted that the direct line distance between Portland and Swanage was 22 miles, in the direction of the prevailing wind, therefore any adverse effects could impact Swanage and the surrounding areas. Members wished to demonstrate their support for the nearby coastal community by providing a financial contribution in the sum of £1,000, and by nominating Councillor Harris, as Chairman of the Planning and Consultation Committee, to speak on behalf of the Town Council at the planning inquiry in December 2023.

Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council agrees to make a financial contribution to the Portland Association in the sum of £1,000, towards legal and technical expert support costs in relation to the planning appeal in respect of the proposed development of an Energy Recovery Facility in Portland Port, and that Councillor Harris, Chairman, be nominated to speak on behalf of the Town Council at the inquiry in December 2023.

115. **Environment and Green Spaces Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee Meeting held on 11th October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

4) **To consider the procurement of LED lighting and solar panels, conditional upon funding from Low Carbon Dorset**

Proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a procurement of LED Lighting in Council Buildings and Solar Panels for Beach Gardens Pavilion and the Operations Department Depot should be undertaken, on the condition that the work is part-funded by Low Carbon Dorset and the work is implemented in the 2023-24 financial year.

116. **Extraordinary Meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 13th October 2023**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Rogers and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 13th October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

117. **Extraordinary Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 13th October 2023**

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

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on 13th October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

4) **To consider the adoption of the Draft Data Protection Policy, Draft Revised Privacy Notices and Draft Records Management Policy**

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Rogers and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the draft Data Protection Policy, Privacy Notices and Records Management Policy be adopted. Furthermore, that delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Data Protection Officer, to finalise the document retention schedule, ensuring that it is tailored to the Town Council's requirements.

118. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 30th September 2023 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

119. **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 6, amounting to £653,025.87.

120. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported attendance at the following events since the Council meeting held on 24th July 2023:

- It had been a privilege to have met a group of Ukrainian families at Cumulus Outdoor Centre, who had travelled from Weymouth for a day out organised by Weymouth Churches. The intention was to welcome the Ukrainian families to Swanage and the welcome they extended was remarkable. Cumulus had extended an invitation to hold a day out for councillors, where activities to look forward to include high ropes, archery or rifle shooting.
- Opening the Poppy Shop in Station Road and also the Old Harry Rocks shop, in Institute Road.
- Opening of the Purbeck Film Festival and attending the display at Co-op to promote Purbeck Coast Radio.
- It was reported that a Mayor's Air Cadet had been appointed and that the Mayor looked forward to meeting her in due course.
- Some tickets for the Polar Express experience on the Swanage Railway had been donated and it was hoped that these could be raffled to raise funds for the Mayor's nominated charities for this year, the RNLI and Lewis Manning Hospice Care.

121. **Fairtrade – To confirm the Town Council’s continued commitment to maintaining “Fairtrade Community” status**

Members thanked the children of St Mary’s Primary School for their valued contribution during public participation time and acknowledged the importance of understanding the origins and meaning of Fairtrade. It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Suttle and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-
That the Town Council reaffirms its commitment to maintaining “Fairtrade Community” status.

122. **Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

(a) **Sports, Leisure and Wellbeing, 4th and 25th October 2023**

Further to Minute No. 101 (a) of the Council meeting held on 18th September 2023, and a briefing note prepared by the Town Clerk, it was noted that a condition survey had been undertaken on the Football Club buildings on 4th October 2023, which had highlighted continued deterioration of the buildings, despite the considerable effort of the Football Club to improve the premises. A summary of the surveyor’s key recommendations had been discussed at the meeting of the Day’s Park Forum on 18th October, at which the Football Club’s representatives had agreed to take forward a number of actions to urgently address the most important issues raised. Members noted the actions taken by the Town Council and the assurances provided by Swanage Town & Herston Football Club that steps will be taken to address the urgent items highlighted by the survey report.

In respect of taking forward proposals to provide improved facilities at Day’s Park, it was reported that the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust (S&PDT) had reviewed their involvement and decided to withdraw from the project. Thanks were provided to the Trust’s Chairman, Mr Bob Foster, and S&PDT for their hard work to date, and it was anticipated that the Trust would continue to offer their support for the project. Discussions had continued between the Town Council and the Football Club and an initial meeting had been held with Dorset Council’s Leisure Services Manager who would bring considerable expertise to future discussions. It was agreed that a meeting of the Sports, Leisure and Wellbeing Working Party should be convened to consider the different options that had been identified for providing improved community sports facilities at Day’s Park prior to the next Council meeting on 11th December.

