

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** of the Parish of Swanage, held at The Centre, High Street, Swanage on **MONDAY 15th MAY 2023** at 7.00 p.m.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Tina Foster, assumed the Chair, and in addition to members of the Council and officials, approximately 21 persons were present. The Mayor welcomed all attendees and thanked representatives from local organisations for their attendance.

1. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Suttle.

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 11th April 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed. (Copies of the Minutes were circulated to those present at the Meeting).

3. **SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED BY THE TOWN MAYOR**

The Town Mayor provided updates and an overview of the activities of the Town Council over the past year which included the following:

- Lighting of the beacon at Durlston Castle for the start of Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee celebrations.
 - Proclamation of succession at the bandstand following the sad death of Queen Elizabeth II.
 - Completion of the Council's Corporate Plan which set out the Council's aims for the next three years.
 - Work had commenced on the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan and on the Seafront Masterplan.
 - Implementation of recommendations made from an accessibility survey.
 - Community Awards evening held in October 2022 to celebrate the work of the town's volunteers.
 - Improvements made to Beach Gardens, which included a new astroturf tennis court.
 - Looking ahead, a public consultation would be undertaken to explore the options regarding the work required to underpin Sandpit Field, the Weather Station field and the Spa area and views regarding the plans would be welcome.
 - It was a proud moment to attend Sherborne Abbey, accompanied by the Deputy Mayor, to honour the coronation of King Charles III. Another pleasure was the handing out of Coronation teaspoons to the children of the local primary schools, who were enthralled with the Mayor's 'Big Necklace'!
- The full report can be found at the end of the minutes.

4. **PRESENTATIONS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

Ged Want, West Dorset and Purbeck Neighbourhood Policing Team Inspector, Dorset Police

It was reported that the police force was facing challenging and demanding times. There were three sergeants for Dorset based in Dorchester, Bridport and Wareham, with the Wareham sergeant covering Swanage.

It was reported that Purbeck had seen a 6% increase in crime during 2022/23 compared to the previous year. It was acknowledged that there was an issue in under reporting due to the difficulties faced by the public in reporting via the 101 phone number, with lengthy delays experienced at times and it was noted that an improvement to the online reporting form had been undertaken as an alternative way to report crime.

The following information was also provided:

- Five Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) covered the Purbeck area and three Police Constables (PC's).
- It was anticipated that a newly appointed PC would be based in Swanage from June 2023.
- Website improvements had been made with a new page entitled 'Meet the Team'.
- The 101 online form had been updated and now requested more details from the reporter to assist with police response.
- Monthly newsletters provided operational updates.
- Attendance at the Swanage Market on 26th May 2023 and Corfe Castle on 31st May 2023.
- Police and Crime Commissioner would be attending a Public meeting being held on 12th June 2023.
- The reestablishment of counter services at the Town Hall was being investigated.
- Planning ahead for Camp Bestival and Swanage Carnival with provision of additional police officers.
- Aware of anti-social behaviour in town and working with schools and other agencies to overcome issues.
- A plea was made to report and be patient.

The Inspector was thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

Sarah Spurling, Project Officer, Sustainable Swanage

Further to the last Annual Parish meeting the following updates were provided:

- The Community Pantry was well used at Herston Village Hall on Monday's between 10 a.m. – 12 noon and Wednesday's 9.00 a.m. – 9.30 a.m. to support the community and reduce food waste.
- Two Fareshare larders had been established to provide near end of life products to the local community at a low cost to reduce food waste.
- The Repair Shop held various workshops to teach skills in sewing, bike repairs and electric devices to save money and reduce the number of products thrown away.
- Working groups continued with the Greening Project producing a tree trail leaflet.
- Sustainable Swanage attended the market providing water saving devices and information on ways in which to save water.
- Launch of the 'Downs and Peveril Point Local Nature Reserve' was held on 15th April 2023.
- Picnic in the Park – an event was held at the former St Mark's school playing field with an opportunity to provide views on the future use of the area.
- Swanage Bike Day would be held at Sandpit field with demonstrations on bike repairs.

