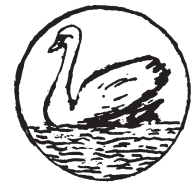


THE SWANAGE INDEPENDENT



The Newsletter of the Swanage Residents' Association

MAY 06 ISSUE 52

**The AGM will be held at
7.30pm on Wednesday 17th May
at
The Catholic Hall
Rempstone Road**

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*This meeting will be open to all with an interest in
local issues.*

Please try to be there - you'll be very welcome

CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

There goes another year in the life of Swanage and of the Swanage Residents Association. As far as I can see, some Good, some Bad and some Very odd things have happened. Lets be positive and look at some of the Good things. The Beach Renewal/Coast Protection scheme has had a dramatic effect on the bay and should impress our holidaymakers but many beach hut owners are not so happy. The refusal by Purbeck District Council to give in to the Developers for an over-development of the Old Grammar School Site is heartening; now the developers are trying to frighten us with the threat of asylum seekers! The progress of the Playground and Skate Park in St Georges Field is great news for the young of Swanage. The re-opening of the Museum; the additional CCTV cameras; etc. etc.

The very sad loss of Hilary O'Donovan, our good

friend and the Town's champion overshadows the Bad things. The state of the Pier Head site is appalling and needs sorting out fast. The surrender of the Sea Court site to the developers was a bad and unexpected result. The continual loss of Hotels and B&Bs, knocked down and/or turned into even more flats is a worrying trend. The Wheelie bin/Recycling mess; the lack of Police at the right time; the worry over the future of our Schools; so on and so on.

Now we get to the Odd things. How about the Parish Assembly fiasco? Well done John Wootton for facing up to the Council and putting them right. The disqualification of a Town Councillor and the sudden retirement of our Town Mayor were dramatic and unexpected, but have you noticed how relaxed the Council meetings are now?

Despite all our moans and groans, I think we are all very lucky to live in such a fantastic place!

Swanage Town & Community Partnership/Parish Plan

At the October Meeting of the Association, we (John Leach and Mike Hadley) were unable to explain what had happened to all the information gathered by the Parish Plan exercise of 2004. The smokescreen of acronyms that were produced by the Swanage Town and Community Partnership also confused us. Since then we, with David Price Hughes, have attended a number of the Swanage Town and Community Partnership meetings to try and get the lowdown on what has been happening. I will now try and give you a logical report with no abbreviations!

In 2004 there was the public Parish Plan exercise, co-ordinated by the Swanage Town and Community Partnership worker Roger Seaman. In May 2005 a draft of the Parish Plan, which had already been circulated to committee members of the Swanage Town and Community Partnership, was published on a local web blog site. This was the first time that most of us had heard anything.

Swanage Town and Community Partnership decided that the best approach for any future funding would be via the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative. It was felt that projects needed proof of viability and of community support. Funding bodies would look more positive and access to funds would be easier if projects came through the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative process.

In September 2005 a Facilitation Day and a Parish Plan-Moving it Forward Day were held. This started the process of dovetailing together all the research carried out over the years, now under the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative. Information from the draft Parish Plan, The Beacon Mentoring Scheme, the Rural Regeneration Survey, etc. will at last be drawn together, visions and goals identified, theme groups set up and work plans determined. This will be a long drawn out process.

November 2005, the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative four Theme Groups are announced - 'Economy', 'Environment', 'Culture' and 'Social'. Data from the Purbeck Community Plan and the Dorset Strategic Partnership were added to the mix.

The four Theme Groups are now in the process of sifting the various projects/activities with special emphasis on items identified by the Parish Plan and Beacon Visioning Day public 'priority dots' projects. The theme groups will identify the skills needed to move the projects forward and will consult with or invite into the groups other people where it is thought appropriate. A set of principles for evaluating projects has been agreed.

The focus in 2005-06 will continue to be on some major scheme proposals such as the Seafront Enhancement Scheme and the Multi-function Centre.

And so it goes on. Its will be a long drawn out process but should provide a working framework and make a massive impact on the town in the future. It is unfortunate that there has not been much in the way of reporting back to the public. The public need to know what progress has been made and what their input has been used for. The lack of public communication appears to have resulted in a loss of confidence and a feeling of anger at not being informed. At our October Meeting one resident stated that 'it's not right to involve the community and not report back to it; and that no similar projects could properly be undertaken in the future if there was no record of earlier work.'

