

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at The Methodist Church, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 17th NOVEMBER 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M. Bonfield – Chairman

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

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, 22 members of the public attended the Meeting. Also in attendance was PC Fiona Tricks, Purbeck Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- Representations were made that the door-to-door campaigning of a local transport action group had been negatively portrayed in the Green Seafront Engagement Report, noting that the group considered this a democratic method of engaging residents that warranted support rather than criticism.
- Drawing on their professional experience, a local resident highlighted concerns that they had as to whether the recent Green Seafront and Shore Road engagement process had met the requirements for public consultation established by the Gunning Principles.
- Comments were made regarding remarks attributed to councillors that suggested that the outcome of the engagement process had been predetermined. Concerns were also expressed regarding the perceived ‘splitting’ of the Green Seafront and Shore Road schemes post-consultation. A view was expressed that public money could be better spent on other projects.
- A resident raised concern that there was a lack of information available about ground conditions and other technical matters in relation to the Green Seafront Scheme, nor had a financial case been published. It was suggested that regular maintenance might address the issues rather than more costly structural works.
- Thanks were given to the Council for its ongoing work and engagement regarding the Green Seafront Stabilisation scheme and best wishes for a Happy Christmas were extended.
- In connection with Agenda Item 11(b), a request was made for the Town Council to award a grant to the Mowlem Theatre in support of its ‘Raise the Roof’ campaign.

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

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

110. **Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

111. **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.

112. **Minutes**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Foster and seconded by Councillor Coward:-

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 20th October 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

113. **Personnel Committee**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Vile and seconded by Councillor Dorrington:-

That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on 15th October 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

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

3) **Staff Handbook Policy Updates**

It was noted that, since the meeting of the Personnel Committee, the wording relating to minor breaches in section 5.1 of the Disciplinary Policy had been reviewed by South West Councils and it was advised that there was no need to change the wording of 5.1 of the Disciplinary Policy.

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

That the new and amended policies covering Disciplinary, Grievance, Absence Management, Bullying and Harassment, Menopause, Health and Wellbeing, Neonatal and Reasonable Adjustments be adopted, subject to the reference to 'medical treatment' in section 1 of the Menopause Policy being removed.

114. **Community Services Committee**

(a) Proposed by Councillor Moreton and seconded by Councillor Sutton:-

That the Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on 15th October 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

115. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Foster and seconded by Councillor Vile:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 3rd November 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

116. **Finance and Governance Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Bonfield and seconded by Councillor Foster:-
That the Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on 12th November 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

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

6) **Corporate Plan 2026/30 – To agree content of consultation material and format of public engagement**

Proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the content of the draft Corporate Plan 2026/30, be issued for consultation and the communications and engagement plan be approved with delegated authority given to officers to make decisions about its implementation.

117. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 31st October 2025 was submitted for information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

118. **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 7, amounting to £816,745.53.

A query was raised regarding the procurement of the services of Fireline Ltd regarding the Annual Fire Extinguisher Servicing and Fire Risk Assessments.

119. **Chairman's Announcements**

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

- DAPTC conference – The Mayor had attended the DAPTC conference on 30th October 2025, where various speakers had provided information regarding Dorset

Council's plans for devolution and there had been presentations from the Chief Executive of Dorset Council and the Council Leader.

- Poppy Shop – The Mayor had pleasure in opening the Poppy Shop, selling items in aid of Remembrance Day.
- Radio Solent – The Mayor welcomed Radio Solent presenters to Swanage whilst undertaking their three-legged race in aid of Children in Need.
- Purbeck School – The Mayor was privileged to have joined the Mayor of Wareham in opening a Complex Communication Needs (CNN) educational area within The Purbeck School.
- Remembrance events – Along with other representatives the Mayor attended a fundraising event at the Royal British Legion and was proud to have attended the Service and Parade on Remembrance Sunday.

120. **Green Seafront Engagement Report - To receive and note content**

Members referred to the Green Seafront Engagement Report that had been provided by Dorset Coast Forum (DCF), together with an introductory briefing paper. There had been more than 1,400 responses to the survey, 45 per cent of which expressed a preference for the new option, and 43 per cent for the essential option. Thanks were expressed to DCF for the large volume of detailed information supplied, and to Town Councillors and officers for their dedicated work during the engagement process.

Members highlighted the importance of continuing to explore all options and ensuring that there was ongoing communication with local residents about the project. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Council was still at a comparatively early stage of project development and that no decision could yet be made as to the preferred option, not least because there remained uncertainty over how the work would be funded.

In line with recent public statements, it was further noted that the Shore Road Options engagement report had not yet been completed and would be presented to the Council at a future meeting.

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

That the Green Seafront Engagement Report and its contents be formally noted.

121. **Dorset Local Plan and Local Transport Plan – To agree response to public consultations for submission to Dorset Council**

It was reported that in order to ensure that a comprehensive response could be prepared this item would be deferred for consideration at an Extraordinary Council Meeting, to be held on Monday 24th November at 7.00 p.m.