- Bioblitz – an event would be held to encourage local participation in creating homes for insects and recording the various species.
- Open Evening to be held 20th June 2023 7.00 p.m. – 8.15 p.m. entitled ‘Wildlife of Swanage and Purbeck’ being held at the Emmanuel Baptist Church.

Sarah was thanked for her hard work and for her attendance at the meeting.

Bob Foster, Trustee and Chair, Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust

Unfortunately, Bob Foster had been unable to attend and a written report had been circulated to Town Councillors and can be found at the end of the minutes.

Paul Angel, Chairman, The Mowlem Theatre

It was reported that new trustees had been recruited and the Mowlem now had a full board. The following update was provided:

- A Patron of the Mowlem had been confirmed as Edgar Wright, a filmmaker with local connections.
- Reinvigorated programming with the community at the heart.
- Artsreach would meet on 16th May 2023 to discuss upcoming events.
- ‘Off the Curve’ would see the comedian, Sean Walsh, perform in September 2023.
- Continuing to work closely with festivals such as Blues and the Jazz festivals with some performances held in the Showbar.
- Hosting Planet Purbeck and Carnival events.
- Launched a fundraising campaign with the aim to raise £160,000 in its 160th year.
- Improvements planned for the Committee room to fully utilise all areas of the Mowlem.
- A Friends of the Mowlem scheme had been launched which would provide discounts to members.
- All attendees were encouraged to follow the Mowlem on Facebook, Instagram and sign up to the newsletter via the website.

The Mayor thanked Paul for his informative presentation.

Councillor Avril Harris, Swanage Town Council

Councillor Harris provided an overview of the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan which included:

- The NHP would shape the location, quantity and the appearance of future builds in the town.
- The design code would stipulate that the buildings were cohesive with existing buildings and the architecture of the town.
- The population had shrunk since the 2001 census with 20% of houses now second homes.
- Little or no housing for local people and the restriction of public transport made it difficult to retain keyworkers.
- Swanage Community Land Trust is trying to set up new homes for local people at affordable rents.
- The Swanage NHP process would ensure local people had their say on the future appearance and housing opportunities in the town.
- The NHP would be an ongoing iterative document and all were invited to be involved.

Councillor Mike Bonfield, Swanage Town Council

Councillor Mike Bonfield provided an update on the Swanage Seafront Masterplan which included:

- The seafront is viewed as the jewel in the crown of Swanage.
- With large scale projects required the Town Council decided it was time to develop a ‘Masterplan’ to provide a cohesive approach to the design of the seafront area, from the Pier to Ocean Bay, and the green spaces such as Prince Albert Gardens and Sandpit field.
- The Town Council engaged Dorset Coast Forum (DCF) to carry out the public consultation process and to help develop the plan.
- In summer/autumn 2022 DCF sought the views of residents and visitors and received 1,045 responses.
- Workshops and pop up events were held to engage with as many people as possible.
- An interim report has been submitted to the Council which will be shared soon.

5. MATTERS RAISED BY LOCAL RESIDENTS

One resident raised concern over the length of time the Swanage and Herston Football Club sports hall had been decommissioned. The benefit to local people in being able to utilise facilities for badminton, table tennis and football was noted. In response the lead councillor of the Council’s Sport, Leisure and Wellbeing working party stated that regular meetings were held with the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust to develop the site for the town and further updates would follow in due course.

It was noted that a public meeting would be held on 12th June 2023 at 7.00 p.m. at the Methodist Church for members of the public to address the Police and Crime Commissioner, David Sidwick, and other members of the Police force regarding the increase in crime in town and potential solutions.

No other matters were raised.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was anticipated that the next Parish Assembly would be held in March 2024 - date to be confirmed.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked those present for their attendance, and informative presentations and closed the meeting at 8.50 p.m.

Mayor's report of last year

It was with great pride that I received the honour of being elected Swanage Town mayor last May and being handed the chain by the outgoing mayor Avril Harris who continues to work diligently for the Council.

Little did I realise last May what a year I was to enjoy with so many changes in our constitution.

My first and most daunting role was to assist in the lighting of the beacon at Durlston Castle for the start of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. Along with the Chairman of Dorset Council and the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset I had to follow them by making a speech in front of hundreds of well wishers. A very great honour.

