

Minutes of the **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING** of the Parish of Swanage, held at The Centre, High Street, Swanage on **MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025** 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 50 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 Sutton.

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 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 an overview of the Town Council's highlights and activities over the past year, which included:-

- An update on the Green Seafront scheme and forthcoming consultation.
- Ongoing work on the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan.
- Submission of plans for the new Days Park Sports Centre.
- Celebration of the Town Council's Golden Anniversary, including a Civic Service at St Mary's Church, which brought the community together and marked a proud occasion.
- The opening of The Focus Centre.
- Installation of the town's new Christmas lights.
- The Mayor's Charity Ball.
- A visit from the Czech Ambassador to the Trevor Chadwick memorial statue and playground.
- A wide range of exciting and successful festivals and events held in the town, including the Carnival, Jazz and Blues Festivals, Fairy Festival, Seafood Festival, Pirate Festival, and The Polar Express experience, among others.
- Thanks were extended to the six new councillors who joined the Council in May 2024 for their time and contributions.
- Thanks were also expressed to all councillors for their commitment, and appreciation was extended to all officers and staff members for their support.

The Mayor reported that a donation of £645.00 would be made to Dementia Friendly Purbeck (DFP) from proceeds of the Mayor's Charity Ball, to support the group's fundraising efforts towards recruiting a second Admiral Nurse in Purbeck. This role would provide specialised dementia support under the supervision of the existing Admiral Nurse, Rachel Murray.

The donation was gratefully received by the Chair of DFP, Councillor Bonfield, who also provided an update on the group's work following the merger of the Swanage and Wareham groups, and on its ongoing fundraising activities. It was noted that £80,000 had already been raised towards a target of £120,000. It was further noted that it was estimated that one in three people in the UK may be diagnosed with dementia by 2040 (circa 1.4m

people). Comments were made that, to help reduce the risk of dementia, individuals were encouraged to remain active, maintain a healthy diet, and exercise both the body and mind regularly.

The Mayor then expressed heartfelt thanks to her consort, Mr Leslie Parkinson, Councillor Chris Moreton, Deputy Mayor, and all those who had supported her during her three-year term as Town Mayor.

A copy of the Mayor's full report is appended to these minutes.

#### 4. **SWANAGE TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY AWARDS 2024**

The Chairman reported that the Community Awards Panel (consisting of the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Team Rector, Swanage & Studland Team Ministry, the President of Swanage and Purbeck Rotary, and the Council's Planning and Community Engagement Manager), had this year received a total of 40 nomination forms.

Before presenting the awards to this year's deserving winners, the Chairman thanked everyone who had taken part and had cast a vote. Choosing the winners had been no easy task, every nominee had made a meaningful contribution to the community and was deserving of recognition.

#### **Community Award winners 2025:**

- **Arts and Heritage - Mr Harry Peake** (The Swanage School and Peake Performance Academy) – nominated for his passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the performing arts which had left a lasting impact on both The Swanage School and the wider community. Particularly praised for the school's annual productions at The Mowlem, introducing countless children and families to the magic of theatre and the performing arts, attracting audiences from far and wide.
- **Service with a Smile - Mr Stuart Norman** (Melody) – nominated for his kindness and patience, and warmth and willingness to help which had earned him a reputation for great customer service in the community. For engaging with customers and visitors, patiently providing support, assistance and advice, all with a smile on his face.
- **Small Business of the Year – Sisters Joanna Nowosad and Agnes Olszewska, The Old Stables Delicatessen & Eaterie** – The Old Stables had received a 'special mention' at the 2023 awards as a newly established business. More than a deli, an eco-friendly shop situated in the 'Heart of Swanage', accommodating individuals' needs, serving a wide selection of cooked meats, cheeses, fruit, vegetables and specialty foods, as well as offering a cafe, serving homemade food, cakes and drinks.
- **Youth Citizen of the Year - Mr Pierre Martel** – a Project Manager, radio presenter at Purbeck Sounds ('Voice of Purbeck Youth'), and videographer – nominated for being an extraordinary and inspirational young person who had consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication to his community, bringing numerous youth projects to life. A volunteer radio presenter, also dedicating his time to helping others with kindness, perseverance, and a heart for service.
- **Community Award – Mo Andrews and David Collacott, Dementia Friendly Purbeck (DFP)** – nominated for their compassion, generosity and kindness,

