

Minutes of a Meeting of the **TOURISM AND LOCAL  
ECONOMY COMMITTEE** held at The Grand Hotel,  
Burlington Road, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> JULY  
2025** at **2.15 p.m.**

Chairman: -

Councillor C Tomes

Swanage Town Council

Present: -

Councillor M Bonfield

Swanage Town Council

Councillor J Dorrington

Swanage Town Council

Councillor T Foster

Swanage Town Council

Councillor J Lejeune

Swanage Town Council

Councillor C Sutton

Swanage Town Council

Councillor S Vile

Swanage Town Council

Outside Representatives: -

Ms L Bish

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Mr M Curtis

Heart of Swanage

Mr J du Toit

Bournemouth & Swanage Motor Road & Ferry  
Company

Ms L Egan

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Ms A King

Swanage Railway

Ms S Libicka

Swanage Chamber of Trade

Mr P Sykes

Swanage Railway

Mr M Whitwam

Purbeck Community Rail Partnership

Also Present: -

Mrs S Layton-Kelly

Administration Officer

Mr C Milmer

Visitor Services and Business Development Manager

Ms B Betts

Environment, Policy and Partnership Manager,  
Dorset Council

Ms T Deacon

Purbeck Sounds

**Public Participation Time**

- An enquiry was raised regarding the condition of the road surface along Commercial Road. It was noted that, at the Council meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025, Councillor Trite had agreed to liaise with Dorset Council on the matter. In light of Councillor Trite's recent death a question was raised as to whether any update had been received. The Chairman agreed to take the matter forward with Swanage Ward Councillor, Councillor Suttle, and would report back in due course.
- The potential for car park permits to be issued at a discounted rate at North Beach car park to local B&Bs was raised. The Chairman acknowledged the comments and noted that this would be discussed under agenda item 6) b).

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Councillor Vile to the committee, along with new committee members representing the Bournemouth & Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Company and the Heart of Swanage, together with Ms B Betts from Dorset Council.

1) **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Coward, Ms K Black (Head Ranger Durlston Country Park), Mr M Kean (Bournemouth & Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Company), Mr A Knill (Heart of Swanage), Mr R Marsh (Swanage Fishermen's Association) and Mr K Sheppard (RNLI Lifeguards).

2) **Declarations of Interest**

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

**Agenda Item 5)** - Councillor Bonfield and Councillor Tomes each declared an interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being Beach Hut users. However, in light of the substantive matter of beach hut charges being deferred to a future meeting, both councillors did not consider their declarations to be prejudicial to their participation in consideration of this agenda item.

3) **Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

There were no matters raised.

4) **Matters arising from the Meeting of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

A brief summary of matters discussed at the advisory committee was provided by the Chairman of the Coastal Change and Beach Management Advisory Committee, which included:-

- Consideration to be given to the potential restructuring of the CCBMAC meetings to address the two core topics separately.
- Safety concerns raised by the RNLI regarding the increasing number of paddleboarders who are unaware of the dangers posed by offshore winds.
- Ongoing concerns were noted relating to the management of dogs on leads on the private beach.

5) **Beach Huts – Process for setting fees and charges for 2026 – 2027**

The Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) requested that consideration be given to deferring the setting of beach hut fees until October 2025, in order to facilitate their review alongside other Town Council fees and charges. It was proposed by Councillor Lejeune, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the setting of beach hut fees be deferred until October 2025, to facilitate their review alongside other Town Council fees and charges.

6) **Establishment of Task and Finish groups**

a) **Private Sites – Request to change colour of Beach Hut**

It was reported that a request to change the colour of a beach hut on a private site had been received, but that this was not in compliance with the current private site licence agreement. A discussion ensued, during which it was agreed that Councillors Bonfield, Foster and Sutton would form a task & finish group to consider all potential options. It was proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY :-

That a task and finish group, comprised of Councillors Bonfield, Foster and Sutton, be established to explore all potential options relating to requests for changes to beach huts on private sites and report back in due course.

**b) Car Parking – Request to consider parking permits at North Beach Car Park.**

Consideration was given to a request for the purchase of parking permits at the North Beach car park, at a discounted price of 50%, to be made available to B&Bs in the immediate area. During the following discussion, it was suggested that the potential for permits to be available in all Town Council owned car parks should be considered. It was noted that a Car Parks and Market Working Party had been appointed by the Town Council at its annual meeting and therefore this matter should be referred to that group for further consideration.

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Vile and AGREED :-

That the request for consideration to be given to discounted parking permits at North Beach car park, along with the potential for similar arrangements at other Town Council owned Car Parks, be passed to the Car Parks and Market Working Party.