So all plain sailing from then on; or so I thought. The sad news of the death of our Queen Elizabeth II meant I had to make the Proclamation of Succession at the bandstand in September. The support of my fellow councillors and Council staff gave me the courage to say the historic words, and their continuing support throughout my time in office has been a source of pride and joy, and of course, gratitude.

As a Council we have now completed a Corporate Plan which sets out our aims for the next three years, having consulted residents on the Council's priorities. In the coming months there is lots of work to develop the Neighbourhood Plan and the Seafront Masterplan, and Councillors Harris and Bonfield will speak about these a little later on. So, it's not all beer and bunting!

But there has been plenty that we can celebrate with the festivities to mark the Downs and Peveril Point becoming a Local Nature Reserve, the creation of a pocket park at Rabling Road, the opening of the former St. Mark's School playing field at Herston, the first winter closure of the Seafront and lots of running, rowing and dancing along the beach area.

We are currently working on implementing recommendations from an Accessibility survey to improve access around the town and are proud of our new "Changing Places" facility in North beach car park. This with the public meeting regarding the Burlington Chine toilets which confirmed the Council's commitment to keeping them open has given Swanage a good record for lavatorial facilities. As my Deputy keeps reminding us we can be "flushed with success".

In October we had a very well attended Community Awards night at the Mowlem where the Deputy Mayor handed out the well-deserved awards. The Awards Panel will be meeting again shortly so think about who you would like to nominate this year.

This may be a good time to mention my sidekick, Councillor Chris Moreton, who has been and hopefully will continue to be, a great strength and support. When I was taken ill in October he stepped in and covered the mayoral duties admirably. Thank you Chris - and Liz - for allowing me time to recover.

Christmas was a special time for Swanage and the lights and festivities were abundant. I cannot mention all the events that delighted us but the Rotary market and the steam train were prominent.

I, of course, have to mention Swanage Railway and the several trips I have made by train - even as far as Wareham for the inaugural journey from Swanage along the newly re-opened line. And it has been officially confirmed that I did not miss the train: it left early!

Some work has been done within the Council with changes to the Committees to try and rationalise the way we work. Working with other councillors and officers we are continuing to trial the new

systems until the Autumn to maximise efficiency. I am proud that we now have a full Environment Committee to implement our future plans for sustainability and this has been recognised as a great step forward by other town and parish councils.

We have joined with neighbouring parishes to create forums to discuss shared problems over Emergency Planning, tourism and logistics as the Isle of Purbeck is such a special area. We hope this will result in better planning and shared resources.

Within the Town itself we are repairing the parish slipway and Stone Quay. We are maintaining access roads to Peveril Point and structures within our ownership. As so much of our property is listed or within conservation areas the responsibility for maintenance is costly and ongoing.

Improvements have been introduced at the Boat Park and a new astroturf tennis court has been opened at Beach Gardens, but, looking ahead, there is a vast amount of underpinning to be carried out on Sandpit Field and other land above the seafront. Please support us and come along to the public consultations when they are called as this is your town and we need your ideas and support.

My year has been rounded off nicely with the Coronation of our new King and I was proud to be wearing the chain and accompanied by the Deputy when we processed with a parade of other Mayors to Sherborne Abbey. The dignitaries of Dorset joined together to celebrate the new King and the sun shone on a pageant of robes and regalia to almost vie with those in Westminster Abbey. I can now relate that I was in the Abbey wearing my jewels for the Coronation but keep quiet about it not being the right Abbey!

One of the greatest pleasures was the distribution of the Coronation spoons to all the primary school children in St Mark's, St Mary's and Mount Scar Schools. Who knew a spoon could be so exciting! Or the mayor's "Big Necklace"!

Before I finish I have to mention the Charity Ball. I had the, perhaps foolish idea, to resurrect a Mayor's Ball which with the help of many others resulted in a wonderful night sparkling with ball gowns, diamante and smartly dressed revellers dancing the night away. And we raised the magnificent sum of over £2,100 for the Heroes Haven Charity.

