

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 22nd JUNE 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, eight 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:-

- **Agenda item 14 a)** – A number of speakers made representations regarding Coastal Learning Partnership's consultation on the future of St George's CE Primary School, Langton Matravers, and St Mark's CE Primary School.
- Support was expressed for Explorers Childcare, and concern raised regarding the potential loss of its premises at St Mark's Primary School. The Council was asked to support efforts to identify alternative accommodation for its services, particularly the Forest School and Holiday Clubs.
- Concerns were raised regarding the use of current pupil numbers within the consultation and the lack of recognition of the potential for future housing development to increase school rolls. Questions were also raised regarding what information had been provided to the Town Council.
- Different perspectives were aired regarding the sharing of staff across the schools.
- It was noted that it was currently anticipated that a full discussion about this matter would be held at the Planning and Consultation Committee meeting on 6th July at 7.00 p.m. at the Town Hall.
- **Agenda item 8)** – Support was expressed for Cultural Purbeck's request for start-up funding to support cultural development and community engagement in Swanage and Purbeck.

Rev. Ian Bird offered a short prayer before the commencement of the Meeting.

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

34. **Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

35. **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.

36. **Minutes**

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

That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 11th May 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

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

37. **Finance and Governance Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on 20th May 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

38. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 1st June 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

39. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

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

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 11th June 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed.

40. **Statement of Cash Balance**

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

41. **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 2, amounting to £652,098.93.

42. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported his attendance at the following events since accepting the role of Chairman of the Council in May:

- **The Focus Centre** – On 29th May 2026, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Bonfield attended the opening of the Focus Café and the Bill Trite Wing of the Centre, recognising Bill Trite’s significant contribution to the town.
- **Swanage Skatepark Jam** – On 30th May 2026, the opening of the new ramps at the Skatepark was celebrated with a Skate Jam event. Thanks were expressed to the Skatepark Group for their work in bringing the project to this stage.
- **Lady Mayor of London and Master Mercer’s visit** – On 6th June 2026, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had welcomed the Lady Mayor of London, the Master Mercer and a group of other representatives of London livery companies to the Town Hall. Highlights included a gathering outside to view the facade, a welcome from the Town Crier and a brief tour of the building.
- **Swanage Information Centre** – On 10th June 2026 the Swanage Information Centre celebrated its 90th birthday and councillors and staff had joined in the celebrations, including thoroughly enjoying the unique cake that had been made in the shape of the building.
- **Allsort’d** – It was a pleasure to attend the Allsort’d choir event at All Saints Church.
- **Swanage Sea Rowing Club** - It was a privilege to be invited to bless and name the newly purchased gig, ‘Old Harry’.

43. **Cultural Purbeck – To consider a request from Cultural Purbeck CIC for start-up funding to support cultural development and community engagement in Swanage and Purbeck**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper setting out a request from Cultural Purbeck CIC for a grant of £15,000. Members noted that the organisation had submitted a five-year business plan, which projected financial independence from local authority grants by 2029/30. It was further noted that the Council’s Corporate Plan recognised the importance of culture to the local economy and identified Cultural Purbeck as a key partner organisation. Members acknowledged that funding could be provided from the budget previously allocated for the unsuccessful Town of Culture bid and expressed support for the initiative. During public participation, the representative from Cultural Purbeck CIC had suggested that the funding could be phased over a three-year period, with £7,500 provided in year one, £5,000 in year two and £2,500 in year three.

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

That the request from Cultural Purbeck CIC for a grant of £15,000 be approved, to be paid over three financial years, comprising £7,500 in 2026/27, £5,000 in 2027/28 and £2,500 in 2028/29, with the contributions for 2027/28 and 2028/29 being subject to confirmation through the annual budget-setting process.

44. **Meeting Schedule – To approve revised date for next meeting of Tourism and Local Economy Committee –15th July 2026**

Members agreed a revised date for the next meeting of the Tourism and Local Economy Committee, at 2.15p.m. on Wednesday 15th July 2026

45. **Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

(a) **Beach Access Vision Task & Finish Group held on 27th May 2026**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper summarising discussion at the recent meeting of the Beach Access Vision Task and Finish Group and proposed next steps. Members referred to a workshop held at Studland, which had also been attended by a representative from Weymouth Town Council, where accessible

beach features had been installed. It was suggested that further exploration was required regarding the suitability of beach access mats and the topography of Swanage Beach. Consideration was also given to the potential for more permanent accessibility features. It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Sutton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Tourism and Local Economy Committee be tasked with further developing the draft Beach Access Vision; that officers be authorised to submit grant applications for projects included within that Vision; and that delegated authority be granted to the Tourism and Local Economy Committee to approve expenditure of up to £10,000 on items included within the Vision.