**c) Festive Lights -update from working party to consider the future use of the Mowlem projector.**

An update was expected from the working party established to consider the future use of the Mowlem projector. However, it was reported that the working party had not yet convened. It was agreed that the working party should now be convened as a task and finish group and provide an update at the next meeting of the committee.

**7) Dorset Council Regulatory Matters**

**a) Purbeck Watercraft Bylaw 2025 – Update**

Dorset Council's Environment, Policy and Partnership Manager provided a presentation to the committee outlining draft proposals for changes to the watercraft bylaw for 2025. The proposals included a potential reduction in the distance of the marker buoys from the shore from 300 metres to 150 metres.

The draft proposals also featured the introduction of designated zones, including an area for jet skis, a separate area for non-powered watercraft and another for powered watercraft.

It was noted that these proposals were currently in draft format and that a formal public consultation would be undertaken in due course.

**8) Update from the Visitor Services & Business Development Manager**

- The beach has once again been awarded the prestigious Blue Flag award.
- An email had been received from a user of a Charity Beach Hut expressing sincere thanks for the opportunity to make use of the facilities and highlighting the significant value and enjoyment the beach hut had brought.
- A newly installed awning outside the Swanage Information Centre was working well and had created an additional area for engaging with customers.
- The RNLI Lifeguards had expressed an interest in moving from a yearly contract to a 3 or 5 yearly rolling contract, further information will be provided at a future meeting.
- It was noted that morning footfall had noticeably increased, particularly in the seafront and town centre areas. In light of this, there could be a need to consider an extension to the opening hours of the public toilets.

**9) Seafront Stall Holders – Review of Policy**

Consideration was given to a briefing note explaining that the Town Council permits the area known as 'Shore Place' to be used by charity and community groups throughout the year to promote their cause. It was noted that due to an increase in stall sizes and the arrival of two new businesses (Carve coffee kiosk and the Swanage Sauna), it had become relatively rare for there to

be more than one stall on the site at a time. However, based on stall type and size, there remained the potential that additional stalls may be accommodated.

The Committee was asked to give consideration to granting delegated authority to officers to manage the siting and number of stalls at Shore Place in the most effective way to enhance the area. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Sutton and AGREED :-

That delegated authority be given to officers to manage the siting and number of stalls at Shore Place.

#### 10) Updates from Outside Representatives

Outside Representatives provided the following updates :-

- **Swanage Railway** – The success of events held to date was reported. Details were also shared regarding the programme of upcoming events.
- **Bournemouth & Swanage Motor Road & Ferry Company** – It was reported that there are no scheduled re-fit closures planned for the ferry this year, so the ferry service is expected to continue operating throughout the year without interruption.
- **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership** – Members were informed that the proposal for a Halt at the Blue Pool were going ahead with the potential that it will be in operation from May 2026.
- **Swanage Chamber of Trade** – Members received an update on recent activities of the Swanage Chamber of Trade, which included the following key initiatives:-
  - SOS -Switch on Swanage Lights and Signs of Swanage: The Chamber are currently distributing collection jars to shops within the town. The purpose of this is to raise funds to support improved signage and festive lighting for the town.
  - Centennial Celebrations: Plans are underway to hold a Dinner Dance event to mark the Chamber's centenary. The event is scheduled to be held at the Grand Hotel, with further details to be confirmed in due course.
  - Business Window Sticker with QR Codes: The Chamber is introducing a new scheme involving the distribution of window stickers to local businesses. These stickers will feature QR codes that link directly to the Swanage Chamber of Trade website offering increased visibility and engagement with Chamber's activities.

#### 11) Items of Information and Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

**Signage to highlight a safe walking route to and from Broad Road Car Park to lower High Street (raised in Traffic Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 11/06/2025)** – Councillor Sutton reported that a suggestion regarding the installation of signage to highlight a safe walking route between Broad Road Car Park and lower High Street had been discussed at the Traffic Management Advisory Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2025. Councillor Sutton brought the matter to the Committee to seek input from Members. During discussions, concerns were expressed regarding the possibility for expenditure on signage to become redundant following the completion of the proposed flood alleviation scheme in the area. In light of these considerations, it was suggested that the matter should be referred to the Car Parks and Market Working Party for further consideration. Therefore, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Foster and AGREED:-

That the proposal of the installation of signage to highlight a safe walking route to and from Broad Road Car Park to lower High Street, be referred to the Car Parks and Market Working Party.

**Purbeck Sounds** – A representative from Purbeck Sounds Radio extended an invitation for Members to visit the local radio station.

**12) Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the Committee was confirmed as Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November at 2.15pm at the Grand Hotel, Burlington Road, Swanage.

The Chairman thanked everyone present for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 3.40 p.m.

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