

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Swanage
Town Council held at The Town Hall, High Street, Swanage
on **MONDAY, 20th APRIL 2026** at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M. Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor P. Burridge
Councillor M. Coward
Councillor J. Dorrington
Councillor J. Lejeune (from 5.00 p.m.)
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor C. Sutton
Councillor C. Tomes
Councillor S. Vile

Public Participation Time

There were no members of the public or press and media present.

217. **Apologies**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Foster and Suttle.

218. **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.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

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

There were no matters raised.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bishop 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 4 and 5 (due to commercial confidentiality and to facilitate consideration of a draft document prior to publication).

220. **Property Panel – to consider recommendations re. potential asset disposal**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper setting out the Property Panel's recommendations regarding potential asset disposals to support the funding of major capital projects. It was noted that the Council had previously agreed to explore this approach at meetings held on 24th July 2023 (Minute No. 87 refers) and 27th November 2024 (Minute No. 138 (a) refers).

The Panel's recommendations were considered, alongside valuation reports in respect of three properties: North Beach Car Park, Spa Beach Huts and adjoining land, and the freehold of Swanage Bay View Holiday Park. In relation to the first two of these

properties, the response to the first round of public engagement in respect of the draft Pre-submission Swanage Neighbourhood Plan, which included the potential to allocate these sites for commercial development, was also taken into account. Furthermore, in connection with the Spa Beach Huts and adjoining land, attention was drawn to the fact that the property had only a nominal value prior to stabilisation works being carried out.

The Panel had also given consideration to the potential disposal of Swanage Railway Station, in the context of ongoing rent review negotiations with Swanage Railway Trust. During deliberations regarding the Panel's recommendations, the strategic importance of this town centre location was noted.

Following consideration of the potential disposal of each of these assets, it was proposed by Councillor Bishop, seconded by Councillor Sutton and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the recommendation of the Property Panel be accepted: i.e. not to pursue the disposal of North Beach car park, the Spa beach huts and adjoining land, the Council's freehold interest in Swanage Bay View Holiday Park or Swanage Railway Station.

221. **Green Seafront Scheme**

(a) To consider Draft Strategic Outline Business Case, evaluate potential amendments, and authorise its submission to Dorset Council in support of a funding request to meet budget shortfall

Further to recent meetings of the Seafront Masterplan Working Party, Members considered the Draft Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the Green Seafront Scheme (GSS) and acknowledged its preparation in accordance with the government approved Five Case Model, documenting the Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management Cases. It was noted that the SOBC set out a number of key conclusions, including the following:

- The project is justified and necessary to address a clearly evidenced and escalating risk. Without intervention worsening ground instability threatens the town's economic vitality, community wellbeing and reputation.
- The project seeks to deliver long-term stabilisation, enhanced public space, improved accessibility, environmental benefits and increased year-round economic activity.
- Ground stabilisation using soil nailing is the only option to deliver the Council's critical success factors.
- The New Option would deliver a significantly enhanced range of economic, environmental and community benefits (including significantly improved disabled access) compared to the Essential Option.
- A combination of using the Town Council's reserves with external/grant funding is the optimal funding model.
- The Essential Option remains on the table due to funding constraints.
- A design and build approach is likely to be an effective means of delivering the project.
- The New Option has a funding shortfall of c. £2.5m.
- The New Option would provide revenue income from beach huts, rental of a kiosk and hire of a new small events space. However, this will not fully mitigate the loss of investment income as a result of the capital expenditure required to undertake the scheme.
- A clear governance structure is in place, including defined reporting mechanisms.
- An initial programme has been developed, targeting construction between September 2027 and April 2028.

Members gave particular consideration to the newly prepared Executive Summary and raised a number of potential amendments. It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Coward and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Green Seafront Scheme Strategic Outline Business Case be approved and that authorisation be provided to officers to make minor amendments to the document as required.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To designate the New Option as the Council's preferred option, given the range of benefits set out in the SOBC.

Consideration was next given to seeking a financial contribution from Dorset Council (DC) to meet the funding shortfall of c. £2.5 million required to deliver the New Option. The Town Council's close partnership working with DC was highlighted, as was DC's commitment to investing in high-quality public spaces to support the local economy, nature recovery and health and wellbeing objectives. It was noted that DC had included the following item on its forward plan for the Cabinet Meeting, scheduled for 19th May 2026: Green Seafront Ground Stabilisation & Shore Road Improvement Projects.

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

That the Town Council makes a formal approach to Dorset Council for a financial contribution of £2.5m to meet the funding gap for delivery of the 'New Option', supported by submission of the GSS SOBC.

Members also agreed that the SOBC should be published on its website following its submission to Dorset Council.

Councillor Lejeune joined the meeting at 5 p.m., following which a brief summary was provided and Members noted next steps towards delivery of the Green Seafront Scheme.

The Meeting closed at 5.05 p.m.