Further to an onsite meeting held on 25th October 2023 at the Former St Mark’s School Playing Field, it was reported that at the Fun Day held on 1st May the majority of attendees who had expressed a view on the future of the field wished to see it remain as a green space with the addition of benches. Members discussed the various name suggestions and agreed that in providing a name the space would develop its own identity. It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council names the former St Mark’s School Playing Field “Herston Community Field”.

(b) **Property Panel, 13th October 2023**

It was noted that the discussions held at the Property Panel meeting would be considered under agenda item No. 17 (a).

(c) **Market, 11th October 2023**

It was noted that the recommendations of the Market Working Party would be considered at the next meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee, being held on 22nd November 2023.

(d) **Events, 25th October 2023**

Consideration was given to a briefing note prepared by the VSBDM, which detailed the Events procedure and outlined the new events proposed for 2024, which included the Coastal Barbarian Rowing Regatta, Studland Swim Run, Swanaloolu Festival, Wareham Town Band and Jurassic Coast Macmillan Mighty Hike. It was noted that the new events would be trialled for one-year only and reviewed by the Events Working Party at the end of 2024. Thanks were given to the volunteers who organised the events and made them possible.

Further to a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council agrees to the new events, indicated in section 4 of the briefing note, along with the various criteria recommended for the Swanaloolu Festival and the Macmillan Big Hike, including the use of Day's Park as the mid-way checkpoint should Forres Field be unsuitable at that time. Furthermore, that the proposed revised terms and conditions, indicated in section 5 be approved and the events as detailed in Appendix 2 be agreed.

It was **FURTHER AGREED:-**

That delegated authority be provided to the VSBDM to provide authorisation to event organisers to sell alcohol for fundraising purposes.

123. **King George V Playing Field**

(a) **To consider entering into a Management Agreement with the King George's Field, Swanage, Charitable Trust**

Further to Minute No. 5 of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on 13th October 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out specialist legal advice received in relation to the Town Council's management of the King George's Field, Swanage, charitable trust, of which it is the corporate trustee. The Council had been advised that it should enter into a management agreement with the Trust so that the current arrangements for managing the field are set out in a formal legal document. A draft management agreement had been circulated prior to the meeting for consideration and had earlier been approved at a Meeting of the King George's Field, Swanage, Charitable Trust. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Monkhouse and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Town Council agrees to enter into the Management Agreement with the King George's Field, Swanage, Charitable Trust in respect of the King George V Playing Field, and to authorise its signature by two councillors.

(b) **To consider proposed replacement of wetland walkway**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Assets and Compliance Manager, which set out the costs associated with the complete replacement of the wetland walkway, required due to vandalism. It was noted that a claim had been made to the Council's insurers but that that had been unsuccessful. Therefore, quotations had been sought which indicated a budget sum required of £2,500, which could be allocated from within the existing repair and maintenance budgets. It was anticipated that the work would be undertaken by the Council's in-house team with an estimated completion time of two weeks.

It was noted that due to the location of the walkway and materials used the walkway may be susceptible to vandalism again in the future.

A brief discussion ensued during which Members noted that the potential of future vandalism should not lead to the removal of the benefit of the walkway to the community. It was therefore proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To reinstate a timber walkway within the wetlands area of King George V Playing Fields at a cost of circa. £2,500.

Councillor Monkhouse left the meeting at 7.50 p.m.

124. **Station Approach – To consider authorisation of next steps in implementing safety improvement scheme**

Further to Minute No. 131 (a) of the Council meeting held on 30th January 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out proposed safety improvements in Station Approach. Discussions between officers of the Dorset Council Project Management Team and Swanage Town Council have been held and it is felt that the proposals provide the most advantageous outcome in terms of meeting the project brief whilst not relying on the cooperation of adjacent landowners. At a recent informal meeting of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee, minor design amendments were considered, which included:

- Removal of the existing bus shelters and replacement by larger bus shelters located at either end of the pavement in front of the station entrance to ease pedestrian congestion.
- Tailoring the vehicular exit from the Co-Op to lead vehicles towards the correct exit past the station.
- Removing the railway parking from the location indicated within the taxi rank.

It was noted that the proposal would also be presented to the next meeting of the Accessible Swanage group for comment.