they had played a vital role in raising awareness about dementia and devoting themselves to making Purbeck a truly dementia friendly community. Organising the fortnightly Dementia Café, and the weekly Singing for Pleasure Group, and working tirelessly to raise funds for DFP, ensuring that DFP could continue making a positive impact on the lives of those affected by dementia. One of the most memorable fundraising achievements for Purbeck being the appointment in 2017 of the first community dementia specialist Admiral Nurse in Dorset, improving the lives of so many families living with dementia.

- **Volunteer of the Year – Mr Ross Wayne** - nominated for being instrumental in bringing people together, fostering health and wellbeing and creating opportunities for connection and friendship (Durlston Country Park Parkrun, and Purbeck Runners). One of the leading figures in establishing the hugely successful park run at Durlston Country Park, attending every single week, taking on key organisational roles, an event that since its inception had welcomed hundreds of participants each week (over 8,000 in total) showing unwavering commitment, promoting fitness, and inclusivity. The event not only benefits the local community, but also brings visitors into the town, and will be celebrating its third birthday this month.
- **Lifetime Achievement – Mr Eric Hudson** – nominated for his steadfast dedication, which had been a cornerstone of the community for over 35 years and touched the lives of countless residents and visitors. His service began with the town’s emergency services, first as a RNLI lifeboat volunteer and later as a retained firefighter for 10 years, responding to many major incidents. For the past 23 years he had been a vital member of the Coastguard Team. Known for his sense of humour, courage, kindness, and his ability to support people at their most vulnerable moments, he had made an immeasurable difference to those he had helped. His contributions also extended to community life, particularly through his long-standing involvement with Swanage Carnival. Respected, resilient, and admired by colleagues and the community alike, this award celebrated his outstanding commitment and lifelong dedication to the wellbeing of others.

Unfortunately, Mr Hudson was unable to attend the meeting, and the award was accepted on his behalf by his very proud daughter, Mrs Sharon Doherty.

- **Lifetime Achievement – Mr David Pike** – nominated for his involvement with Swanage & Purbeck Rotary, Swanage Drama Group, Swanage Carnival, and The Mowlem, to name just a few organisations – someone whose dedication and generosity had left a lasting and meaningful impact on the community. He had devoted countless hours to supporting local theatre, schools, and charitable organisations, always working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure their success. A steadfast supporter of community events, he had offered his skills and advice to local venues, helping to ensure that every event ran smoothly, whether organising annual fetes or playing a pivotal role in festive markets. His involvement in key fundraising initiatives had helped raise thousands of pounds for local good causes and international charities alike, making a tangible and lasting difference.
- **Lifetime Achievement – Mr Neil Hardy MBE and Mrs Maggie Hardy** – celebrating two extraordinary members of the community, for a lifetime of dedicated service across a wide range of organisations, including RNLI

Lifeboats, Swanage & Purbeck Rotary, local hospitals, Dorset NHS CCG, and the Swanage Community Defibrillator Partnership.

Mr Hardy was recognised for over 30 years of outstanding service with Swanage RNLI, including his role as Lifeboat Operations Manager. His commitment to saving lives at sea had provided safety and reassurance to countless people, and in 2015 he was deservedly awarded an MBE for his exceptional contribution.

Mrs Hardy had been nominated for her tireless commitment to community and healthcare services. She had been a driving force behind initiatives to expand access to lifesaving defibrillators and had played a key role within Swanage & Purbeck Rotary, fostering generosity and community support. Her distinguished career included serving as Manager of Swanage Hospital (1992–2001), Locality Commissioning Manager at Dorset NHS CCG, and Chair of the Friends of Wareham Community Hospital, as well as providing invaluable support during the Covid pandemic.

Together, they had made an extraordinary and lasting impact on the health, safety, and wellbeing of the community.

Unfortunately, Mr Hardy was unable to attend the meeting, and his award was accepted on his behalf by Mrs Hardy.

