

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 14th SEPTEMBER 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor C. Tomes – Chairman

Councillor M. Bonfield
Councillor P. Burridge
Councillor M. Coward
Councillor J. Lejeune
Councillor T. Foster
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor G. Suttle
Councillor C. Sutton
Councillor S. Vile

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, seven members of the public and two representatives of the local press and media attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- **Swanage-based Ambulance Car** - a report was presented on information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act from the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) regarding the Swanage-based ambulance car service, together with liaison with NHS bodies concerning access for Swanage and Purbeck patients to reconfigured health services, and regarding plans to restore and develop local NHS services in Swanage and Wareham.
- It was noted that the Town Council was still awaiting a response from SWASFT regarding the data for January-June 2026, and the importance of continuing to request information to monitor performance was again emphasised.
- An update was provided on efforts to monitor attendance at Swanage Hospital's Minor Injuries Unit and outpatient clinics, promote existing local NHS services, and seek the restoration of services in Swanage and Wareham, including outpatients clinics, MIU opening hours, and full walk-in access to the MIU. A petition calling for the restoration of local services was approaching 4,000 signatures, with a target of 5,000 before presentation to Dorset Council and the NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board.
- Thanks were expressed for the continued work to support health services in Purbeck.
- **Swanage Folk Festival 2026** – a member of the public congratulated the festival organisers on another successful festival.

Cllr. Moreton offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

The Chairman opened the Council Meeting at 7.10 p.m.

74. **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Bishop and Dorrington.

75. **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. 10 – Councillor Bonfield declared an interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a regular beach hut user.

76. **Minutes**

- (a) Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Coward and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 20th July 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

- (b) Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 5th August 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

77. **Finance and Governance Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on 22nd July 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

78. **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 3rd August 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

79. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 7th September 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Following approval of the Minutes, Councillor Foster thanked Members of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for their support and participation in the Neighbourhood Plan process.

80. **Statements of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st July 2026 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

- (b) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st August 2026 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

81. **Payment of Accounts**

In accordance with Financial Regulations 5 and 6 the following Payment Schedules were submitted for information:-

- Payment Schedule 4, amounting to £592,262.14.
- Payment Schedule 5, amounting to £810,358.59.

82. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported a busy month and had attended the following events:

- **Swanage Regatta and Carnival** – on 26th July 2026, the Mayor, Mayoress and their son had taken part in the Carnival procession. Having spent the previous 15 years helping to organise the procession behind the scenes, the Mayor had been pleased and honoured to participate. He thanked everyone who had attended or taken part in this year's events, as well as the volunteers whose hard work had made Carnival Week such a success.
- **Swanage Sailing Club** – on 6th August 2026, the Mayor had attended the Club's 'Super Thursday' series prize-giving ceremony. He had also enjoyed seeing so many young sailors sailing in the bay and competing in the Allan Cross Series race.
- **Swanage Museum 50th Anniversary** - on 26th August 2026, the Deputy Mayor and Councillors Bonfield and Moreton had attended the Museum's 50th anniversary celebrations. Thanks were extended to the trustees and volunteers who gave their time to welcome visitors to the Museum, which was recognised as an important cultural asset for the town.
- **Swanage Sea Rowing Club 25th Anniversary** – on 23rd August 2026, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Bonfield had the pleasure of attending the Club's 25th anniversary celebrations, joining current and former members to mark this important milestone. The Club's success in winning the Jurassic League for 2026 was noted.
- **Swanage Folk Festival** – on 12th September 2026, the Mayor had the honour of taking part in the festival's celebrations and led the parade along the seafront, accompanied by the Swanage and Wareham Town Criers. It was noted that a record number of dancers had participated in this year's event.

83. **Meeting Schedule – To confirm date of next meeting of the Personnel Committee on 13th October 2026**

Consideration was given to bringing forward the Personnel Committee Meeting, scheduled for 14th October 2026, by one day. It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Personnel Committee Meeting scheduled for 14th October 2026 be rescheduled to 13th October 2026 at 11.00 a.m.