(b) Property Panel held on 1st June 2026

It was reported that the Property Panel had reviewed ongoing legal matters and progress in relation to leases and licences. Arrangements for leasing parking spaces on the former garage site at Peveril Point Road and the submission of a revised planning application for conversion of the vacant space adjoining Burlington Chine had also been considered.

(c) Communications Working Party held on 1st June 2026

It was reported that Members of the Communications Working Party had discussed Dorset Coast Forum's draft communications and engagement plan in respect of the Green Seafront Stabilisation Scheme and that a further update would be provided under agenda item 15 (c).

46. Reports from Council representatives on outside organisations

(a) Purbeck Transport Action Group

It was reported that Morebus was considering the introduction of electric buses on some local routes, together with a half-hourly service from Swanage.

(b) Swanage Chamber of Trade

It was reported that the Chamber of Trade currently had 60 members, with a further 20 businesses having expressed an interest in joining. Discussions were being held with Accessible Swanage to explore ways of improving accessibility to shops in the town and enhancing ease of movement around them.

(c) Health Services 'Round Table' Event

The Deputy Mayor had attended a Health Services event on 22nd May 2026, which had been organised by Lloyd Hatton MP to facilitate engagement between stakeholders and the wider community. Attendees included, the Chief Executive of the County Hospital, and representatives from Swanage Hospital, Wareham Hospital and Dementia Friendly Purbeck. It was reported that members of the community had shared experiences of the impact of local health services on local families. Health service providers acknowledged that communication across services needed to improve and agreed that a further meeting would be arranged.

(d) Dementia Friendly Purbeck

It was reported that a Purbeck Community Admiral Nurse had been employed in the area since 2016. Fundraising had been undertaken to secure the appointment of a second Admiral Nurse, with the initial fundraising target of £127,000 having been achieved. It had since been confirmed that the actual amount required was £111,000, and arrangements were now in place for the second nurse to begin training within the next few weeks.

47. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

The following updates were provided:

- **Ullwell Road** – The hedges along Ullwell Road, near Gainsborough Care Home, had been cut back.
- **Shore Road** – Dorset Council's Cabinet had recently approved funding of £2.5 million for the Green Seafront Scheme to enable the Council's preferred option to progress.
- **Housing** – It was reported that discussions had taken place with other Dorset councillors regarding the disposal of homes by Aster, with 20 properties having been sold over the past five years and a further two currently being marketed for sale. Concerns were also raised regarding the condition of, and repairs to, Aster properties. It was reported that a further meeting would be arranged within the next few months to discuss how Dorset Council could work with Aster to address these issues.
- **Coastal Learning Partnership** – It was reported that both Dorset councillors had met with Explorers Childcare and the Coastal Learning Partnership to discuss the potential impact of the proposed merger of St George's Primary School and St Mark's Primary School on the future provision of wraparound childcare, which is currently based at St Mark's Primary School.

48. **Reporting of delegated matters**

(a) **Essential Tractor Repairs – To note urgent expenditure**

It was reported that urgent expenditure had been incurred for essential repairs to the Council's tractor. A budget of £2,000 had been allocated for such repairs at budget setting; however, the total cost of the repairs had amounted to £6,468.41. In accordance with Financial Regulation 4.8 this had been agreed by the Town Clerk and reported to the Town Mayor.

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

(a) **Coastal Learning Partnership consultation on future of St George's CE Primary School & St Mark's CE Primary School**

It was noted that no decision regarding the Council's response to the consultation would be made at this meeting. Members raised a number of points regarding the consultation and the information provided by the Coastal Learning Partnership. A number of queries were raised regarding the financial information contained within the consultation documents, including the assumptions made and the long-term financial sustainability of the proposals.

Members also discussed the potential impact of the emerging Dorset Local Plan, noting that future housing development in the area could increase demand for primary school places. It was suggested that this should be taken into account when considering the long-term need for educational provision within Purbeck. During the discussion, Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that the needs and best interests of local children remained at the forefront of any decision-making process. It was acknowledged that both schools played an important role within the community, and that the Council's response to the consultation would be considered by the Planning and Consultation Committee at its meeting on 6th July 2026.

(b) **Swanage & Studland Bay Amended Byelaw Proposals - To note consultation update from Dorset Council**

An update from Dorset Council regarding the consultation on the Swanage & Studland Bay Amended Byelaw Proposals was noted. Thanks were given to the many residents who had participated in the consultation, as a result of which the 5-knot buoys would remain largely in the same position, with a small adjustment to improve

consistency. The most significant proposed change was an extension to the byelaw enforcement period of one month, to run from 15th March to 31st October each year.

(c) **Neighbourhood Plan – To note arrangements for Regulation 14 consultation**

It was reported that the new Swanage Neighbourhood Plan website had been completed and that the draft Neighbourhood Plan was ready to proceed to the formal pre-submission consultation stage (Regulation 14). This would provide an important opportunity for residents, businesses and other stakeholders to review the draft Plan and submit comments before it was finalised.