- **Heart and Soul Award – Community Champions – Mr Mel Norris and Mrs Gerry Norris** - awarded posthumously to Mrs Norris in recognition of her remarkable contribution and lasting legacy. Together, Mr and Mrs Norris had shown exceptional dedication to Swanage through decades of tireless community action and advocacy. They had played a central role in establishing the Swanage Area Forum and producing its monthly newsletter (along with the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust), keeping residents informed and connected, work that proved especially invaluable during the Covid pandemic. Over many years, they helped support and champion numerous successful community campaigns, including:

- Swanage & Purbeck Ambulance Car and specialist staff after the overnight closure of the Minor Injuries Unit
- Swanage Day Centre
- The reopening of James Day Care Home
- A new Swanage Recycling Centre
- NHS dental provision for the town
- Swanage Hospital
- Save Poole A&E and Maternity Services campaign, and the maternity and paediatric services at Dorset County Hospital
- Swanage Ambulance Car

Their unwavering commitment, compassion, and persistence helped safeguard vital services and strengthened the community they loved. Their legacy endured in the many lives improved and saved through their extraordinary efforts.

- **Special Mention:**  
**McAllisters Pantry & Picnic Bar, Café and Bakery** – independent, family-run businesses, receiving many complimentary comments regarding the sizeable gluten-free range of products on offer, and the knowledgeable and diligent staff members when dealing with customers' intolerances.

Congratulations were passed on to ‘Team McAllister’.

Congratulations were also extended to all winners on their well-deserved awards. Details of the awards would be posted on the Council’s website and Facebook page, and in the local press.

The Town Council expressed its heartfelt gratitude to all of the town’s volunteers and local businesses for their dedication, energy and enthusiasm. They were at the heart of the community and played a vital role in supporting local towns and villages, especially at a time when public service funding was limited. Their efforts truly made a positive difference, benefitting everyone.

The Council also extended its sincere thanks to the town’s emergency service workers for their tireless commitment and the invaluable service they provided in keeping the community safe.

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

**Accessible Swanage** - an update was provided on the wide range of projects and improvements the group was hoping to progress, including consultation with local businesses. The representatives reported positive partnership work with the Town Council and thanked councillors and staff for their support in helping to make the town more accessible. The group was also pleased to be collaborating with Allsort’d.org and would soon be seeking more volunteers to help deliver their ideas and further their aim of making the town as welcoming, inclusive, and accessible as possible.

**Dorset Police** – it was reported that due to work commitments the local policing team had been unable to attend the meeting.

**Greengage Community Garden** - an update was provided on the Greengage project at Prospect Nursery, which included a large greenhouse and outdoor growing plots. Originally set up by Dorset Wildlife Trust in 2016 as a community wellbeing garden, with support from the Town Council, the project had been created to support people experiencing mental health challenges, dementia, or long-term unemployment, through eco-therapy and gardening. In 2021 volunteers formed a project group and took over the lease of the nursery under the Swanage and Purbeck Development Trust. The garden was now open to all, promoting wellbeing through growing flowers, fruit, and vegetables, for personal use or to support the group’s fundraising activities. Upcoming events at Prospect Green included a picnic in May, a summer show in August, and a Christmas Fayre. Thanks were extended to Swanage and Purbeck Rotary, the Town Council, the Co-op Community Fund, and Talbot Village Trust, for their funding support.

**The Swanage Community Defibrillator Partnership** – it was reported that this year marked the Partnership’s tenth anniversary. The group originally set out to install four defibrillators in the town, there were now 45 across Purbeck, along with two trauma kits, a significant achievement, with further units planned thanks to ongoing fundraising initiatives. The devices were accessible 24 hours a day and required regular maintenance. A team of guardians carried out fortnightly checks to ensure they remained in good working order. It was also reported that the equipment had been used more than 200 times, helping to save lives. In addition, the group had trained over 300 people in how to use the devices through its free, volunteer-run workshops.

Thanks were extended to all organisations, including the Town Council, for hosting devices on their premises. The group's fundraising efforts continued.

**Swanage Skatepark Community Project** – an update was provided via a short newsletter which was handed out to attendees (a copy of which is attached at the end of the minutes).