It was anticipated that the works would take approximately six weeks to complete with proposed commencement in September/October 2024. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Moreton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council approves the current proposal for infrastructure improvements at Station Approach, Swanage and that delegated authority be given to the Community Services Committee for any further minor amendments to the design. Furthermore, the Town Council agrees to carry forward the sum of £50,000 allocated in the Capital Programme 2023/24 to create a total budget allocation of £120,000 in the Capital Programme for 2024/25.

125. **Reports from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillors Suttle and Trite:

- It was reported that Dorset Council (DC) was in the process of budget setting for the financial year 2024/25. It was noted that in order to maintain services to residents additional funding of £15m was being sought to cover the budget deficit.
- It was reported that a judicial review regarding the Bibby Stockholm barge was taking place.
- It was noted that John Sellgren, Executive Director of Place, was retiring and that the completion of asset transfers would be a priority before his departure.

- A Dorset Resident Survey was being conducted and door to door representatives may approach residents at home between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- The winter gritting teams were on standby to take action when required.
- It was noted that Round 4 of the Household Support Fund would open on Tuesday 5th December 2023.
- A decision had been made to proceed with a devolution deal for Dorset, which would enable Dorset Council to take decisions over a wider area of activities, providing it fell within the Council's strategic policy objectives.

Councillor Monkhouse joined the meeting remotely from 8.05 p.m.

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

(a) **Swanage Carnival Committee**

Further to Minute No. 106 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 18th September 2023, it was reported that the presentation evening had been held on Friday 6th October 2023, where it was announced that £27,650 had been raised for local charities. It was noted that Mr Brian Norman had stood down as President after 10 years, and appreciation was shown for his hard work during that time.

127. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There were no matters to report on this occasion.

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

(a) **Report following Swanage Sports Club Networking Meeting, 3rd October 2023**

It was reported that a successful first networking meeting for local Sports Clubs had taken place on 3rd October 2023. It was anticipated that a plan would be developed to open sport to a wider audience and a support network established for the various sports clubs in town.

(b) **Six Months to Local Elections – Information event for prospective Town Councillors, 20th November 2023**

It was noted that the local elections would take place in May 2024 and the Town Council would be hosting an information event for prospective new councillors on Monday 20th November 2023, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Town Hall.

(c) **Committee Review – December 2023**

Further to Minute No. 186 of the Council meeting held on 24th April 2023, whereby it had been agreed that the trial period for the revised committee structure be extended, with a further review to take place upon the anniversary of its adoption in September 2023, Members considered whether they wished to pursue a further review prior to the next election. It was noted that the committee structure reflected the Corporate Plan aims and objectives and consequently it was
AGREED:-

That the review of the current committee structure should be deferred until the last meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee prior to the election, currently scheduled for 13th March 2024.

Consideration was given as to whether or not to form a dedicated working party or steering group to take forward the redevelopment at Day's Park. However, it was agreed that the existing arrangements should remain at place for the remainder of this Council's term of office.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Bonfield 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.

Councillor Whitwam left the meeting at 8.25 p.m.

129. **Procurement**

(a) **Boat Park jetty emergency repairs**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out the recent deterioration of the extension to the jetty located nearest to the Angling Club/Lifeboat Station. An inspection had taken place by engineers to explore potential repair methods. It was proposed by Councillor Suttle, seconded by Councillor Rogers and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To prepare and issue a detailed brief for repairs to the jetty for tender purposes and that a budget of £1,500 be allocated for professional advice to support the preparation of the tender brief and analysis of responses. Furthermore, that an assessment of the budget costs associated with the longer-term future of the jetty be undertaken.

Councillor Bonfield left the meeting at 8.30 p.m.

130. **Property-Related Legal Matters**

(a) **Rental of former Taxi Office – To consider report on expressions of interest**

Further to Minute No. 110 (c) of the Council Meeting held on 18th September 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined four expressions of interest that had been received by the Council's agent. It was noted that these had been reviewed by the Property Panel at its meeting on Friday 13th October. Three of the offers proposed refreshment sales, but the Panel had concluded that a refreshment facility was not well suited to the area, especially given concerns about crowding of pedestrians around the bus stops and the potential to re-locate one of the bus stops to the area in front of the former taxi office as part of the proposed improvements to Station Approach, discussed under Minute No. 124 above.

Consequently, it was proposed by Councillor Suttle, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To accept the offer of Swanage Railway to rent the former taxi office at Swanage Station in the sum of £5,250 p.a., subject to agreement of terms for a short lease, excluded from the security of tenure provisions under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.

It was noted that some improvement works were required to the premises prior to the new tenant taking occupation.

The Meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.