The consultation would run for six weeks. During July, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would hold four public engagement events across the town, providing residents with an opportunity to find out more about the draft Plan, ask questions and complete the consultation survey. Full details of the events would be published later in the week.

50. **Green Seafront Scheme**

(a) **Planning Application - To agree mechanism for approval of draft plans for submission to Dorset Council**

Members noted that preparation of the draft plans was progressing in accordance with the project timetable. To ensure that the submission could be made within the required timescales, it was suggested that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Bonfield, as lead member of the Seafront Masterplan Working Party, be nominated to work with the project team to approve the final draft plans for submission to Dorset Council.

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

That the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor
Bonfield be nominated to work with the project team
to approve the final draft plans for submission to
Dorset Council.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Lejeune 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 15(b),
15(c) and 16 due to legal and commercial
confidentiality.

(b) **Procurement - To approve approach to market engagement**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out the proposed approach to market engagement to inform the procurement strategy for the Green Seafront Scheme. It was noted that, following the Council's previous decision to appoint WSP to provide procurement advice (see Minute No. 238 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 27th April 2026), work had progressed on the development of the procurement strategy and an assessment of the available options for engaging with the market had been undertaken.

Members were advised that the proposed approach would involve a structured market engagement exercise to obtain feedback from potential contractors and suppliers. The information gathered would be used to inform the procurement strategy, including the proposed route to market, project delivery, programme and risk allocation. The recommended approach had been identified as the preferred option as it would maximise market engagement while remaining proportionate and transparent.

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

That the proposed approach to market engagement,
namely the delivery of a structured online
engagement exercise via a single virtual event,
followed by a questionnaire, be approved.

(c) **Communications & Engagement Plan – To consider quote from Dorset Coast Forum**

Further to Minute No. 32 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 20th May 2026, Members considered the contents of a briefing paper regarding the appointment of Dorset Coast Forum to deliver communications and public engagement for the Green Seafront Scheme during the 2026/27 financial year. It was noted that the Communications Working Party had met with representatives from Dorset Coast Forum to discuss the proposed approach, the project's communication risks and the arrangements for delivering clear and consistent messaging throughout the project.

Members acknowledged the importance of maintaining consistent communications with residents and stakeholders, particularly alongside other significant projects taking place within the town. It was also noted that the Communications Working Party would have the opportunity to review all significant communications material prior to publication, whilst ensuring that the communications approach remained sufficiently flexible to respond to emerging issues.

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

That further to the recommendation of the
Communications Working Party held on 1st June
2026, Dorset Coast Forum be appointed to deliver
communications and engagement in respect of the
Green Seafront Project for the 2026/27 financial
year for the sum of £4,761.

51. **Property Related Legal Matters**

(a) **Compass Point drainage and access – To note update on agreement with Barratt Homes further to Minute No. 88 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 24th July 2023**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which provided an update regarding ongoing negotiations with Barratt Homes in relation to the drainage easement across Journey's End and the associated legal agreement in relation to the development at Compass Point. The position was noted.

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

That delegated authority be provided to the Town
Clerk to conclude an agreement with Barratt Homes,
having taken into account legal and valuation advice
received.

(b) **Day's Park – Regularisation of Tenure of Swanage Town & Herston Football Club and consideration of draft Memorandum of Understanding**

Further to Minute No. 176 (b) of the Council Meeting held on 26th January 2026, consideration was given to a briefing paper providing an update in respect of legal advice received about the best form of agreement to use to regularise the Football Club's tenure of the football ground, including all ancillary buildings, at Day's Park, pending completion of a long-term lease. The benefits of entering into a short-term-lease were noted, rather than a tenancy at will as had previously been agreed. It was

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

That solicitors be instructed to draft a short-term lease to Swanage Town & Herston Football Club for the football ground at Day's Park.

A discussion ensued around progress towards implementing a draft Memorandum of Understanding in respect of projects at Day's Park, including the proposed installation of an artificial playing surface. Although not legally binding, this would provide a clear statement of the obligations of the three parties working together to deliver improved sporting facilities at this location, i.e. Swanage Town & Herston Football Club, Day's Park Community Sport CIO and the Town Council. It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To approve the format of the draft Memorandum of Understanding and authorise the Town Clerk to conclude negotiations and finalise the agreement, in consultation with the Town Council's nominated Football Club representatives (Councillors Tomes, Bonfield and Sutton).

Further to Minute No. 242 of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 6th May 2026, an update was provided about ongoing discussions with the Football Club around the demolition of the former sports hall. It was reported that the Football Club had informed the Town Council that it no longer believed that the agreed schedule for the works to take place was achievable and had put forward an alternative proposal. During the debate councillors confirmed that the Council's priorities remain public safety and risk management and it was, therefore, AGREED:

That an urgent meeting should be arranged between the Town Council's nominated Football Club representatives and Swanage Town and Herston Football Club committee members.

The Meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.
