

Minutes of the Meeting of the Swanage Town Council
held at the Town Hall, High Street, Swanage on
MONDAY, 23rd JUNE 2025 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor M. Bonfield – Chairman

Councillor S. Brookes

Councillor M. Coward

Councillor J. Dorrington

Councillor J. Lejeune

Councillor T. Foster

Councillor C. Moreton

Councillor C. Sutton

Councillor C. Tomes

Councillor S. Vile

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, eight members of the public and one representative of the local press and media attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- **Agenda item 8 a)** – Support was expressed for former Councillor Monkhouse to be co-opted onto the Health Service working party in view of her longstanding commitment to the preservation of health services in the town. It was also acknowledged that former Councillor Monkhouse had been an active campaigner in efforts to retain the Swanage Ambulance Car service.
- **Agenda item 17)** – The most recent concessionaire reported that Punch and Judy shows had been a feature on Swanage Beach since 1904 and that his Swanage show had been voted sixth place in the Seaside Heritage Network's top ten favourite seaside places in 2024. Support was sought from Members for a proposal to extend the current contract and he indicated a willingness to commence the shows earlier in the 2026 season.

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

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

31. **Apologies**

There were no apologies to report.

32. **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.

33. **Minutes**

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

That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 19th May 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

That the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 28th May 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

34. **Planning and Consultation Committee**

- (a) Proposed by Councillor Foster and seconded by Councillor Lejeune:-
That the Minutes of the Planning and Consultation Committee Meeting held on 2nd June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

35. **Statement of Cash Balance**

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

36. **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 £770,941.71.

37. **Chairman's Announcements**

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

- Swanage Library – It was an honour to be invited to the Swanage Library Open Day and to see the hard work of the Swanage Library Friends.
- Rotary Club – Enjoyed an evening sampling Polish food at the Rotary event.
- Swanage Fish & Food Festival – Had the pleasure of opening the Swanage Fish & Food Festival and was invited to cut the cake.
- Swanage Sea Rowing Club – It was a privilege to be invited to bless and name the newly purchased gig, 'Dancing Ledge II'.

38. **Working Party Updates and Recommendations**

- (a) **Health Services – To consider request from former Cllr Monkhouse to be co-opted to the working party**

Further to a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Brookes, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That former Cllr Monkhouse be co-opted to the Health Services working party.

- (b) **Property Panel held on 20th June 2025**

It was reported that the Property Panel continued to consider potential asset disposals, legal matters and rent reviews and that a further update would be provided under agenda item 20.

39. **To consider appointing representatives to outside bodies following resignation of Cllr Monkhouse**

Members considered a list of representatives appointed to outside bodies at the Annual Council Meeting, which identified the vacancies created by the resignation of former Councillor Monkhouse. It was noted that, with two byelections due to take place on 24th July 2025, it would be prudent to defer appointments to fill these vacancies until the first meeting after the election, scheduled for Monday 15th September 2025.

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

That the appointment of Members to outside bodies to fill the vacancies created by the resignation of former Councillor Monkhouse be deferred until the first council meeting following the election, scheduled for Monday 15th September 2025.

40. **Swanage Household Recycling Centre – To consider response to Dorset Council regarding proposed introduction of booking system**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper which outlined Dorset Council's proposal to introduce a booking system at all Household Recycling Centres in Dorset. It was noted that Members had already made representations to the Leader of Dorset Council in opposition to the proposal during an earlier meeting. Concerns had been raised that the proposals could lead to an increase in fly-tipping and that the booking system might be inaccessible for some local residents. It was also noted that the Swanage Household Recycling Centre was not used by those living in neighbouring counties, which was an issue in those towns near to the county boundary, and that local residents did not experience any lengthy queues.

Members acknowledged the high volume of complaints and concerns received from residents regarding the proposal. It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Tomes, seconded by Councillor Brookes and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Town Council should state its objection to the proposed introduction of a booking system at Swanage Household Recycling Centre, on the grounds set out above, in a formal letter to the Cabinet Member for Place Services, Dorset Council.

41. **DAPTC AGM Motion – To consider seconding the following motion proposed by Corfe Castle Parish Council: DAPTC registers its concern to Dorset Council and its MPs at the loss of both public and private rented housing whose owners cite the financial unviability of the proposals for energy and condition standards. We ask Dorset Council, Dorset MPs, NALC and the Government to review the viability of the new standards to ensure the rented housing stock is retained**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper which set out the following motion, which had been proposed by Corfe Castle Parish Council for consideration at the AGM of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils to be held in the autumn:
“DAPTC registers its concern to Dorset Council and its MPs at the loss of both public and private rented housing whose owners cite the financial unviability of the proposals for energy and condition standards. We ask Dorset Council, Dorset MPs NALC and the Government to review the viability of the new standards to ensure the rented housing stock is retained.”