Multi-function Centre

The Multi-function Centre scheme, originally identified as a high priority in the Parish Plan exercise, is being progressed under the Rural Renaissance Initiative. In November the appointed consultants produced a draft business plan. Various sites for the centre were identified. The public exhibition about the centre scheduled for December was delayed for more information until February 2006. This exhibition presented outline-building plans for two different physical layouts and gave details of the two favoured sites at Days Park and the Middle School. Caution was necessary with regards the Middle School site because of the current review of the Education System.

Swanage Residents Association

In June 2004 the Residents Association was put into hibernation because of the lack of new volunteers to act as Principal Officers and Committee Members. That situation has not really changed other than I very reluctantly offered to take on the post of Chairman. This was because I 'felt very strongly that the Association is an important asset to the town and should not be allowed to flounder and die'. We still need new blood and enthusiasm to keep the Association alive.

However, during this past year we have also had some criticism about the work of the committee members and some debate about the influence/effectiveness of the Association. There has been the suggestion that the Association should be more aggressive. What do you think? Should the Association be:-

- 1) More aggressive and more 'politically' active.
- 2) Remain as it is, presenting information, raising issues at council meetings, writing letters etc.
- 3) Less active, only gathering and distributing information for individuals to act on as they feel fit.

We want to know what you think. Please fill in the slip at the end of this Newsletter and either hand it in at the AGM on May 17th or send it to me at 22 Moor Road, Swanage.

How about helping us out, we need new people, new ideas, and new input.

*John Leach, Chairman
johneleach@yahoo.co.uk
or 07815 427215*

Swanage Museum

Swanage Museum and Heritage Centre. The project to install the Museum at its new location in the town square is proving to be extremely successful, with many local residents as well as visitors coming in to visit. The partnership with Purbeck District Council has worked very smoothly with the level of professional support and level of commitment offered going well beyond the bounds of what we could have anticipated. The team of volunteers from the Museum itself probably logged up over five hundred hours of efforts to take advantage of the Lottery funding and to achieve as professional a result in Museum display terms as we have.

The combined Centre is already planning ahead to put on Exhibitions and events and hopes to do this in conjunction with other local heritage venues such as the Pier and with other organisations so that it can develop as a town focal point.

One such event which we would hope to put on this Autumn is to give the opportunity for local organisations to promote their activities and to give an opportunity for membership and volunteer recruitment. It is possible that Swanage Museum and Heritage Centre could become a 'shop window' for membership and recruitment of volunteers on a permanent basis. Please contact me now if your organisation wishes to be involved. The Autumn event will offer space to advertise and promote interest, and if enough interest is shown; something in the nature of a day seminar or a recruitment day, with space for our displays and information/resources. This will hopefully be a two way process. The increased flow through of visitors is sparking off a far more active era for our volunteers and for our development as a community museum.

Please drop in or offer your support and tell us what you would like to happen, if there are ways to develop the use of the new location to the towns advantage.

*John Page
Acting Chairman
Tel. 427474*

Parish Assembly

The annual town meeting is to be held on Monday 15th May, 7pm at the Town Hall. This public meeting is entirely given over to the people of Swanage to raise any issues they wish. For more information, contact Alan Leeson, Town Clerk on 423636.

CCTV

The CCTV programme has recently had three more cameras covering the Lower High Street and surrounding area, which together with all the CCTV cameras in the town will be monitored in a new control room in the police station.

Many of the under age drinkers are found by the police have obtained their alcohol from their parents, either directly or covertly. The police ask parents therefore to be responsible and keep their liquor stored safe from their children.

Rob Owen

Swanage Bay Rest. & Bar

David and Kate Taylor were awarded the contract to operate the Swanage Bay View Restaurant & Bar from 31st March 2006. The restaurant and bar is open every evening from 5.30pm and all day Saturday & Sunday, providing a wide range of competitively priced meals.

We have committed over £3000 in May and June to provide what we believe to be some of the best live entertainment in the area. The vast majority of activities will take place in the lower Restaurant/Bar: however when there are functions the upper bar will be available and offer the same services as normal. The lower Restaurant/Bar is available for private functions throughout the year with the exception of July and August. To date we have four weddings booked.

