

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 20th JULY 2026 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor C. Tomes – Chairman

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor M. Bonfield
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 S. Vile

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, three members of the public attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matter was raised during Public Participation Time:-

- Concerns were raised regarding the accumulation of seaweed on the beach, and a question was asked about what information was available about the current situation and the Town Council's policy more broadly. The Chairman explained that, although the Town Council's contractor had been returning the seaweed to the sea in accordance with the Town Council's policy, there had recently been an exceptional number of easterly winds, resulting in the seaweed being washed back onto the beach as part of a natural process. It was hoped that the prevailing westerly winds, which would normally be expected at this time of year, would return, and the Council would continue to monitor the situation.

Rev. Dave Richards offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

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

52. **Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

53. **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. 4 (d) – Councillor Bonfield declared an interest under the Code of Conduct by reason of being a regular beach hut user.

54. **Minutes**

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

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22nd June 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

55. **Environment and Green Spaces Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Environment and Green Spaces Committee Meeting held on 24th June 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

5) **Swanage Information Centre – Air source heat pump grant application**

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

That officers submit an application to Low Carbon Dorset for grant funding and, if successful, to undertake a competitive procurement exercise for the installation of an air source heat pump and radiators at the Swanage Information Centre, the balance of the cost to be funded from the Environmental Projects reserve.

56. **Community Services Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Vile and RESOLVED
UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on 1st July 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

57. **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 6th July 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

58. **Tourism and Local Economy Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee Meeting held on 15th July 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Members thanked officers for preparing the Minutes so promptly following the Committee Meeting.

Further to his declaration under Minute No. 53, Councillor Bonfield left the room during consideration of the following item.

Consideration was given to the recommendations contained in the Minutes:-

4) **Beach Huts – Proposed fees and charges for 2027-2028**

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

That consideration of the recommendations of the
Tourism and Local Economy Committee relating to
proposed Beach Hut fees and charges for 2027–2028,
including the proposed fee structure, and amendments
to the terms and conditions, be deferred until the
September 2026 Council Meeting.

Councillor Bonfield re-entered the Meeting.

59. **Statement of Cash Balance**

- (a) A Statement of Cash Balance as at 30th June 2026 was submitted for
information (a copy attached at the end of these Minutes).

60. **Payment of Accounts**

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

- Payment Schedule 3, amounting to £915,756.49.

61. **Chairman's Announcements**

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

- **Hants & Dorset Coastal Rowing Regatta** – on 4th July 2026, the Mayor had presented the trophies at the Regatta. It was noted that this event was now one of the biggest rowing regattas in the country.
- **St Mary's RC Primary School's 90th Anniversary celebrations** – on 11th July 2026, the Mayor, Councillor Bonfield, and Councillor Sutton attended a special open morning at the school, which included a tour of the school, a birthday cake, and an opportunity for former pupils, staff, and members of the community to share memories. The event formed part of a year of celebrations to mark the school's 90-year history since it was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1935.
- **Clifftop Care Home's 'Summer Hoedown'** – on 11th July 2026, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillor Bonfield attended the home's annual summer party, which had a 'Wild West' theme this year, including costumes, music, and a themed cake. It was noted that staff, volunteers, residents and their families enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon together.
- **The High Sheriff of Dorset, County Line Walk** – on 12th July 2026, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor welcomed the High Sheriff of Dorset, Dr Helena Conibear, at a reception at The Focus Centre, which included a wonderful performance by the Allsort'd Choir, as she completed the leg of her walk from Kimmeridge to Swanage. During Dr Conibear's year in office, she was walking 216 miles around the county line of Dorset to raise awareness of the dangers of 'County Lines' exploitation, the importance of protecting young people and supporting local communities. She aimed to raise £10,000 during her walk to donate to Dorset Charities, with a project in each area she visited to receive a grant of £1,000. Attendees heard about the invaluable work being undertaken at The Focus Centre to support local people. Dr Conibear also visited Swanage Skatepark where she met some of the town's young people and heard about the successful completion of Phase 1 of the Swanage Skatepark Community Project and the progress being made with Phase 2. The visit also highlighted the importance of providing safe, positive spaces for young people in the community to enjoy.