**Swanage Streams Partnership** – the Partnership had been launched in November 2024 and was actively seeking to engage the local community in its river restoration and flood protection initiatives. The launch event, held at The Swanage School on 26<sup>th</sup> November, was attended by approximately 90 people, with 40 individuals volunteering to support the project. This partnership brought together the National Trust, Dorset National Landscape, Planet Purbeck, and Swanage Town Council (who had provided grant funding for the project). An update was given on the existing condition of Swan Brook. It was reported that the watercourse had suffered from long-term neglect and was currently impacted by a range of issues, including poor drainage, litter and pollution, elevated nutrient levels, and declining habitat quality. Future plans included raising awareness and encouraging community involvement through events such as public talks, guided tours of existing flood defence schemes, and practical demonstrations of beneficial environmental management activities. The Partnership aimed to restore Swan Brook and other local streams in Purbeck, delivering wide-ranging benefits for residents and wildlife. Expected outcomes included reduced flood risk, improved water quality, and enhanced biodiversity, supporting species such as dragonflies, kingfishers, and otters.

**Wellbeing Swanage and The Focus Centre** – an update was provided on the progress of the project, a health and wellbeing hub for families to access one-stop community services in Swanage. Since the update given at the last Annual Parish Meeting in May 2023, the Trust had acquired the Children's Centre and the Day Centre buildings. Significant building work had taken place, and it was anticipated that the new 'Welcome Lounge' would open in April 2025, providing the community with signposting services, help and information. It was noted that services launched so far included the return of a baby weighing service, a depression support group, and a Narcotics Anonymous group. There would be a relaunch of the 'Community Connectors' scheme, and workshops were being held for individuals or organisations wishing to join the network. It was also noted that the Trust had taken on a 125-year lease and was seeking to build reserves to reinvest in the project for the long-term sustainability of services. The decision on a National Lottery funding application was anticipated in April 2025. Thanks were expressed to the Town Council for its support and funding.

## 6. **MATTERS RAISED BY LOCAL RESIDENTS**

There were no matters raised. However, Mr Pierre Martel, one of the Community Award recipients, commented that this was the first award he had ever received, and that it had taken a moment for the achievement to sink in. He expressed thanks to Mr Harry Peake for his inspiration and for helping to build his confidence through school drama classes and musical performances.

Mr Martel also thanked Swanage and Purbeck Rotary for the opportunities it had provided, and Purbeck Sounds, in particular Mr Graham Turner and Mr Andrew Birt, who worked tirelessly as volunteers to provide the town with a community radio station.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was proposed that the next Parish Assembly would be held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked those present for their attendance, for the informative presentations provided, and for their continued support for one another, and for taking pride in the town.

The Chairman invited all attendees to remain after the meeting for a light buffet and an opportunity to socialise, and formally closed the meeting at 8.40 p.m.

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## **Town Mayor's Report for Annual Parish Assembly 2025**

As we move towards the new term for the Town Council in May 2025, I want us to think about change. Change is inevitable and is going to happen whether we want it or not. Climate change, with the subsequent effects on our coastline and surrounding areas, is threatening our town, green seafront and beach, our parks and gardens, roads and pathways. As the famous quote goes "When the winds of change blow, some people build walls, others build windmills."

In our case the walls are cracking already, as they are along Shore Road, so we need to build, maybe not windmills, but structures that are going to bring improvements and safety to our town.

We have to be prepared to embrace change and use our resources to construct and enhance the spaces that make our town so beautiful and enjoyable.

And I believe that we have the team to take on the challenges which we face. I hope that when we go out to all with our consultations, the residents of Swanage will take the time to understand and support what we want to do to improve and secure our beautiful town.

Since May of last year, we have been joined by six new councillors who are learning that it takes many hours of meetings, workshops, and committees to make the decisions that keep the Council striving to undertake its commitments. The time given by all councillors who have offered themselves to the, sometimes, thankless task, should be appreciated. Supported by officers and the teams of staff members, our Council is worthy of high regard.