The parish council was seeking a seconder for the motion. The Town Clerk shared an email from the Vice-Chairman of Corfe Castle Parish Council, which explained the reasoning behind the motion. Members acknowledged that the loss of housing was affecting local residents' ability to continue living in their towns and villages and it was,

therefore, proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Foster and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That Swanage Town Council second the motion put forward by Corfe Castle Parish Council, as outlined above, for submission to the DAPTC AGM, to be held on Saturday 22nd November 2025.

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

(a) **Sandbanks Ferry**

It was reported that a public drop-in event had been held on 19th June 2025 at Studland Village Hall, at which representatives of the ferry company had met with local residents. It had been reported at the event that the inspector overseeing the Public Inquiry had finalised their report last week and forwarded it to the relevant minister for a decision on the application to increase tolls. An update would be provided to a future meeting.

(b) **Swanage Disabled Club**

It was reported that Councillor Brookes had been approached to be appointed as an outside representative to the Swanage Disabled Club. It was stated that, as recorded under Minute No. 39, the appointment of Members to outside bodies would be deferred until the first meeting following the election, scheduled for Monday 15th September 2025.

43. **Report from Dorset Councillors**

There was no report on this occasion.

44. **Reporting of delegated matters**

There were no matters to report.

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

(a) **Pre-election period from Thursday 19th June**

Members noted the contents of a briefing paper which summarised the guidance contained in the Local Government Association's publication 'A Short Guide to Publicity During the Pre-Election Period'.

It was reported that, in line with the need for impartiality during the pre-election period, the Talk of the Town Hall newsletter would not be published in June.

(b) **Green Seafront – Update on public engagement**

It was reported that the Green Seafront and Shore Road survey would close on 29th June 2025, with a report on the results anticipated in approximately six to eight weeks' time.

It was also noted that an additional drop-in event had been scheduled to take place at the Emmanuel Baptist Church on Tuesday 24th June 2025, between 3.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. Given the pre-election period this would be an officer-led event.

(c) **Swanage Neighbourhood Plan – Update on proposed public engagement**

It was reported that due to the pre-election period the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan public engagement would be postponed and an update provided to a future meeting.

(d) **Outcome of government consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting at Council meetings**

Members noted the contents of a briefing paper outlining recent news releases from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) regarding the outcome of the government's consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting at council meetings. The outcome confirmed that only principal authorities would have the option of proxy voting.

The government had also acknowledged the need for councils to develop their own remote and hybrid attendance policies, tailored to local circumstances. Once the government's guidance had been finalised, a draft policy would be brought forward for consideration by the Finance and Governance Committee.

46. **Beach Gardens – To consider and approve a draft licence with Swanage Tennis Club for the use and maintenance of tennis courts**

Further to Minute No. 155 (a) (ii) of the Council Meeting held on 16th December 2024, consideration was given to a draft seven-year licence between the Town Council and Swanage Tennis Club for the use and maintenance of courts 1-6 at Beach Gardens. This set out increased reserve contributions by the Tennis Club to ensure that funding would be available for the resurfacing and fencing work required during that period. It was noted that it was currently anticipated that this would be accompanied by a 'side letter' detailing the funding required to ensure that the tennis courts and court fencing continue to be maintained and replaced as required up to 2040.

Thanks were given to the representatives of the Tennis Club and the Visitor Services and Business Development Manager (VSBDM) for their collaborative work in drafting the licence. It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Dorrington and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the draft licence agreement with Swanage Tennis Club for the use of the tennis courts at Beach Gardens be approved, and that the Council's solicitors be instructed to finalise the agreement, together with a side letter.

47. **Punch and Judy – to consider an extension to current licence**

Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which outlined the key terms of a proposed licence between the Town Council and Professor Joe Burns, in respect of performing a Punch and Judy show on Swanage beach. It was noted that the concession had previously been the subject of a procurement process in 2021, resulting in Professor Burns being awarded the concession for a three-year period, expiring in September 2024. It was reported that it had not proven possible to complete a procurement process ahead of the summer season and, therefore, it was proposed that a new licence be entered into with Professor Burns on similar terms as previously agreed, either for a single year or for a further three-year period.

It was noted that in order to support the storage of essential equipment for the licensee, the Town Council had provided a standard upper-level beach hut from early July to early September each year. It was further noted that, should the concessionaire wish to commence shows earlier in the season, the availability of the beach hut would need to be reviewed by the VSBDM.

Members confirmed their support for the continuation of the Punch and Judy shows on the beach, recognising the value they brought as a traditional and well-regarded attraction for the town. Support was expressed for the concession to be awarded for the 2024 season, with a further two-years being subject to successful negotiation in respect of potential changes to the licence agreement. Members agreed that the matter should be delegated to officers, although it was noted that any significant changes to the licence and related matters would need to be reported to a future Council meeting.