It was then reported that a visit to Weymouth had been scheduled for the afternoon of 7th October 2026 for the Chairman and Councillor Bonfield to find out more about Weymouth Town Council's Beach Access Project. A request was therefore made to bring forward the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting, scheduled for 2.15 p.m. that day, to 11.00 a.m.

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by the Chairman and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Beach Management Advisory Committee Meeting scheduled for 2.15 p.m. on 7th October 2026 be rescheduled to 11.00 a.m.

84. **Working Party and Task & Finish Group Updates**

- (a) **Museum Task & Finish Group held on 3rd August 2026 – To consider request for confirmation of security of tenure**

Consideration was given to a briefing note outlining Swanage Museum's progress in strengthening its governance and developing a sustainable business plan, and its request for assurance regarding its future occupation of the Heritage Centre building to support an application to the Dorset Council Culture Revenue Fund. It was noted that the grant would be fundamental to the Museum's future operation. The Town Council's Corporate Plan identified Swanage Museum as one of the organisations with which the Council worked in partnership for the benefit of local residents and visitors. It was noted that supporting the Museum's efforts to secure external funding would contribute towards protecting an important heritage offering, strengthening public access to local history, supporting educational opportunities and enhancing Swanage's cultural offer.

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

That the Town Council issues a letter of comfort to Swanage Museum in support of its application to the Dorset Council Culture Revenue Fund, confirming the Town Council's ongoing commitment to working constructively with the Museum and to entering into a longer-term lease for the Heritage Centre building in the Town Square, subject to evidence being provided of a sustainable plan for the Museum's future operation.

(b) Property Panel held on 5th August 2026

It was reported that work on rent reviews was ongoing.

(c) Communications Strategy Working Party held on 17th August 2026

An update was provided on discussions held at the meeting, including the next edition of the Talk of the Town Hall newsletter, research into potential new audiovisual equipment to improve remote public access to Council meetings, and proposed communications regarding the Green Seafront project.

(d) Fishers' Huts Task & Finish Group held on 28th August 2026

It was reported that a brief meeting had been held to review existing hut occupation and the potential allocation of huts. It was anticipated that no new allocations would be made before spring 2028.

(e) Seafront Masterplan Working Party held on 7th September 2026

An update was provided on the progress of the Green Seafront project planning applications, the next steps in the procurement process and potential project timescales. It was anticipated that the planning applications would be considered at Dorset Council's Eastern Area Planning Committee meeting scheduled for 21st October 2026.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 75, Councillor Bonfield left the room during consideration of the following item.

85. Beach Huts – To consider scale of fees and charges for 2027/28

Further to Minute No. 58 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 20th July 2026 consideration was given to a briefing note setting out proposed changes to beach hut fees and charges for 2027/28, together with proposed amendments to the booking arrangements and terms and conditions.

The Town Council offered a range of beach huts, and attention was drawn to a report published by Monzo about council-owned beach huts (at 22 locations) dated 14th August 2026, which had identified the Spa Beach huts as the second-best value for daily

hire in the UK, with the upper level Shore Road huts coming in as joint-third.

Members discussed the need to balance any fee increases with encouraging uptake, particularly in the Spa and Spa Retreats areas over the next year, in anticipation of the new huts proposed as part of the Green Seafront project.

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

That the proposed changes to beach hut fees and charges for 2027-28, as set out in rows 1, 2 and 3 of the table in Section 4 of the briefing note dated September 2026, be approved.

It was proposed by Councillor Suttle, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That a 3% increase in fees, as set out in row 4 of the table in Section 4 and detailed in Appendices 1 and 4 of the briefing note dated September 2026, be approved.

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

That the proposed changes to the terms and conditions, as set out in Section 7 of the briefing note dated September 2026, be approved, and that delegated authority be granted to the Visitor Services Manager to determine the permitted kW rating of a single electric heater in a beach hut.

Councillor Bonfield re-entered the Meeting.

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

(a) **Swanage Regatta and Carnival Committee**

On behalf of the Carnival Committee, the Chairman expressed thanks to the Assets and Compliance Manager, the Visitor Services Manager and their respective teams for their support towards making this year's Carnival Week a success.

87. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

Updates were provided which included:

- **Swanage-based Ambulance Car** – further to the update given during Public Participation Time, it was noted that once the petition reached 5,000 signatures, Dorset Council would be able to refer it to the People and Health Scrutiny Committee for consideration. Everyone was encouraged to share details of the petition.
- **Shore Road improvement project** – Dorset Council was progressing the design work for the project.
- **Dorset Council Waste Services** – it was reported that a meeting had been held with the Wareham Depot regarding proposed changes to local bin collection dates. Letters would shortly be sent to affected households.
- **Dorset Cultural Strategy 2026-2031** – Councillor Tomes and Councillor Ben Wilson, Dorset Councillor for SE Purbeck, had attended a meeting to gain a better understanding of Dorset Council's Cultural Strategy.

- **Dorset Local Visitor Economy Partnership Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2026-2035** – Councillors Tomes and Bonfield had attended the official launch of the DMP on 7th September 2026. The Plan set out a shared vision and framework for the county over the following ten years. It was noted that details of the full framework were available online and that further workshops would be held for town councils.

88. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There were no matters to report.

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

(a) **Swanage Neighbourhood Plan – To note additional consultation period**

It was reported that, following advice from the planning consultants at the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 3rd September 2026, an additional six-week public consultation period had been agreed as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which formed part of the evidence base for the Plan, had not been published on the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan website by the consultants during the Regulation 14 consultation.

The SEA, together with the Habitats Regulations Assessment and Housing Needs Assessment, would be published for review. The additional consultation would provide statutory consultees and members of the public with a further opportunity to comment, helping to ensure that the Plan met the basic conditions required to proceed to referendum.

It was noted that the consultation would be widely publicised, including through a leaflet drop to homes and businesses in Swanage, and face-to-face community engagement sessions. Any additional representations received would be considered by the planning consultants and Steering Group following the consultation.

(b) **Vodafone – proposed upgrade to telecoms mast at King George’s Field**

It was reported that a landlord notification letter had been received from Beacon Comms Ltd, on behalf of Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Limited, regarding proposed upgrade works to the telecommunications mast in Main Beach car park, which would be carried out under permitted development rights.

(c) **Swanage Town Council - Annual Return 2025/26**

The Town Clerk was pleased to report that the Council’s external auditors, BDO, had today issued their opinion on the 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return and had not raised any matters for consideration by the Town Council. This would be formally reported to a future meeting.

Further to Standing Order 12.a.viii, it was AGREED:

That item 16 be brought forward on the agenda.

90. **Property Related Legal Matters**

(a) **Swanage Town & Herston Football Club – To consider update further to Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 5th August 2026**

The Town Clerk provided a short update regarding the Council’s ongoing discussions with Swanage Town & Herston Football Club. A meeting between representatives of both organisations had been held on Friday 11th September, at which the Club had confirmed that they would be commissioning improvements to the buildings at Day’s Park and would provide the Council with the written undertaking requested further to Minute No. 72 (b) of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 5th August 2026.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Foster, 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 item 16 (due to legal and commercial confidentiality).

91. **Procurement**

(a) Panorama Road – To consider awarding contract for resurfacing

The Assets & Compliance Manager introduced a briefing paper that set out the procurement process that had been followed in respect of resurfacing works to the unadopted east-west stretch of Panorama Road to the north of Swanage Bay View Holiday Park and the south of house numbers 2-36 Panorama Road. The briefing paper also set out the most economically advantageous quotation. It was noted that despite seeking quotes on two separate occasions it had only proved possible to obtain two compliant cost estimates, and, therefore, for the reasons set out in the briefing paper, it would be necessary for the Town Council to suspend Financial Regulation 11.11 in order to place an order for the work.

Consideration was also given as to whether the Council should commission an enhanced surfacing product, which would improve durability and comply with requirements from the highway authority for potential future adoption.

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

That Financial Regulation 11.11 be suspended, for the reasons set out in the briefing paper, in order to award a contract to David R. White Building Services Ltd for resurfacing works at Panorama Road for the sum of £28,050.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:-

That delegated authority be granted to the Assets & Compliance Manager to instruct a variation in contract relating to the use of an enhanced surfacing product up to a total project cost of £30,050.

The Meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.