Many exciting and joyous events have taken place this last year including the usual festivals such as the Pirates, the Fairies, the Seafood, the Jazz and Blues music, as well as the hugely popular Carnival. Ours is a town for people to enjoy and I congratulate all those who work so hard to bring prosperity and pleasure here.

Other highlights of this past year include the opening of the Focus Centre, which I know will be of huge benefit to us all. The new Christmas lights sparkled through the town centre, and the Polar Express brought hundreds of families here to enjoy the spectacle. The Civic Service in St Mary's Church brought people together to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Town Council; a very proud occasion.

We were united by the tragedy at the Gainsborough Nursing Home with our town showing its caring face.

The visit by the Czech Ambassador to the Trevor Chadwick memorial statue on the rec was a very proud moment.

The plans for the new sports centre have been submitted, and other plans including the Swanage Neighbourhood Plan and the vision for Swanage are going out shortly for public consultation.

This will give you all the opportunity to contribute to the plans, to work together and continue to make this the town we know and love. Swanage has a much-praised community spirit, and I know we can achieve what is needed; let's work together to make the next year another of which to be proud.

Before I hand over, there is a presentation I would like to make to this year's Mayor's charity. Following the Charity Ball last month, and with thanks to those who helped make it such enjoyable night, I should like to present the sum of £645 to Cllr Mike Bonfield, Chairman of the Purbeck Dementia Friendly Group. Thanks also to all who came along on the night, and contributed to the fun, and the dancing.

And a heartfelt thank you to my Consort, Les, my stalwart Deputy, Cllr Chris Moreton, and all those who have supported me over the last three years.



## Swanage Skatepark Community Project – Exciting Progress & Upcoming Event!

Dear Supporters

As we approach the first anniversary of our fundraising journey, we're thrilled to share some exciting updates on the **Swanage Skatepark Community Project!**

### Fundraising Milestone Achieved!

Over the past year, thanks to the generosity and support of our amazing community, we've successfully raised **£83,500** towards the rebuilding and improvement of Swanage Skatepark. This incredible achievement means we are now in a position to start the first phase of construction!

### Next Steps: Bringing the Vision to Life

Swanage Town Council's Assets and Compliance Manager is currently preparing a **tender process** for skatepark builders to submit their proposals. Each builder will be asked to:

- ✓ **Demonstrate the amount of skatepark equipment they can construct** within our existing budget.
- ✓ **Present a full vision for the skatepark**, including the total cost for completion.

This approach will allow us to set a clear **fundraising target** for the next phase, ensuring we create the best possible facility for our community.

### Building More Than a Skatepark

Beyond the physical rebuild, we're committed to **creating a welcoming and inclusive space** for skaters of all ages and abilities. Our project is built on key values:

- ☀️ **Kindness** – Encouraging a positive and supportive environment.
- ☀️ **Inclusivity** – Ensuring everyone feels welcome.
- ☀️ **Transparency** – Keeping the community informed every step of the way.
- ☀️ **Positivity & Respect** – Promoting a fun and safe skatepark culture.
- ☀️ **Opportunities for Learning** – Helping skaters develop their skills and confidence.

### Join Us for an Exciting Event!

We'd love to invite you to our next event:

- 📅 **Saturday, 12th April**
- 📍 **Swanage Skatepark**
- 🕒 **12:00 PM onwards**

This special afternoon will feature **free workshops and pro rider demonstrations**, plus a **Skate Jam in memory of Will Paddy**. Funds raised from cake sales, refreshments, and raffle tickets will be shared between **Swanage Skatepark Community Project and**

**#Willdoes.** This event has been kindly funded by **Dorset Council** and **Swanage Town Council**.

**Stay Connected!**

To keep up to date with our progress, visit [SwanageSkateparkCommunity.com](http://SwanageSkateparkCommunity.com) and sign up for our newsletter!

Thank you for your continued support—we can't wait to see you at the skatepark!

**The Swanage Skatepark Community Project Team**

**March 2025**



**SKATE - SCOOT - BMX  
WORKSHOPS & DEMOS**

# SKATE JAM

IN MEMORY OF WILL PADDY #Willdoes 

**12:00 - 17:00 SATURDAY 12TH APRIL  
SWANAGE SKATEPARK**

# FREE ENTRY