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

That delegated authority be granted to officers to finalise a new licence with Professor Joe Burns, on the same or similar terms as the previous agreement at an annual fee of £150 for the 2025 season, and, subject to the successful negotiation of revised

terms, to enter into an agreement for a further two years, ending in September 2027.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Tomes and AGREED:-

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 to 20 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

48. **Health and Safety Advisory Service – To consider renewal of contract with Worknest**

Further to Minute No. 65 (a) of the Council Meeting held on 27th July 2022, consideration was given to a briefing paper outlining the key terms of the Town Council's current arrangement with its Health and Safety consultancy provider, WorkNest. It was noted that, in accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1.b, the Council was not required to obtain three quotations for contracts involving the undertaking of specialist services where the exercise of professional knowledge is of primary importance. Members acknowledged the positive working relationship with the provider and the absence of any price increase. It was, therefore, proposed by Councillor Dorrington, seconded by Councillor Lejeune, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the contract with Worknest to deliver professional health and safety consultancy services to the Council be renewed for a further 3-year period for the sum of £4,823 per annum plus legal expenses insurance.

49. **Godlingston Cemetery – To agree annual payment for water supply**

Members considered a briefing paper regarding the need to regularise arrangements for the supply of water to Godlingston Cemetery. It was noted that the historic arrangement with Godlingston Farm, by which the water had been supplied in return for use of the undeveloped cemetery land as a grazing field, had ceased in the summer of 2021, in preparation for the cemetery extension which was laid out later that year. Following discussions between council officers and Mr Bowerman of Godlingston Farm, a proposal was brought forward by which the Town Council would pay £500 per annum, increasing by the October CPI inflation measure each year. In the absence of a mains water supply and in light of comparison with the water bill paid for the allotments, Members felt this was a reasonable proposal.

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

That the Council enters into an arrangement to pay Godlingston Farm the sum of £500 per annum, subject to an annual uplift linked to the October CPI figure, for the supply of water to Godlingston Cemetery effective from 1st April 2025.

50. **Matters arising from the Property Panel meeting held on 20th June 2025.**

(a) **Lease renewal/rent review of telecoms mast at Day's Park**

Further to Minute No. 195 of the Council Meeting held on 24th April 2023, Members considered the contents of a briefing paper which outlined the current situation regarding negotiations in respect of the lease renewal and rent review for

the telecoms mast situated at Day's Park. It was proposed by Councillor Brookes, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That solicitors be appointed to provide legal advice (proportionate to the matter in hand) in order to inform ongoing negotiations regarding the lease renewal and rent review in respect of the telecoms mast at Day's Park.

(b) **Potential disposal/lease/licence of plots of land to the rear of Beach Gardens/Gannetts Park and at junction of Benlease Way/Higher Days Rd**

Members noted the contents of a briefing paper which summarised the Property Panel's consideration of enquiries received from local residents regarding the potential disposal/lease/licence of plots of land to the rear of Beach Gardens/Gannetts Park and at the junction of Benlease Way/Higher Days Rd. The local residents were seeking security of tenure to facilitate their maintenance of these areas of land. During the discussion, Members highlighted the importance of these green spaces remaining in public ownership and considered that the most appropriate form of agreement would be a licence. It was proposed by Councillor Foster, seconded by Councillor Sutton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That licence agreements in respect of plots of land to the rear of Beach Gardens/Gannetts Park and at the junction of Benlease Way/Higher Days Rd be explored, with any legal costs to be borne by the potential licensees.

(c) **Burlington Chine – potential disposal of vacant space adjacent to the public conveniences**

Further to Minute No. 87 of the Council Meeting held on 24th July 2023, consideration was given to a briefing paper outlining proposals for the conversion of the area adjacent to the public conveniences into beach huts. It was noted that this step had originally been considered by the Town Council in 2010 and that planning permission had been acquired at that time. Surveyors had recently been engaged by the Town Council to report on the current position and advice had been received highlighting the need to acquire a new planning consent due to the expiry of the previous permission. It was further proposed that the huts could be sold on a long lease, similar to the existing Council-owned beach huts in this location and that the services supplied should also reflect those provided in the existing huts.

During consideration of this item, a question was asked as to whether best value could be achieved by conversion to a single larger hut, rather than two huts, and it was suggested that further advice should be sought on this matter prior to a planning application being submitted. It was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Lejeune and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That plans be prepared for a beach hut/huts at the vacant space adjoining the public conveniences at Burlington Chine, with a view to submitting a new planning application prior to a potential disposal under a long-term lease.

The Meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.