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

(a) **Car Parks and Market held on 5th November and to consider appointing additional members**

It was reported that discussion at the recent Car Parks and Market working party focussed on fees and charges and would be presented to the Finance and Governance Committee meeting on 17th December 2025.

It was proposed by Councillor Coward, seconded by Councillor Burrridge and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That Councillors Dorrington and Tomes be appointed to the Car Parks and Market Working Party for 2025/26.

(b) **Events held on 5th November**

It was reported that the working party had reviewed the events for 2026, which had been presented to the Tourism and Local Economy Committee meeting.

(c) **Seafront Masterplan held on 12th November**

The Mayor, as lead councillor for the working party, read a short statement in which it was reported that councillors had met to informally consider the feedback received from the Green Seafront Engagement. The working party's discussions had focussed on the suggestions and comments that had been provided by the community to improve and enhance the existing designs. These were reviewed and many selected for further scrutiny. These potential design amendments would be costed and feasibility and buildability assessments undertaken in order to inform decisions on their inclusion within the next design iteration.

It was noted that improving accessibility to, from and across the Green Seafront was a key theme and further pathway improvements are being considered. The outcome of this process will be reported at a future Council meeting.

123. **Grants**

(a) **Application from the Mowlem Theatre on behalf of Cultural Purbeck - To receive update from the Grants Panel**

It was reported that Members of the Grants Panel had met with representatives of the Mowlem Theatre regarding the Cultural Purbeck grant request of £500. It was noted that the group had decided not to proceed with the grant application at this time. Members were informed that the group had held its first community workshop on 7th November, which had been attended by 48 representatives from 29 local organisations, including the CEO of the Arts Development Company. A report on the outcomes is currently being prepared.

It was anticipated that the group might support a bid for Swanage to become the Dorset Town of Culture 2027 and would seek funding to support this proposal. It had been explained to the group that in order to receive a grant from the Town Council Cultural Purbeck would need to be formally constituted.

(b) **To consider grant request from the Mowlem Theatre for match funding for 'Raise the Roof' Project**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper setting out the recommendation of the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing Working Party, following its recent meeting with representatives of the Mowlem Theatre regarding the request for Town Council funding to contribute towards the costs of repairing the theatre roof. The paper included information on the roof condition, survey findings, and cost estimates. It was noted that the working party had recommended approval of a sum of money to supplement the amount raised through the theatre's crowdfunding campaign. The sum requested was £12,753, with an additional contingency request of £1,275.

It was clarified that, should the Council support the working party's recommendation, the amount would be funded from within existing budgets, most likely through the reallocation of the £15,000 budget previously set aside for the unsuccessful Town of Culture 2025 bid.

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

That the recommendation of the Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing working party to award a grant to the Mowlem Theatre be accepted and that a sum of up to £15,000 be awarded to meet any shortfall in the cost of the works as specified in the briefing note, the total to be reduced accordingly should the Mowlem raise further funds via their own fundraising.

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

(a) **Chamber of Trade**

It was reported that the “Dinner and Dance” event scheduled for 26th November 2025 had been cancelled, but that a buffet would be provided at the Grand Hotel on 9th December 2025 at 8.30 p.m. and all local businesses were welcome.

125. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided by Councillors Suttle and Tomes:

- Dorset Local Plan – It was reported that the land near Darkie Lane had been removed from the proposed site list for housing development as the landowner had made it clear that it was not available. Councillors Suttle and Tomes had met with residents at Cauldron Barn Farm Park to hear their concerns about the potential allocation of a nearby parcel of land as a housing site.
- Police matters – A meeting had been held with the Police Inspector to review policing over the summer. It was reported that there had been no major incidents, however, there had been an increase in shoplifting.
- Visit Dorset – A local economy partnership meeting was scheduled for 27th November to consider the potential establishment of a Dorset-wide visitor plan.

126. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There had been no new delegations to report back on this month.

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

There were no matters raised.

128. **Town Hall Annexe - To determine whether to accept insertion of break clause in new lease to Dorset Police**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper summarising the history of negotiations regarding the renewal lease for the Town Hall Annexe, including Dorset Police’s request for a rolling break clause which had initially been refused by the Town Council (see Minute Nos 113(c) of the Council Meeting held on 21st October 2024 and 133(d) of the Council Meeting held on 18th November 2024). It was noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner had since provided repeated written assurances that there were no plans to change the current policing arrangements in Swanage, and that Dorset Police had maintained their position that a 6-month rolling break clause was required in all new leases.

In light of these assurances, and the continued police presence since the matter was first raised in 2024, it was proposed by Councillor Lejeune, seconded by Councillor Coward and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To agree to the inclusion of a six-month rolling break clause in the new lease of the Town Hall Annexe to Dorset Police.

