

Swanage Residents Association

Meeting held at 7.30 pm on 20 November 2006 at the Mowlem Committee Room

1. John Leach, Chairman, chaired the meeting. Committee members present were : Stewart Borrett, Robert Owen, Rowland Hughes, Councillor Colin Bright, Councillor Mike Hadley, Councillor Cherry Bartlett and David Price-Hughes. There were around 30 members present.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes.

Councillor Cherry Bartlett asked if it was appropriate to comment on the minutes of the last meeting (of the AGM) until the next AGM. Councillor Mike Hadley noted that these could be considered draft minutes so presumably all right to comment upon (subject to procedural correction).

2.1 Pavement obstruction:

Mrs Chips of Quay House, Lower High Street noted the obstructions caused by chairs/tables outside the Beach cafe and the Trattoria. Councillor Hadley noted that DCC were conducting a 'root and branch' review of all issues to do with pavement obstruction, including advertising boards, but that the subject was being addressed carefully to ensure all legal matters were properly addressed. Councillor Bright noted that some businesses may not have licenses for alcohol to be consumed on the pavements outside their premises.

2.2 Offers of help:

Dr Leach regretted to note that there had been no volunteers to offer any support to the Association.

2.3 Survey: there had been 11 replies out of 300 canvassed.

3. Swanage Town & Community Partnership:

Dr Leach noted that there appeared to have been a considerable communication failure, with few in the community aware of what was going on. A full report of all activities to date had been promised for the last //Partnership// meeting, but this had not been ready, so the Partnership meeting was cancelled at short notice.

Mr Ian Allen (Chamber of Commerce) reported that the first draft of the report was due to be signed off in a few days and that there would be a meeting for review and consultation before its publication early in the New Year.

There was some strong debate about the apparent 'black hole' into which all 'community partnership' input had apparently disappeared. A view was expressed that the community had lost interest and faith as a result of the lack of communication. There had been little or no feedback, no proper explanation about the fact of, and the reason for, dropping the Parish Plan in favour of the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative.

Peter Clark explained that this did appear to make sense for there was considerable extra funding to bodies aligned with the MCTI. He regretted that Swanage had missed the opportunity to have this information presented to PDC for inclusion in their deliberations on the Local development Plan for the Core Strategy document. He noted that no one told the public about the changes, and no one explained the reason for delays. Mike Hadley reported that he had passed the contents of the first 'outline draft report' (of over 12 months ago) to the PDC for consideration in the LDP.

Rowland Hughes observed that this seemed a familiar process, to change the names and move the goalposts, so no one knows what's happening any longer.

Robert Owen asked why information could not be placed on a website or blog. Ian Allen noted that this was being explored.

There was debate about whether an amount of around £40,000 remained available to Swanage through the MCTI. Mike Hadley thought this was the figure that had been spent on progressing the multi-function centre. Ian Allen reported that money had been spent

mainly on a Bournemouth University report, on publishing the Report and on financing specific projects.

4. Purbeck Core Strategy/Local Development Plan

The majority of those present admitted to great confusion, if not total ignorance, about this document. Key complaints were that it had been poorly publicised and was poorly presented. The format and layout was not easy to follow, so making it difficult to understand — and so difficult to make comments. Colin Bright noted that the presentation followed government guidelines, so was not the responsibility of PDC. Colin Bright went on to explain that this was the first in a series of documents, and that even the PDC councillors only received the draft document a few days before publication. Colin Bright also noted that the core strategy was initiated and evaluated by the so-called Government of the South West rather than central government (news to most in the audience).

5. Pier Head development

Dr Leach reported his understanding that since the last application had been rejected, Mr Storer was discussing new proposals with PDC to try to reach a conclusion. He expressed the wish, apparently shared by many, that this really should be resolved, for the shabby site reflects poorly on the image of the town. Colin Bright noted that any plans previously rejected had been because the application did not meet the guidelines provided for this area outside the official settlement boundary. There was some debate about whether any enforcement action could be taken to require development of this site and others, such as the old Huon Pine bakery next to Lloyds Bank. It seemed not.

6. CCTV

Robert Owen reported that CCTV coverage was increasingly effective, leading to some successes in crime prevention and/or detection. He noted that the police were trying to improve monitoring facilities, and were looking for volunteers to man the monitors.

7. Multi-function centre

No one seemed to know the status of this project. Peter Clark hoped that more information might be forthcoming at the next partnership meeting.

8. Transport

Councillor Cherry Bartlett reported that STAG (the Swanage Transport Action Group) was now integrated with the Purbeck Transport Action Group and was actively working to improve all kinds of transport. She was sorry to report that the STAG bus had been withdrawn owing to lack of demand (or support): 50 people registered but only 1 person used the service.

Next STAG meeting is 6.30 pm on 10th January at the Town Hall.

9. Health Care

Cherry Bartlett noted that there was to be a meeting of the Primary Health Care Trust on Tuesday 21st at 2pm.

10. Playland: pavements

David Price-Hughes raised the subject of the dangerous pavements on the High Street side of Playland, which he had been assured time and again would be addressed. Mike Hadley agreed to pursue this, noting that Steve Darrington had been doing a lot of work to improve access on pavements.

11. Wheelie bin obstructions

The question was asked why SITA could not replace bins in people's gardens, to stop them blocking the pavements. [Mike Hadley raised this at a subsequent meeting between the Council, PDC and SITA and was told that bins are only the responsibility of PDC/SITA while they are being emptied. Before and after this, the householder is responsible. One explanation for this is apparently to do with potential liabilities if the council go on other people's property.]

12 Free parking at Christmas

Colin Bright noted that he had distributed 105 posters detailing free parking arrangements in the run-up to Christmas, and was sorry to see that a number of traders did not appear to support the scheme and had not displayed the poster.

13. Christmas Lights

It was noted the Christmas lights will officially be switched on on Saturday 25th at 2.06 pm.

14. Newton Grange development

It was noted that there was to be a site meeting (open to the public) on the 23 November at 9.30 am.

15. Dr Leach thanked Phylis Denton and her daughter for preparing refreshments at past meetings, but noted that as she was not well, there would unfortunately be none at this meeting. He wished her a speedy recovery.

16. Meeting closed at 9.00 pm