- **Swanage and Purbeck Rotary Club** – on 1st July 2026, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillor Bonfield attended the Club’s annual celebration and presidential handover evening at The Swanage School, marking a very successful year of community service and fundraising. It was noted that Councillor Bonfield had received a Paul Harris Fellowship in recognition of his longstanding contribution to both the town and Rotary. Congratulations were extended to Councillor Bonfield on his well-deserved award.

62. **Meeting Schedule – To confirm venue for Council Meeting on 14th September 2026**

Consideration was given to the venue for the Council Meeting scheduled to be held on 14th September 2026, which was currently due to take place at The Swanage School. It was proposed by Councillor Coward, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the venue for the Council Meeting scheduled to be held on 14th September 2026 be changed from The Swanage School to the Town Hall.

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

(a) **Housing Task & Finish (T&F) Group held on 20th July 2026**

Further to Minute No. 47 of the Council Meeting held on 22nd June 2026, it was reported that the T&F Group had met with Aster earlier in the day to raise the Town Council’s concerns regarding the condition of Aster’s housing stock in Swanage, discuss current maintenance issues relating to specific properties, and understand the process for bringing these properties up to the required standard. A further meeting was planned to continue these discussions.

It was noted that, at the meeting, Aster had agreed that they would be willing to work with the Swanage Community Land Trust on other projects in the town.

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

(a) **To consider appointing Councillor Vile as observer to Action for Health and Care Purbeck**

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

That Councillor Vile be appointed as the Town Council’s observer to Action for Health and Care Purbeck.

(b) **Purbeck Community Rail Partnership (PCRP)**

Councillor Bonfield reported that he had attended the PCRP Committee Meeting held on 8th July 2026 and provided a brief update from the meeting, which included:

- A review of cycleways in Purbeck, particularly in coastal areas;
- A potential new footpath from Purbeck Park to Corfe Castle;
- A potential new community bus service; and
- The updating and refreshing of the Wareham and Dorchester South railway stations.

65. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided:

- **Dorset Local Plan** – It was reported that, following changes to the Government’s planning system, housing requirements, and plan-making deadlines, Dorset Council had decided to discontinue the previous Local Plan process and commence preparation of a new Local Plan under the Government’s new plan-making system. It was noted that previous evidence and consultation responses would be used to inform the new Plan. The new process was expected to commence with a scoping

consultation in September 2026, with the new Local Plan anticipated to be submitted for examination in 2028 and adopted in 2029.

It was noted that the adopted Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034), would remain part of the current development plan. A query was raised as to whether the new Local Plan process would affect emerging Neighbourhood Plans (NPs). It was confirmed that NPs would continue to progress and that this could assist the planning process for the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.

- **Dorset Destination Management Plan (DMP) 2026-2035** – It was reported that the DMP had been approved by Dorset Council and BCP Council at their respective Cabinet meetings in July. Disappointment was expressed that the Plan appeared to be broad in scope, and that Swanage had not been specifically included in the report. It was hoped that the Town Council would be able to contribute to the process as the Plan progressed.
- **Dorset and BCP Councils Joint Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2026-2041** – It was noted that the pan-Dorset LTP had been approved for adoption by Dorset Council at its meeting held on 16th July 2026.

66. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There were no matters to report.

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

(a) **To note outcome of UK Small Town of Culture Bid 2028**

It was reported that Cultural Purbeck had been notified that Swanage had not been shortlisted as one of the towns to go through to the next round for consideration to be the UK Small Town of Culture 2028. Thanks were recorded to those at Cultural Purbeck for putting the bid together, and it was noted that the Town Council remained supportive of their longer-term objectives.

68. **Swanage Town & Herston Football Club – To consider update regarding proposed works to existing sports hall at Day's Park and associated grant request**

The Town Clerk provided a short update regarding the Council's ongoing discussions with Swanage Town & Herston Football Club. It was noted that this matter would most likely be placed on the agenda of a forthcoming extraordinary council meeting.

The Meeting closed at 7.25 p.m.