129. **Request for landlord’s consent from Co-op for installation of an EV charger in rear delivery bay at 52 Kings Road West**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out the proposal from Co-op for the installation of an EV charger in the rear delivery bay for use of Co-op fleet vehicles only. It was noted that full specification for the charger, product datasheet, risk management document and fire risk documentation had been provided.

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

That consent be provided to the Co-operative Group to install an electric vehicle charger in the rear delivery bay at 52 Kings Road West, subject to any

legal fees incurred in the drawing up of any agreement required in the lease being paid by the Co-op.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Vile, 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 items 18 and 19 (due to legal and commercial confidentiality).

130. **Property Related Legal Matters**

(a) **Beach Hire Concession – To consider outcome of tender process**

Further to Minute No. 82 of the Council Meeting held on 15th September 2025, Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which outlined the tender process for the beach hire concession. Further to a lengthy discussion around the process and scores, members felt that additional information was required and that another meeting of the Beach Hire Concession Task and Finish group would be beneficial prior to a decision being made. It was anticipated that this item would be further discussed at the Council Meeting scheduled to take place on 15th December. It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Vile and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Beach Hire Concession Task and Finish group convene a meeting and that any recommendations be brought forward to the next Council meeting for consideration.

(b) **Vodafone Mast, Day's Park – Update on lease renewal and rent review**

Further to Minute No. 50(a) of the Council Meeting held on 23rd June 2025, Members received an update on negotiations regarding the lease renewal for the Vodafone mast at Day's Park and the associated rent review. It was noted that the lease had expired in October 2024 and that the tenant was seeking a significantly reduced rent. It was acknowledged that the mast income funds a grant to the Football Club, and therefore any reduction in rent would have a corresponding impact on the Club. Despite repeated attempts by the Council's professional advisers to progress discussions, it was reported that the tenant had initiated court proceedings. Members were advised that such an approach to the matter was not unusual within the telecoms sector. Having weighed the potential legal costs associated with defending the proceedings against the financial implications of the rent level being sought, it was proposed by Councillor Suttle, seconded by Councillor Tomes and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the update, as set out in the briefing note, be noted and that the Council confirms that it will defend the court proceedings.

131. **Procurement**

(a) **Procurement of Professional Services in support of planning application for Green Seafront Options under Collaboration Agreement with Dorset Council – To consider use of Transportation Engineering Professional Services Contract**

Further to Minute No. 89 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 15th September 2025, under which the Town Council had agreed to enter into a collaboration agreement with Dorset Council, consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out the

need to procure professional services in support of the submission of planning applications by June 2026 to enable construction to commence in September 2027. It was noted that the collaboration agreement provides a framework for the Town Council to engage Dorset Council contractors that have previously been procured via competitive tender for works and services related to the Green Seafront Scheme. Dorset Council had confirmed that the professional services required to draw up planning applications for the Green Seafront scheme could be procured through its Transportation Engineering Professional Services (TEPS) contract. A quotation had been sought, and the contractor, WSP, had provided a costed proposal of £135,633.49 for the preparation and submission of planning applications for both the essential and new seafront options. Members noted that the work would be funded from the approved capital budget.

Legal advice had been provided by Dorset Council confirming that the collaboration agreement complied with the provisions of the relevant section of the Procurement Act, 2023 so that the arrangement provides an exemption from covered procurement rules. It was noted that this, taken together with the Town Council's Financial Regulation 11.1.b, meant that it was not required to undertake its own tender exercise. In terms of evaluating value for money, it was reported that the TEPS contract had been the subject of a rigorous procurement process in 2020 and a subsequent cost comparison exercise in 2023.

It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That Dorset Council be instructed to appoint WSP via the Dorset Council Transportation Engineering Professional Services (TEPS) Contract to deliver professional services required for the submission of planning applications for the essential and new Green Seafront scheme options for the sum of £135,633.49, and that a third schedule be added to the Collaboration Agreement in respect of the Green Seafront scheme accordingly.

(b) Town Hall flooring and WC refurbishment

Members considered a briefing paper which outlined the specification that had been prepared for refurbishment works to the Town Hall tiled lobby floor, Chamber timber floor, and first floor WC, in accordance with advice from the Dorset Council Conservation Team. Three compliant quotations had been received, the lowest being from David R White Building Services Ltd for £15,349, including a contingency of £2,250. Members noted that this exceeded the allocated budget of £9,000 and considered making a virement of £6,500 from the Central Services employee budget to cover the shortfall.

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

That the Town Council awards a contract to David R White Building Services Ltd for the sum of £15,349 to undertake refurbishment of the Town Hall tiled lobby flooring, timber Chamber flooring and the first floor WC.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED:-**

That the cost of the works over and above the agreed budget of £9,000 be funded from a virement of £6,500 from the Central Services employee budget.

The Meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.