It is our hope to develop and increase the existing trade at Swanage Bay View during the next four years (the duration of the contract) and look to work with the local community to offer services throughout the year.

For further information or a copy of our latest menu please call us on 427111.

David & Kate Taylor

Recycling a pain?

As the new recycling scheme settles down, we hear of some people having particular difficulties.

If you have trouble getting your recycling box or wheelie bin out on the day, you can ask for an

'assisted collection'. And if you haven't got a convenient, practical, place to keep a wheelie bin, you can have a fortnightly bag collection instead. (You could always just store your bags in the wheelie bin until collection day, if that helps). Just call Purbeck District Council on 556561 to make arrangements. (I've just checked this with Mrs Jackson at PDC, so the information should be accurate). Now we just have to see what fortnightly collection will be like if we have a long, hot, smelly summer.

Road Problems?

If you want to report any highway defects, such as potholes, broken signs, faulty lights, obstructions, call CLARENCE, the Dorset County Council helpline, on 0800 232323. They will log your call and pass it on to the appropriate department to sort out.

Beach Bonanza

The beach recharge and development work is almost complete, ahead of schedule, thanks to favourable winter weather (and efficient works, of course). The new wooden groynes are in place (and so much less intrusive than nine-foot wide boulders would have been). And of course there is an unbelievable amount of extra sand. If you haven't visited for a while, do yourself a favour and take a walk before the crowds get there!

What's up at the Council?

This newsletter tries to be independent of all political parties, so this is not the place to delve too deeply into the goings-on at the council. But we thought it might help to explain the current position.

Former councillor Henk Agelink (Conservative) had to resign owing to his bankruptcy. A by-election was held in January and won by Gloria Marsh (Conservative).

The former Mayor (Conservative, Tony Miller) resigned suddenly, and Councillor Gary Suttle (Conservative) was elected interim Mayor, until the next formal annual Mayor making (at the end of May). A by-election is to be held on 4th May to elect a replacement town councillor for the north ward of Swanage.

Former councillor, Julie Wheeldon, was disqualified for misconduct and, having decided not to appeal, another by-election will be held in the near future to elect a town councillor in the south ward of Swanage..

So the present Councillors (at date of publication) on the Swanage Town Council are:

Gary Suttle	Conservative
Bill Trite	Conservative

Constance Gainsborough	Conservative
Mike Pratt	Conservative
Mike Tyrer	Conservative
Colin Bright	Conservative
June Farrow	Conservative
Gloria Marsh	Conservative
Cherry Bartlett	Labour
Mike Hadley	Lib Dem

Just to confuse things further, former councillors Miller and Wheeldon were also members of Purbeck District Council, so there will be by-elections for those positions as well: on the 4th May to replace Mr Miller and in the near future to replace Mrs Wheeldon.

Mike Hadley

Disabled Access

Steve Dorrington is compiling information for an Access Guide to help disabled people in Swanage, whether resident or visitors. This will initially cover the town centre and the routes in and out, businesses that offer disabled access or assistance, and those that visit or deliver. There will also be a map showing drop crossing points and how to get around in a wheelchair or on a travel scooter that can't climb kerbs.

If anyone would like to contribute, please email Steve at: s.darrington@btopenworld.com or write to him c/o TIC, Shore Road, Swanage, Dorset BH19 1LB

Membership

We currently have 341 paid up members, if any of you have not paid your subs I shall be collecting at the AGM. Many thanks.

Stewart Borrett

New Swanage Publication

Stewart Borrett of Amberwood Graphics who produces our Independent Newsletter has published a small booklet of his photographs taken around Swanage last summer titled 'The Little Book of Swanage'.

The booklet fits into an ordinary envelope and can be sent to friends to show the delights of Swanage. It retails for £1.99 and can be purchased at: The New & Secondhand Bookshop, TIC, Purbeck Press, Swanage News, Martins and other outlets.



SRA - What do you Want

- 1) More aggressive ()
- 2) Remain the same ()
- 3) Less active ()

Please hand in at AGM or send to 22 Moor Road, Swanage. Thank you