Being Mayor is a much bigger job than I had ever imagined. The public face of wearing the regalia and cutting ribbons is enjoyable and interesting. I love meeting people and sharing in their community efforts but there is another side to the work and that is being the Chairman of the Town Council. The responsibilities are many and various and as we look forward to a local election next year I hope that the new Council will be as dedicated to the town as the one that I have been proud to work with this year.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the Councillors and employees who make our town so special. Not the biggest town, but one with a huge heart.



UPDATE STATEMENT ON THE CHAPEL LANE PROJECT FOR THE PARISH ASSEMBLY 2023.

By Bob Foster, Chair of Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust

Firstly, my apologies for not being able to attend to present this update. I would much prefer to be there in person, but I am currently suffering with Covid.

The Background

It is astonishing to think that it is now 7 years since the Trust, with the assistance of the Town Council, took on the challenge of the building you are now sitting in, when funding, for open access Youth Clubs, was withdrawn by Dorset County Council.

After thousands of hours of volunteer time and grants from various sources, the Trust refurbished the building to its current state. It is now well used for Community use with a full-time childcare and wrap around care service. It is also used for Community events at weekends.

The Youth Club, itself, was moved to the Trust's building, Herston Village Hall, where there was a greater demand from Young People, and has lots of space for indoor and outdoor activities. The Club is now oversubscribed, and the Trust is planning to invest in opening on additional evening, in the foreseeable future, as funding becomes available.

The Children's Centre and Day Centre Chapel Lane

While managing the Youth Centre we noticed that the Children's Centre and the Day Centre were becoming increasingly underutilised, with much less activity going on.

With the withdrawal of SureStart, for young families, and the changes of funding for Adult Services, it was clear that the level of services being provided in Swanage was falling back. The Trust considered the services, being lost, to be a detriment to the Community of Swanage and surrounding villages. The Trust set about finding ways, with the help of both Swanage Town Council and Dorset Council, to try and protect existing services and start to reintroduce services that had been lost, locally.

It was important that the services, meeting the needs of the local Community, could be cost effectively managed to ensure that they are sustainable in the long term.

The discussions, which have been going on for several years, have now been highlighted, with a decision by the Cabinet of Dorset Council, at its meeting of 28 March 2023, to proceed with an Asset Transfer of the Children's Centre and Day Centre to the Swanage and Purbeck Development. This decision followed a Business Case, presented by the Trust, stating that it would manage the accommodation to offer cost effective accommodation for a range of Family and Adult Services, based upon local need.

The introduction of funding for Family Hub services, by Central Government, led to an agreed partnership between Dorset Children's Services and Swanage and Purbeck



Development Trust to set up and deliver a Family Hub, for Swanage, in Chapel Lane, managed by the Trust.

Design Concept for Chapel Lane

In agreement with Dorset Council's Children's and Adult Services the buildings will be integrated and become a multigenerational Hub, delivering services to families with young children through to the older generation, requiring increased care services.

The new Health and Wellbeing Hub will have a Community Café at the front together with a Welcome Lounge, where local people can find out about services that they need, available both onsite and further afield. A principal objective is that local people will feel welcome, when they arrive, with trained coordinators available, to interpret the needs of individuals and signpost a health and wellbeing solution, which suits them.

The existing, Wellbeing Swanage project, which is part of the Trust, will have a more direct role, in the Hub. It will provide the links for the Community to access the services that it needs. It will also be there to encourage greater resilience, by helping people to help themselves and others by having access to services that they need, more easily.

Timing

The Dorset Cabinet meeting, of 28 March, indicated a time frame of three and a half months, for completion of the Asset Transfer, from that date. This is now being followed through, with fortnightly meetings, of Dorset Council officers, Trustees of SPDT and Martin Ayres of STC.

A timeline of completing the property formalities by mid-July has been agreed. At that time, it is anticipated that the Trust will commence on the reorganisation works necessary to integrate the site for an intergenerational Family Hub. The site will be kept open for existing services, and a Welcome Lounge introduced, to provide signposting for local people to access Health and Wellbeing services. to suit their needs.

Bob Foster

Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust

15 May 2023